



# 2023-24 Modified Academic Calendar

AT ITS JANUARY 25, 2022, MEETING, THE AIKEN COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION DIRECTED THAT A PLAN BE DEVELOPED TO ADDRESS ISSUES IDENTIFIED DURING TOWN HALL MEETINGS. CHAIRMAN BRADLEY ASKED AT THE FEBRUARY 8, 2022, MEETING THAT BOARD MEMBERS SUBMIT ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS TO SUPERINTENDENT KING LAURENCE FOR DISCUSSION. BELOW ARE SUPERINTENDENT LAURENCE'S RESPONSES TO THE MORE PROMINENT ISSUES PUT FORWARD TO DATE.

## 1. CHILD CARE

Keep in mind that the number of days of school and the number of days off have not changed. We have the best solution for child care on those days within our schools already. We have an agreement with Quest Zone to provide after school programs in our elementary and middle schools. They also provide a drop in program during the summer and have expressed a desire to do the same during the fall and spring intercession periods.

The Family Y has a longstanding tradition of providing “School Days Out” childcare during school breaks whenever they occur. The Y provides this for all of the area school districts which have always been on different schedules. Larger churches have expressed interest in providing programs during those weeks as well. Most child care providers are for profit businesses. They are going to address the market demands of their clients. They proved they were up to it when they geared up very quickly during the pandemic.

Staffing shortages have been mentioned. By the 2023-24 school year the applicant pool should be rebounding. Additionally, we will have a large number of classroom aides, bus drivers, and school food service workers – all with background checks and experience with children – who may be interested in part-time work with child care providers. That is something we could help to facilitate.

## 2. BAND

The question with band continues to be about weekend competitions and time to prepare. Marching bands currently practice during the summer when school is not in session. Those practice days would naturally shift to the intercession weeks. These weeks would also offer the opportunities for band camps during cooler weather. Since this time is just a couple of weeks prior to lower state and state competitions, it might be a good time to perfect routines. Transportation would be handled the same way it is handled during the summer months. There may actually be additional transportation opportunities since we will be running bus routes for intervention.



### **3. ATHLETICS**

As with band, coaches and athletes are used to practicing and playing when school is not in session. Christmas break has always been a time for basketball tournaments, and spring break is an active time for baseball and softball. The late September-early October intercession would be just prior to the conference region football schedule. Those weeks would be an ideal time to fine tune for conference play. Again, transportation for athletes would be no different than transportation now during early August.

Practice schedules would likely have to be adjusted in early August but no practice days would be lost. Students make a commitment when they choose to participate in sports or band or any other extracurricular. There are trade-offs and sacrifices regardless of the calendar used.

### **4. CHILD CUSTODY AGREEMENTS**

I believe that most families are able to work out custody and visitation. For those that have specific dates set in court orders and cannot come to an agreement, they will have a year and a half to go through the legal process.

### **5. COST**

The financial impact should be minimal. Work calendars for positions working fewer than 12 months will be adjusted to align, as needed, with the modified calendar. We don't anticipate a need for additional days that would be covered out of the General Fund. Utility costs should not be affected since buildings are already occupied year-round with a variety of programming. Individuals working extra duty with students during the breaks would be paid through other funding sources such as ESSER, Title I, and academic assistance, similar the how the summer program is funded. The summer school programs would generally be of shorter duration with intervention time being shifted to the fall and spring break.

### **6. TRANSPORTATION DURING SUMMER MONTHS**

A concern was voiced about students riding the bus during the hotter summer weeks. They already do that. Our summer school programs offer school bus transportation so students are on buses throughout June and July. For a number of years South Carolina schools started early in August. Georgia schools typically begin the first week in August. Nearly all of our buses now have air conditioning. We will endeavor to have air conditioning on all buses by the 2023-24 school year.

### **7. SUMMER JOBS AND INTERNSHIPS**

There would certainly be fewer weeks in the summer for full work days. However, as I have stated previously, employers who hire students adapt schedules for school hours. If it is a one-off, pure summer job, earning days will be shortened. Most working students have an ongoing relationship with the employer and work after school hours when school is in session.

Internships likely would be more plentiful and could be done during the school year on the modified calendar. Job shadowing and CTE work-based learning opportunities could be leveraged during the intercession times as well, opening up even more opportunities for our students which could lead to paid summer opportunities.

## 8. TEACHERS AND OTHER EMPLOYEES WITH SUMMER JOBS

As with students, if it is a one-off job, then there will be fewer earning weeks available. However, the same situation exists based on the relationship with the employer. I am aware of a number of teachers who work full-time in the summer and evening or weekends during the school year. There will also be earning opportunities during the intercession weeks.

## 9. HEAT INDEX IN AUGUST

There were a couple of concerns voiced about the heat index affecting recess in August. While it is technically possible, my experience has been that the heat index does not reach a dangerous level until well after noon. Recess is generally over by then, and if not, can be shifted based on the forecast.

## 10. HOMEWORK/PROJECTS DURING BREAKS

Homework will not be assigned over the breaks. I tried to find examples of homework over the Christmas and spring breaks after that was brought up but could not find any. I asked the folks that brought it up to send me examples as well. Nothing was submitted. Some students may have long-term projects that cross over the breaks, especially AP and dual enrollment. It would be the student's choice to work during that time.

