School Calendar and Local Update

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NCSBA

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NC School Calendar Law Overview

- School start and end dates for all 115 LEAs dictated by the General Assembly.
  - Start no earlier than Monday closest to Aug 26.
  - End no later than Friday closest to June 11.
  - Weather exemptions for qualifying LEAs allow start date to be Monday closest to Aug 19.

- **NC is 1 of 2 states in the US where the start AND end dates for local school districts are dictated by the State legislature.**

- LEAs may go 185 instructional days or 1,025 instructional hours within this window.
Prior to passage of the school calendar law in 2004:

- Most LEAs in NC started school before mid-August and ended in May.
- 25% of LEAs in NC reduced the length of summer break to less than 10 weeks.
School Calendar

Issues

• Local control- local education leaders not able to set a calendar that meets unique needs of their communities.

• Limited window for scheduling makeup days.
  ◦ Saturdays
  ◦ Holidays
  ◦ Spring Break

• Limited options for professional development/teacher workdays.

• Out of alignment with community college start dates.

• Students taking 1st semester exams after Winter Break.

• Sports teams starting practices and games before school starts.
School Calendar
Issues

- Limited options for addressing summer learning loss.
- More LEAs opting to schedule less than 185 instructional days during the school year……at what point does this start to impact student learning???
- Scheduling headaches and difficulties.
- Charter schools and Restart schools have flexibility on calendars…..if it is good enough for them it should be good enough for ALL students!!!
2017 Legislative Study of School Calendar Law

- Study of school calendar law.
- Surveyed public, superintendents, school personnel, etc. about thoughts and views of the school calendar law.
- Many significant concerns noted.
- Recommended authorizing calendar flexibility for continuously low-performing schools and LEAs.
- No recommendation on larger calendar issue—“no modification to the calendar law can satisfy competing interests.”
Local superintendents rated how current school calendar law impacts various scheduling tasks.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Calendar Scheduling Task</th>
<th>Made Somewhat or Very Difficult</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Scheduling make-up days</td>
<td>96%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scheduling teacher workdays</td>
<td>94%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aligning high school schedules with the schedule for the community college serving your LEA</td>
<td>94%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scheduling professional development for teachers and other certified school employees</td>
<td>92%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scheduling final exams for high school students</td>
<td>92%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scheduling the opening and closing day of school</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developing alternative school calendars to meet community needs</td>
<td>77%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### 2017 Legislative Study of School Calendar Law

Public opinion surveys

#### Exhibit 16: Public Opinion Favors Local School Districts Determining School Start Dates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response Options</th>
<th>Elon University Poll (n=660)</th>
<th>High Point University Poll (n = 404)</th>
<th>Parent and School Personnel Survey (n=46,139)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>State law should determine the start date for North Carolina public schools</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local school districts should determine the start date for their schools</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No opinion/Did not respond</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2017 Legislative Study of School Calendar Law

- Will be on the NCSBA Legislative webinar page!

https://www.ncsba.org/governmental-relations/webinars
Local Calendar Flexibility Bills - 2017

- During 2017 there were 53 local bills filed to give individual local school districts full calendar flexibility.
  - Covering 82 LEAs.
- Some written to allow the district to align start date with local community college.
- Several filed on the Senate side.
House Bill 375

- Allows LEAs to align school start dates with start date of their local community colleges.
- No earlier than August 15.
- Example:
  - Wake Tech begins Fall 2018 classes on August 16, 2018.
  - If HB 375 became law, Wake County Schools would be able to start the 2018 school year as early as August 16.
- Sitting in Senate Rules.
- Eligible for action at any time in 2018.
House Bill 389

- Pilot program

- Allow 20 specified LEAs to start the school year as early as August 10.

- 3-year pilot.

- Study impact on student achievement, travel/tourism.
House Bill 389 – LEAs in the Pilot

- Anson
- Bladen
- Cabarrus
- Caldwell
- Cherokee
- Cleveland
- Davidson
- Duplin
- Graham
- Greene
- Guilford
- Martin
- McDowell
- Mitchell
- Northampton
- Robeson
- Rowan-Salisbury
- Warren
- Washington
- Wilson
House Bill 389

- Passed House in April by 104-6 vote.
- Sitting in Senate Rules.
- Eligible for action at any time during 2018 session.
Other Factors to Note

- Several districts utilizing the Restart Model for their low-performing schools.
- Restart Model is an option to operate the school with the same freedoms and flexibilities as charter schools.
- In their applications, many districts cite the desire to have calendar flexibility as a reason for seeking Restart Model status.
- Some districts discussing year-round multi-track schooling models.
L.O.C.A.L. Coalition

- Let Our Calendar Authority Be Local
- Cross-section of organizations supporting more local control of school calendars.
- Website: www.nclocalcalendars.net
- Twitter: @nclocalcalendar
- Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/nclocalcalendars
- Providing updates and articles on school calendar issues.
- Grassroots support for HB375 and HB389.
What You Can Do

- Continue emphasizing to Senators why more calendar flexibility is important.
  - Talk about HB375 and HB389 as bills they can pass to help you in 2018!
- Keep calendar flexibility front and center in your discussions with your legislative delegation.
- Talk about the issue with candidates for GA in 2018….ask them where they stand on the issue!!
  - Raise the issue in candidate/public forums.
- Remind lawmakers that charter schools and Restart schools have calendar flexibility….all we are asking is that traditional schools be given this same authority.
- Follow the LOCAL coalition on Twitter and/or Facebook….share the tweets and posts and engage others.
Contact:

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**Upcoming Legislative Webinars**

- May 7- School Safety
- May 14- Short Session Preview

https://www.ncsba.org/governmental-relations/webinars