

How the school district evaluated makeup options

In looking at how to make up lost instructional hours when school was cancelled during the recent snowstorms, Tahoma School District convened meetings involving administrators, School Board members, teachers, support staff, and parents who assembled the following list of pros and cons that helped shape the plan that was approved by the School Board on Monday, March 4:

1. Add two days to the end of the school year (June 20 and 21)

Pro:

- Families likely would leave on vacation on Saturday due to adult work schedules.
- No further disruption to existing schedule.
- No impact to Special Education and IEP evaluations
- Easy solution to restore 720 minutes of instruction.

Con:

- Negatively impacts AP preparation.
- Extends school year and impacts vacations and other family and staff commitments.
- Potentially results in higher absentee rate.
- Parents might not like the addition at the end.

2. Add more days to the end of the school year through the week of June 24.

Pro:

- Labor contract language lists this as a makeup option.
- No added impact to classroom focus.
- No impact to Special Education and IEP evaluations.

Con:

- Likely low attendance due to vacation plans.
- Potential loss of focus.
- Community will question why other solutions were not considered.
- Staffing shortages possible because people may have scheduled vacations a few days after the original June 19 end of the school year.
- Possible additional impact to seniors (family schedules and possible venue change).
- Substitutes may not be available to cover staff absences.

3. Ask OSPI to waive up to five school days.

Pro:

- Provides flexibility
- If it is available, why not use it?
- This option does not directly impact IEP students in terms of paperwork.

Con:

- Loss of focused instructional time (full day vs. added minutes to fewer days)
- Impact on learners who need the additional instructional time.
- Public expectation is to provide 180 days of school.
- Public perception: Why wouldn't we waive the days if we can?
- Public perception: Are surrounding districts waiving days?
- Pay differential for classified staff.

4. Make the last day of school a full day.

Pro:

- Easy way to recover instructional time.
- Not a big change for families, staff.

Con:

- Could affect family plans.
- Would this be quality instructional time?

5. Take away early release Fridays.

Pro:

- Easy way to recover instructional time.
- Recovers instructional time for AP students and teachers before exams in May.

Con:

- Lose valuable training and planning time; disrupts work momentum.
- Affects family schedules.
- There would be added costs for training without early release days.

6. Extend the school day.

Pro:

- Reduced impact on family plans, compared to adding days in June.
- Easy way to make up instructional time.

Con:

- Would affect family schedules for athletics, activities, tutoring and other after-school activities.
- Could be fatiguing to some students, especially younger students.
- How will this impact para-educator schedules?
- AP kids and classes won't recoup needed time.
- What is impact for Running Start and similar programs?
- This extra time will impact Special Education IEP minutes.
- IEP student coverage schedules at the building level will be impacted.

7. Saturday school option.

Pro:

- Could make up days without extending the school year.

Con:

- Students and teachers probably would not like it.
- Disruptive to family schedules.
- Disruptive to extracurricular activities (sports, clubs, etc.)
- Possible cost implications for senior-only classes.
- Pay differential for classified staff (overtime).
- Special Education evaluation timelines could be impacted

8. Make up days during Spring Break.

Pro:

- Could recover large chunks of time.
- Positively supports AP preparation prior to testing for high school students.
- Opportunity to move forward in curriculum and preparation for state testing.

Con:

- Would disrupt travel and vacation plans that are already in place (airplane tickets).
- Eliminating break days could disrupt learning, due to long period of time without a break.
- Staff and parents likely would not like this option.
- Would there be enough substitutes?
- Special Education evaluation timelines could be impacted.