

- By State Law, school systems must complete a minimum of **1,080 hours, or 64,800 minutes of instructional time** during an academic year. Previously, State law mandated 180 days but did not allow for any time for half days or other exceptions. Like most school systems in the State, the Tuscaloosa County School System has never had a problem with meeting the 64,800 minutes of instructional time. (Note: instructional time cannot include time for lunch, breaks, or transitions such as class changes).
- At least seven (7) faculty/days are required and faculty/staff must meet their contracted days regardless of student days (ex: most nine month employees are on a 187 day contract).
- Schools may not be in session on Veterans Day or Memorial Day. Schools may be in session any other day of the year that is approved by the local Board of Education.

Considerations/Regular “Debates”

1. ***Why do we start school so early? -AND- We want to be out before Memorial Day!***

The start and end dates for school may be adjusted but we have to meet the minimum number of instructional minutes requirement as described above. The later we start, the fewer holidays that can be taken during the year...or, school has to extend beyond Memorial Day.

2. **Professional Development Days for Teachers**

These truly are not a “day off”. Research from all aspects of educational study clearly states and provides ample evidence that teachers need time to collaborate, plan, align lessons to standards, develop intervention plans for struggling students, and develop extensions for students who need additional challenge. Without periodic and uninterrupted time to do so, the effectiveness of instruction is limited.

3. **Fairly Consistent Time for Each Semester of School**

While there is no State law mandating timeframes for each semester, they need to be fairly close in days and/or instructional time.

4. **Holiday Decisions**

All holiday decisions impact start and end dates for the academic year.

5. **Coordination with the Tuscaloosa City Schools and the University of Alabama.**

It has been a significant concern in past years that the Tuscaloosa County School System at least have Spring Break the same week as the University and City School System. Some have advocated for the coordination of start and end dates of the school year.