



**South Bend Empowerment Zone  
Balanced Calendar Frequently Asked Questions**  
*Last updated: Mar 8, 2023*



This is a “living document” of FAQ about the proposed balanced calendar. Information will be updated and questions added over the coming weeks. **New questions from the prior week are highlighted in yellow.**

<b>Frequently Asked Questions</b>	<i>Answers</i>
<b>Has a decision been made to implement a balanced calendar?</b>	<i>No. The Zone’s Board of Directors will vote on the calendar in mid-April.</i>
<b>Why implement a balanced calendar?</b>	<p><i>Research shows that a balanced calendar creates benefits for students, families, and teachers. It supports student academic progress with continuous instruction and more opportunities for intervention. It also supports families with shorter periods of time when their children require care. Teachers benefit from regular breaks throughout the year that prevent burnout, improved work-life balance, more opportunities for professional development, and a prep day at the start of each quarter.</i></p> <p><i>A number of schools in Indiana, and throughout the country (46 out of 50 states), already use a balanced calendar including the following districts in Indiana:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><i>● Beech Grove City Schools</i></li><li><i>● Lafayette School Corporation</i></li><li><i>● Lawrenceburg Community School Corporation</i></li></ul>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>New Albany-Floyd County Consolidated Schools</i></li> </ul>
<p><b>With the Zone entering Year 5, would it make sense to implement a new calendar for one year?</b></p>	<p><i>We hope to have an answer regarding the long-term plans for SBEZ by April. This decision will be made before any decision regarding changes to the calendar.</i></p>
<p><b>Will families have the opportunity to ask questions and give feedback on the proposed calendar?</b></p>	<p><i>Yes. We will have multiple in-person town hall meetings for families across the coming weeks. At least one town hall will be in Spanish. All town halls will offer Spanish translation for specific questions. Town halls will be live streamed on Facebook and those watching online will be able to submit questions. Town hall dates will be shared on the Zone’s Facebook page and other social media.</i></p> <p><i>We will also gather feedback and additional questions from families via online surveys. We also welcome families to ask questions on the Zone’s Facebook page.</i></p>
<p><b>Would the new calendar align with the SBCSC breaks for Fall, Thanksgiving, Winter and Spring?</b></p>	<p><i>Yes. The proposed 3-week breaks include SBCSC Fall, Thanksgiving, Winter and Spring Breaks.</i></p>
<p><b>Is SBCSC considering a balanced calendar?</b></p>	<p><i>We cannot speak for SBCSC. However, conversations and discussions are continuously taking place between SBEZ and SBCSC.</i></p>
<p><b>How long are the instructional days during the intervention week between quarters?</b></p>	<p><i>The second week of each break cycle in between quarters will include a 5-day intervention intensive for targeted students and at this time is proposed to run from 8:30am to 11:30am for students and 8am to 12pm for teachers. This has not been finalized.</i></p>
<p><b>What do you know about districts that have implemented a balanced calendar but</b></p>	<p><i>Implementation is critical to the successful roll out of a balanced calendar. The decision framework will be used to determine if this is a proposal that we will move</i></p>



<p><b>stopped and returned to a traditional calendar?</b></p>	<p><i>forward with and if we do, we will implement it with fidelity. In some districts that introduced the balanced calendar and returned to a traditional calendar, the proposed changes varied during implementation, such as reducing intercession days and not including the intervention time during intercession breaks.</i></p>
<p><b>What measures will be used to determine if the balanced calendar is effective?</b></p>	<p><i>Measuring the effectiveness of the program would be extensive. We would refine, tweak what needed to be tweaked; however, we do not plan to stop in the first year after identifying challenges.</i></p> <p><i>A program needs enough time to germinate once implementation begins. We would plan to follow the balanced calendar for at least one year.</i></p>
<p><b>Does the Zone have time to build relationships with external partners to provide day camps when they are needed?</b></p>	<p><i>We already have external partners at many of our schools running after school programming and they could potentially be our day camp providers during intercession and we have various existing partners in the community that we could bring in. We also have had some people suggest we run our own intercession camps.</i></p>
<p><b>Surveys are being collected from parents and teachers, but what data will be shared and where can it be accessed?</b></p>	<p><i>The full data set will be shared with stakeholders and the community. These will be available online.</i></p>
<p><b>What will the Zone Board vote on?</b></p>	<p><i>The proposal we take to the Board in April will be based on community input and additional data. The Board will vote on only one of three options: (1) the current proposed calendar, (2) a modification of the proposed calendar based on feedback, or (3) the SBCSC traditional calendar.</i></p>
<p><b>What does the research show in regards to truancy rates?</b></p>	<p><i>Studies are available to support both balanced calendars as well as not using the balanced calendar in general. However, there are numerous studies that have demonstrated a decrease in absences.</i></p>



<p><b>Will intervention week during breaks replace intervention services during academic quarters?</b></p>	<p><i>No. We will continue to have instructional intervention throughout the year during the school day.</i></p>
<p><b>How would parent-teacher conferences work?</b></p>	<p><i>Parents can coordinate to meet at any time with their child's teacher. Additionally, we will schedule two afternoon/evening events, in the Fall and Spring, to conduct parent-teacher conferences. Progress reports, report cards and parent-teacher conference dates would be adjusted to align with the proposed balanced calendar.</i></p>
<p><b>How would Summer School work?</b></p>	<p><i>For students who need it most, we are proposing intensive interventions during week 2 of each cycle, three times a year. In this proposal, after the fourth quarter and the last day of school next school year (2023-2024), summer school would serve as an additional "intervention" session and would take place for one week.</i></p>
<p><b>Is Summer School optional?</b></p>	<p><i>Summer school is not optional, it is tied to Performance in Doubt.</i></p>
<p><b>What does Summer School look like for students who have multiple reasons for being Promotion in Doubt (i.e., attendance, academics and behavior)?</b></p>	<p><i>This would be determined individually. Summer school would most likely focus on the highest impact areas.</i></p>
<p><b>Will any DLI changes be taken into account with the new calendar?</b></p>	<p><i>Yes. The Dual Language Immersion (DLI) program and the needs of our students will be taken into account with a new calendar, as well as if we stay on a traditional calendar.</i></p>
<p><b>What students will be selected for intervention?</b></p>	<p><i>The primary student group are those who perform in the bottom quartile when assessed in math and/or reading skills.</i></p>



<p><b>How will progress be monitored?</b></p>	<p><i>iReady benchmark data can provide an overarching view of progress; however, formative assessments that align with the learning objectives (e.g., DIBELS for literacy) will also provide data about student learning and progress for precise skills or standards.</i></p>
<p><b>Will one week of intercession intervention make a difference?</b></p>	<p><i>One full week of intensive intervention can be structured to make a difference in accelerating learning and helping close gaps. We have also had suggestions from different stakeholders to extend intervention during intercession to two weeks instead of one.</i></p>
<p><b>How do we address childcare with a balanced calendar during the breaks when students are off from school?</b></p>	<p><i>In the calendar that we are proposing, we plan to offer optional student day camps during two weeks out of three in each intercession. Day camps would mostly likely be offered by community partners such as Big Brothers/ Big Sisters, Boys &amp; Girls Club, etc. The Zone may consider creating its own day camp.</i></p> <p><i>The current proposal offers 11 weeks of subsidized child care each year: The full five weeks of summer break, and two weeks out of three weeks during each intercession.</i></p>
<p><b>Will there be opportunities for support staff to work during the intervention weeks?</b></p>	<p><i>Yes. The second week of each break will allow for some support staff to work beyond the 180-day school year. Staff are not required to work during these weeks.</i></p>
<p><b>Will staff's personal days change?</b></p>	<p><i>No. Current Human Resources (HR) policies, including personal days, remain the same.</i></p>
<p><b>What is staff hourly pay during the summer?</b></p>	<p><i>The same contract applies and the same amount of days; however, the days are redistributed. If staff would like to work during the 3-week intercession breaks, we will be offering day camp opportunities and other summer employment to work during the intercession.</i></p>



<p><b>Will payroll be based on the traditional calendar?</b></p>	<p><i>The payroll schedule for all staff would reflect the new calendar.</i></p>
<p><b>Would the teacher contract change?</b></p>	<p><i>A modified or new contract would be revised to reflect teacher pay.</i></p>
<p><b>How would this apply to 12-month employees?</b></p>	<p><i>During intercessions, 12-month employees will still be working as they currently do; this is only a redistribution of school days.</i></p>
<p><b>Is the teacher prep day at the beginning of each quarter in place of teacher record day?</b></p>	<p><i>Teacher prep days are built into the calendar at the beginning of each new quarter, after each 3-week intercession or break cycle. The schedule for teacher prep days would be 9am to 1pm so that teachers and staff can plan and prepare for the new quarter prior to students returning.</i></p>
<p><b>Will we have teacher record day?</b></p>	<p><i>We will probably not have a separate teacher record day.</i></p>
<p><b>Will we still have early-release Thursdays if we move to a balanced calendar?</b></p>	<p><i>Yes.</i></p>
<p><b>Will the curriculum we use change if we don't move forward with the balanced calendar and go back to SBCSC after one more year as the South Bend Empowerment Zone?</b></p>	<p><i>We will be able to make curricular changes even if the Zone is not extended and has one more year. A process for curriculum review is currently in place and recommendations will be made by the curriculum review committees. Any changes will be informed by what is best for students.</i></p>



<b>If a teacher is interested in being an intervention teacher, must they commit to work all intercession intervention sessions across the three break cycles?</b>	<i>No. We will identify the teachers who may work during the intercessions, but they don't need to commit for all breaks at one time.</i>
<b>Will teacher attendance at professional development during the second week of intercession be mandatory?</b>	<i>It will be remote and asynchronous, and strongly encouraged.</i>