

- 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 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. Instructional time cannot include time for lunch, breaks, or transitions such as class changes.
- At least seven faculty days are required, and faculty/staff must meet their contracted days, regardless of student days. 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 and Frequently Asked Questions

1. ***Why do we start school so early in August?***

Will we be out of school 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 are not a “day off” for teachers. Research from all aspects of educational study 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**

Semesters should 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**

In our community, many households have members who attend and/or are employed by TCSS, as well as either UA and/or TCS. Therefore, calendar coordination with TCS and UA is meaningful for many families, particularly for Spring Break, as well as other holiday breaks and school year start/end dates.