SBISD 2015/2016 and 2016/2017 School Calendar FAQs
(Click on any question below to jump to the answer found in the document.)

1. What determines the school start date?
In spring 2006 the state legislature passed legislation in House Bill 1, that Texas schools cannot begin classes before the fourth Monday in August, with no provisions for a waiver. Start dates for the past and upcoming years are:

2013: August 26
2014: August 25
2015: August 24

2. What is the process the District will use to determine the academic calendars?
The District Improvement Team (DIT), comprised of staff and community members, has been charged to propose two educationally-sound school calendars to the Superintendent. Working from a set of parameters and a resolution developed by the school board to guide the work of developing academic calendar, the DIT will design calendar options A and B for the next two school years to post on the web for community and staff input in October 2014. Additionally, stakeholders may submit input via email to the calendar@springbranchisd.com email address.
Using community and staff input, the DIT will make final revisions in November 2014, and present one proposed calendar each for 2015-2016 and 2016-2017 to the Superintendent.

The Superintendent will consider the DIT’s proposals, and may or may not ask the group to reconsider some portions of the calendars. Once the dates are final, representatives from the Curriculum & Instruction Division will divide the calendar into academically sound grading periods.

A final calendar for each school year will be presented by the Superintendent to the Board of Trustees in December 2014.

3. How many days must children attend school?
The state requires 180 days of attendance, but districts may apply for waivers down to a minimum of 175 days to use for staff development purposes. SBISD has 178 days of instruction as adopted by the Board of Trustees. The two extra days (less than 180) have been approved by a waiver to TEA to be used for Staff Development. These two days must occur during the school year.

4. How many days are teachers required to be in attendance?
State law requires teachers to be on duty for a minimum of 187 days. SBISD teachers are currently on duty 188 days. SBISD strongly supports the professional growth of its teachers in order to remain proficient on state curriculum requirements, share and learn new teaching techniques, and to have time to plan in subject matter teams. For example, in the 2014-2015 calendar, by a waiver to the State, two instructional days are currently exchanged for professional development, along with eight other staff development and planning days spread throughout the school year for a total of 10 staff development/work days.

Teacher Work/Planning Days August 14 & 22, 2014
June 4, 2015

Teacher Staff Dev. Days Aug. 15, 18-21, 2014
January 5, 2015
February 16, 2015

5. Why are there professional development days for teachers?
Before school starts, teachers need time to develop their instructional plan for the year, and to work with grade level or subject content peers. During the school year, occasional staff development days are needed to assess how students are doing with the instructional plan, and to make adjustments where needed. Also, teachers need time to absorb new instructional techniques, and immediately apply the knowledge learned back in their classrooms.

In the 2014-2015 calendar, teachers had five professional development and two workdays prior to the start of school. There are two professional development days scheduled during the school year, and one workday following the last day of school.

6. Could teachers take professional development classes during the summer?
Many teachers do take professional development classes during the summer, both in and away from the District. In summer 2014 SBISD offered more than 300 training classes for its teachers in June, July and August. Many teachers use the summer to take university courses to further their credentials. It is also important to schedule professional development days inside the school year so teachers can immediately apply new teaching strategies in the classroom and for remediation of struggling students.

Scheduling mandatory staff development during the summer would interrupt some teachers’ college course work, work study trips, and supplemental jobs. SBISD teachers are required by Board policy (DMA [Local]) to earn 12-18 non-contract staff development hours each school year, so hours earned during the summer months count toward that requirement.

7. Why do summer vacations seem shorter than when many of us attended school?
Summer vacations are shorter because students are now required to attend school more days of the year (see chart at #11 below). From 1977 to 1991, students were only required to have 175 days of instruction. In 2014-2015, SBISD students will attend school 178 days.

8. Why does the school year end after Memorial Day?
Given the State-mandated late August start date (see question #1), and the District’s desire to maximize instructional days, finishing school prior to Memorial Day weekend is not possible with the traditional length Thanksgiving, Winter and Spring breaks (see Question 14 below for more details).

For the past four years, SBISD seniors have attended a shortened school year, 175 days, which is the minimum required by the state. All other grade levels attend school 178 days as required by the SBISD Board of Trustees.

9. How has the District determine public satisfaction with the current calendar?
In the past, survey data and community input was gathered for consideration by Calendar Committees prior to the drafting of the calendars. Now that the start date is fixed by State law, there are not many options for varying the calendar design and being able to finish school during the first week of June.

The SBISD District Improvement Team (DIT), comprised of parents, teachers, administrators, students, and community members, is now the calendar development team, which provides representation and input from a variety of stakeholders. Using parameters set by the SBISD Board of Trustees, the DIT will work in the Fall of 2014 to draft academically sound calendar options for the 2015-2016 and 2016-2017 school years.

Two calendar options for each school year under consideration will be posted online for community and staff input during a two week period in October 2014. Members of the public and District staff members can also send email comments to Calendar@springbranchisd.com, to give input to the DIT.

10. Has the district ever begun school after Labor Day?
Records going back many school years indicate SBISD has begun school the second or third week of August most years except for six years (including 07/08) when the start date was...
during the fourth week, and six years when the start day was after August 31. In the years that began school after August 31, the school end date was the first Thursday or Friday in June, but there were also fewer mandated days of school (see chart at #11).

11. What is the history of school start dates in SBISD?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Start Date</th>
<th># of Instructional days</th>
<th>Last day before winter break</th>
<th>Last day of first semester</th>
<th># of first semester days</th>
<th># of second semester days</th>
<th>School End Date</th>
<th>Thanks -giving</th>
<th># of SD days</th>
<th># of teacher prep days</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1969</td>
<td>2-Sep</td>
<td>176</td>
<td>Dec. 19</td>
<td>Jan. 16</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>28-May</td>
<td>Thurs-Fri</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1971</td>
<td>23-Aug</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>Dec. 17</td>
<td>Dec. 17</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>31-May</td>
<td>Thurs-Fri</td>
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<tr>
<td>1972</td>
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<td>Dec. 20</td>
<td>Dec. 20</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>25-May</td>
<td>Thurs-Fri</td>
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<tr>
<td>1973</td>
<td>20-Aug</td>
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<td>Dec. 20</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>29-May</td>
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<tr>
<td>1974</td>
<td>19-Aug</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>Dec. 18</td>
<td>Dec. 18</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>28-May</td>
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<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td>1975</td>
<td>25-Aug</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>3 quarters: 62, 61, 57 days</td>
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<td>28-May</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Thurs-Fri</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1976</td>
<td>23-Aug</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>3 quarters: 57, 61, 62 days + summer school 24 days</td>
<td>1-Jun</td>
<td>Thurs-Fri</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1977</td>
<td>23-Aug</td>
<td>175</td>
<td>3 quarters: 57, 60, 58 days + summer school 24 days</td>
<td>25-May</td>
<td>Thurs-Fri</td>
<td>10</td>
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<td>Thurs-Fri</td>
<td>8</td>
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<tr>
<td>1979</td>
<td>27-Aug</td>
<td>175</td>
<td>Dec. 19</td>
<td>Dec. 19</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>29-May</td>
<td>Wed-Fri + Followin g Monday</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1980</td>
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<td>175</td>
<td>3 quarters: 59, 59, 57 days</td>
<td></td>
<td>27-May</td>
<td></td>
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<td>8</td>
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<tr>
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<td>17-Aug</td>
<td>175</td>
<td>Dec. 17</td>
<td>Dec. 17</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>24-May</td>
<td>Wed-Fri</td>
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<tr>
<td>1983</td>
<td>17-Aug</td>
<td>175</td>
<td>Dec. 20</td>
<td>Dec. 20</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>22-May</td>
<td>Wed-Fri</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Dec. 20</td>
<td>Jan. 23</td>
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<td>88</td>
<td>5-Jun</td>
<td>Wed-Fri</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Jan. 22</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>5-Jun</td>
<td>Wed-Fri</td>
<td>8</td>
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<tr>
<td>1987</td>
<td>1-Sep</td>
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<td>87</td>
<td>2-Jun</td>
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<tr>
<td>1988</td>
<td>1-Sep</td>
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<td>Jan. 20</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>1-Jun</td>
<td>Wed-Fri</td>
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<tr>
<td>1989</td>
<td>5-Sep</td>
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<td>Jan. 26</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>7-Jun</td>
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<td>2.5</td>
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<tr>
<td>1994</td>
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<td>Dec., 15</td>
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<td>94</td>
<td>25-May</td>
<td>Wed-Fri</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>14-Aug</td>
<td>177</td>
<td>Dec. 20</td>
<td>Dec. 20</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>22-May</td>
<td>Wed-Fri</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
12. Can there be a difference in the number of days per semester?
Yes, there can. However, efforts are made to “balance” the number of instructional days each semester to accommodate secondary courses offered on a semester basis. All STAAR testing days are scheduled in the second semester, so these are subtracted from the actual number of instructional days per semester. An increase of eight to ten days in the second semester over first semester would effectively “balance” the semesters’ number of instructional days.

Other than balancing the semesters to accommodate testing dates, semesters should not be drastically different in length, because some semester courses would be covering more information than others, though students are tested on the same material. However, with the later start date mandated by the Legislature, and the preference for having finals before Winter Break, the semesters are not currently well balanced. See Question #15 below for more information.

SBISD high school students have options to participate in more rigorous Dual Credit courses on a semester basis in cooperation with Houston Community College, whereby they earn college credit for certain designated classes for a small tuition fee. Since the classes are conducted on a semester basis in alignment with the community college schedule, finals for these classes must occur prior to Winter Break. However, if the SBISD first semester was not scheduled to end until January in order to balance the semesters, Dual Credit finals would take place prior to the end of first semester, thus compromising the amount of instructional time completed prior to Dual Credit testing.
13. Do bad weather days affect the calendar?
By state law, the district must provide for two bad weather days in the second semester. Should weather conditions postpone instructional day(s), the day(s) would be made up by attending school on the designated bad weather day(s).

In the 2014-2015 SBISD calendar, there are four bad weather days identified.

14. How do graduation and college schedules affect the calendar?
The ability of students and teachers to attend college during summer semesters is a consideration. Many colleges’ summer sessions begin in late May during the week following Memorial Day. Some graduating students want to, or are required to, complete some college work prior to entering a university in the fall semester. Teachers who need or wish to take college courses during the summer often like to take the first summer session to enable them to have a break later in the summer. College summer school course material is densely packed into a five-week schedule. Missing one day is like missing a week of class since so much material is covered each time the class meets.

However, most colleges and universities do offer two summer school sessions, and those wishing to take college courses during the summer could consider attending during the second session.

Some students conclude their high school requirements mid-year. Their intent is to begin college in January. By concluding the first semester after winter break, these students would more likely have to wait until summer or the following fall to enter college. Additionally, some colleges require a transcript with first semester grades by early February prior to a student being selected for admission. If first semester does not end until mid-January, this might be a problem.

15. How does the testing schedule impact the calendar?
Most students have five to eight State testing days in the Spring semester. In order to balance the number of instructional days in each semester, eight days are usually subtracted from the second semester total to see how it aligns with the total number of instructional days in the first semester.

For example, in the 2014-2015 calendar, there are 80 student days in the first semester, and 98 in the second semester. By subtracting eight testing-days from 98, there are about 90 instructional days in the second semester. There is a 10-instructional-day difference between the two semesters, which is not ideal, particularly for classes that are only one semester long. Students taking the same class second semester will have approximately ten more instructional days in class, which could make comparisons between first and second semester grades unequal.

16. How do holidays affect the school calendar?
Traditionally the following are the holidays the district has traditionally observed with time off from school and work. With the late August start date, the holidays listed in bold will be student holidays during the 2014-
2015 school year.

- Labor Day
- Columbus Day
- Thanksgiving
- Christmas Day (included in Winter Break)
- New Year’s Day (included in Winter Break)
- Martin Luther King Jr. Birthday
- Presidents’ Day (student holiday, teacher staff development day/Flex Day)
- Good Friday/Passover
- Memorial Day

17. How do energy costs affect the school calendar?
The months that are affected by the start of school date change are May – September, as follows:

- An earlier start in August means
  - Buildings open and air conditioning starts up in late July for back to school preparations
  - Building AC is used longer in August for back to school nights, parent meetings, registration etc.
  - School runs till the last week of May, and summer schedule takes effect right after Memorial day
  - This earlier-start option is not currently available to districts in the State due to the legislative mandate described in Question #1.

- A late start in August means
  - Back to school preparations start in August, allowing the summer schedule to run the entire month of July
  - Building AC is used longer in late August and first week of September for back to school nights, etc.
  - School runs through the first week of June, delaying summer energy schedule onset

SBISD has had a very strong energy management program since the Energy Policy was passed by the board in May 2006. Consequently, we cannot attribute 100% of the savings that are shown over the past two years to the later start. Climate data for the Houston area from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) indicates that July and August are significantly warmer than May and June, therefore we can expect some savings in cooling costs from reducing our building occupancy during the hotter months. Whether these savings are large enough to compensate for the inconveniences caused by starting school later is open to discussion.

18. Do the calendars of surrounding districts affect SBISD?
Each district develops its calendar independently and on different timelines. Efforts are made to coordinate proposed dates with surrounding districts in order to be sensitive to the needs of SBISD employees whose children attend school in other districts.*

A study of the home locations of SBISD employees by zip code reveals:
## 2014 Study of Where SBISD Employees Live

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th># of employees</th>
<th>% of all employees</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SBISD</td>
<td>1381</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HISD</td>
<td>949</td>
<td>20.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cy Fair</td>
<td>658</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Katy</td>
<td>635</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alief</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ft. Bend</td>
<td>133</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Misc.</td>
<td>423</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A study of the start dates and holidays of surrounding districts for the 2014-2015 calendar shows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>School Start Date</th>
<th>School End Date</th>
<th>Instructional Days</th>
<th>Staff Development Days</th>
<th>Teacher Work Days</th>
<th>Total # days teachers on duty</th>
<th>Thanksgiving</th>
<th>Last Day before Winter Break</th>
<th>Spring Break dates*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SBISD</td>
<td>Aug. 25</td>
<td>June 3, 2015</td>
<td>178</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>188</td>
<td>Nov. 26-28</td>
<td>Dec. 19</td>
<td>Mar. 16-20*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*In spring 2014, a staff and community survey was taken to determine whether stakeholders wanted to change the dates of Spring Break in 2015 to align with other school districts in the area, which had recently changed theirs to a week earlier. The survey results overwhelming indicated a preference for the dates indicated in the chart above.

Many SBISD high school students take classes at HCC, so it is important for the spring break dates to align for academic alignment. This list shows the 2015 Spring Break dates for colleges in the state. Colleges marked in yellow align with the SBISD Spring Break dates:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>College</th>
<th>2015 Spring Break Dates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HCC</td>
<td>3/16-3/20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lonestar</td>
<td>3/9-3/13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
19. Is there evidence to show that students do better on finals after winter break?
There are multiple factors that affect academic achievement, but there is no direct evidence that the calendar is a determining factor. It is likely the December absenteeism rate would be higher if semester exams were given in January, thus reducing the likelihood of successful finals results due to reduced instructional time.

Teachers report teaching days were lost when final exams were given in January in previous years, because they had to spend significant time reviewing class material prior to testing. Students were more apprehensive about taking the exams then, thus reducing satisfactory results. See #’s 12 and 14 above for more information.

20. How does concluding the first semester prior to winter break affect absenteeism?
Concluding the first semester prior to the winter break reduces absenteeism because most secondary students are not allowed to take final exams early unless there is an emergency, and they do not want to take make up exams after the break. Therefore, students come to school the week before winter break in order to complete finals, causing attendance figures to be higher.

Also, please see #14 above for information about students who graduate early and seniors needing first semester transcripts sent to colleges.

21. Is the absenteeism rate affected by students who enroll after the school start date?
The absenteeism rate is not affected until students enroll.

22. Does enrollment spike after Labor Day?
There is a constant increase in enrollment during the first month of school. From the Friday before Labor Day to the week after the holiday in 2013, there was a 4.683% increase in enrollment.

In Fall 2013, enrollment increased by 742 students from the first day of school when all students were counted (August 26) through September 25, an increase of 6.295%.
23. How much does student absenteeism cost the district?
Every day an enrolled student is absent in a 178-day instructional calendar, costs an average of $15-$20 per student in lost revenue from the State (different classifications of students are reimbursed at various rates). Multiply this by the number of students absent each day for all 178 days and the financial impact becomes significant. For example: If 6% of students, or roughly 2123 students, are out on a single day, the District loses about $31,000 to $42,000 for that day.

24. Is the start date influenced by football and extracurricular?
No. The University Interscholastic League (UIL) sets the start date for all sports seasons at the high school level; middle school athletics may not begin practice until the first day of school. Band practice can start whenever the band director wishes, usually determined by the date of the first football game (which is also regulated by UIL and not affected by school start date). Currently, high school volleyball, football, team tennis, and cross-country practices start in early August. The UIL has not yet made any provisions to adjust this schedule in light of the later August start date mandated by the Legislature.

25. Does the final exam schedule affect only 25% of students in SBISD?
No. There are approximately 17,000 secondary students in SBISD who are affected by final exams schedules. There are also about 16,000 elementary students. Elementary students do not take final exams.

2015-2017 Calendar Steering Committee
Patty Pace                      Jennifer Cobb
Linda Buchman                  Becky Wuerth