Calendar Survey Analysis

Prepared for Park City School District

June 2019
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Introduction

In this report, Hanover Research analyzes and summarizes the results from Park City School District’s (PCSD) School Calendar Survey, administered in Spring 2019. In total, 1,094 respondents from PCSD completed the survey—17 current high school (Grade 9-12) students, 701 parents of a current student, 317 staff members, and 59 members of the community.

The purpose of this survey was to collect feedback from PCSD stakeholders about their perceptions of the school schedule and calendar. PCSD will use the results from this survey to determine the optimal school calendar and school-day schedule. Specifically, the survey addressed the following topics:
Methodology Notes

- **Survey Administration and Response Rate:** The survey was fielded online using the Qualtrics software platform in April and May, 2019. The survey link was sent by email to stakeholders of PCSD including current students, parents of current students, staff members, and members of the community. All stakeholders responded to the survey during the administration window.

- **Survey Analysis:** In the following report, results are segmented by affiliation with PCSD where applicable. Statistically significant differences (95% confidence level) between groups of 30 respondents or more are noted with red letters designating the group (A, B, C, or D) or with an asterisk (*). Group-assigned letters can be viewed in the figure legends. For full aggregate and segmented results, please consult the accompanying data supplement.

- **Duplicate responses:** Some stakeholders may be affiliated with PCSD in multiple ways (i.e., a parent of a current student and a staff member, a parent of more than one student in the district). Stakeholders with multiple affiliations and/or current students were given the opportunity to take the survey multiple times in order to respond to survey questions from multiple perspectives, however respondents were not required to take the survey multiple times. Forty-two percent of responding staff members indicated that they were also a parent of a current student and 15 percent of responding parents indicated that they were also a PCSD staff member. However, most of these respondents did not complete the survey more than once. The final sample includes only 26 respondents who took the survey twice, for a total of 52 of 1,094 individual survey responses (5%).

- **Sample Size:** Sample sizes vary across questions as some questions only pertain to a subset of respondents, and some respondents may have chosen to not answer certain questions. Further, “Don’t Know or Not Applicable” responses, and equivalent, are excluded from the figures and analysis of Likert scale questions in order to focus on respondents who did express an opinion. **Conclusions drawn from a small sample size (n<20) should be interpreted with caution.**
Recommendations

Based on the findings from this survey, Hanover Research recommends that Park City School District:

- **Begin school in late August.** While there is some disagreement between stakeholder groups, almost half of parents and staff members prefer a late August start date. These two groups represent 93 percent of all survey respondents.
  - *Park City should keep the high school start time at 7:30 AM.*

- **Build a variety of long and short breaks into the school calendar.** Stakeholders consider a two-week winter break to be a high priority. Stakeholders are mixed, however, between their preference for a week-long break for Thanksgiving and two long holiday weekends.
  - *Most stakeholders prefer to observe Presidents Day and/or Martin Luther King Jr. Day, providing Park City with the opportunity to strategically build two long weekends into the calendar that most stakeholders would enjoy.*
  - *Park City should also create and keep a fixed timeline for Spring Break as this is widely preferred among stakeholders.*

- **De-prioritize religious holidays when creating the calendar.** Most Park City stakeholders do not observe religious holidays.
  - *It is recommended, however, that Park City permit parents to keep students home from school and staff to take a personal day in order to observe religious holidays.*
Key Findings

Perceptions of Current Calendar

- About half of Park City School District (PCSD) parents, staff, and students are satisfied with the current school calendar, with only 44% of community members feeling satisfied. Roughly half of parents (57%), staff (51%), and community members (49%) find the start and end dates of the school year to be acceptable, while only two-in-five students (41%) agree.

Preferred Start and End to School Year

- Park City stakeholders vary in their preferred school year start time. Staff members (45%) and parents (44%) want the school year to begin in late August and end in early June, while students (47%) and community members (44%) would prefer a post-Labor Day start date and mid-June end date.

Break Preferences

- Stakeholders of Park City generally prefer longer, less frequent breaks, although staff members are split between preferring longer, less frequent breaks (42%) and shorter more frequent breaks (40%). At least three-in-five stakeholders (62% - 76%) think that winter break should be two weeks rather than one week or variable based on the year. Stakeholders also agree that there should be a fixed timeline (such as mid-April) for Spring Break (49% - 59%). Stakeholders vary in their preferences for other breaks, however, with community members (55%) and parents (50%) preferring to take the entire week off for Thanksgiving while students (69%) and staff members (49%) prefer to have two long holiday weekends.

- Stakeholders slightly vary in the importance they give to different considerations of the break schedule. Staff members (64%), students (56%), and parents (50%) prioritize have two full weeks off during December break, while students also find closing school for two days during the UEA convention in October to be important (73%). Community members are most likely to advocate for the semester ending before winter break (58%).
Key Findings

**Holiday Breaks**

- Park City School District stakeholders widely agree that the district should take off for Presidents Day and Martin Luther King, Jr. Day. Stakeholders also agree that families should be allowed to keep students home to observe a religious holiday (40% - 56%), while only staff members are likely to say that staff should be allowed to take a personal day to observe a religious holiday (29%). Most stakeholders do not observe any religious holiday (60%-67%), although a small portion do observe Good Friday (23%-38%).

**School Day Start and End Times**

- Over half of staff members and students prefer that Park City High School keep its 7:30 AM start time, while parents are split between 7:30 AM (29%), 8:00 AM (21%), and 8:30 AM (22%) as the earliest possible start time. About one-quarter of staff members (27%) and parents (25%) think that Park City should have a latest possible start time of 8:00 AM, while an additional fifth of staff (20%) and parents (22%) think that 8:30 AM should be the latest possible start time. Students are split between preferring a latest possible start time of 8:00 AM (19%) and 8:30 AM (19%).
  - Staff members (64%), community members (57%), and parents (56%) prefer an early release time to a later start time, while students are more split (44% early release time; 44% later start time).

**Other Considerations**

- The top three factors stakeholders consider in regards to the Park City School District Calendar are the timing of extra-curricular activities, research on child/adolescent sleep, and traffic congestion at the beginning and end of the school day. Staff members (60%), students (53%), and community members (37%) agree that there should be one emergency weather day built into the school calendar, while parents are more likely to say that there should be no emergency weather days built into the calendar (44%).
  - Two-in-five students think the AP testing schedule should be considered when creating the school calendar, yet fewer community members (35%), parents (25%) and staff members (20%) agree.
SECTION I:
OVERALL PERCEPTIONS
Satisfaction with Calendar

- About half of Park City parents, staff members, and students are satisfied with the current school calendar.
- Community members are significantly less likely to be satisfied with the calendar than parents and staff members.

Q: How satisfied are you with the current school calendar?

![Bar chart showing satisfaction levels for different groups.]

- **Current student (n=16) [A]**
  - Completely dissatisfied: 6%
  - Somewhat dissatisfied: 25%
  - Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied: 19%
  - Somewhat satisfied: 31%
  - Completely satisfied: 19%
  - Top 2: 50%

- **Parent of a current PCSD student (n=687) [B]**
  - Completely dissatisfied: 7%
  - Somewhat dissatisfied: 25%
  - Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied: 12%
  - Somewhat satisfied: 36%
  - Completely satisfied: 20%
  - Top 2: 56%

- **PCSD staff member (n=307) [C]**
  - Completely dissatisfied: 7%
  - Somewhat dissatisfied: 24%
  - Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied: 13%
  - Somewhat satisfied: 40%
  - Completely satisfied: 16%
  - Top 2: 56%

- **Community member (n=50) [D]**
  - Completely dissatisfied: 4%
  - Somewhat dissatisfied: 24%
  - Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied: 28%
  - Somewhat satisfied: 30%
  - Completely satisfied: 14%
  - Top 2: 44%
Acceptability of School Year Start and End Dates

- Almost three-in-five parents find the school year start and end dates to be somewhat or completely acceptable.
- Students find the school year start and end dates to be slightly less acceptable than parents, staff members, or community members, although there are no significant differences.

Q: How acceptable are the school year start and end dates in the current school calendar?

- Parent of a current PCSD student (n=701)
  - Completely unacceptable: 6%
  - Somewhat unacceptable: 23%
  - Neutral: 14%
  - Somewhat acceptable: 28%
  - Completely acceptable: 29%
  - Top 2: 57%

- PCSD staff member (n=317)
  - Completely unacceptable: 8%
  - Somewhat unacceptable: 23%
  - Neutral: 18%
  - Somewhat acceptable: 29%
  - Completely acceptable: 22%
  - Top 2: 51%

- Community member (n=59)
  - Completely unacceptable: 7%
  - Somewhat unacceptable: 25%
  - Neutral: 19%
  - Somewhat acceptable: 25%
  - Completely acceptable: 24%
  - Top 2: 49%

- Current student (n=17)
  - Completely unacceptable: 18%
  - Somewhat unacceptable: 24%
  - Neutral: 18%
  - Somewhat acceptable: 12%
  - Completely acceptable: 29%
  - Top 2: 41%
SECTION II:
GENERAL PREFERENCES
Preferred Time of Year

- Almost half of community members and students prefer to begin the school year after Labor Day while staff members and parents prefer to begin in late August.

Q: Given that Park City is a community with year-round events and activities, do you prefer the district to...?
Q: Assuming the same length of the school day, what is the earliest start time that you would support for Park City High School?

Over half of staff members and students prefer to keep Park City High School’s 7:30 AM start time. Almost one-third of parents agree.
Latest Preferred High School Start Time

Over one-third of Park City staff members prefer that 8:00 AM is the latest possible start time of Park City High School. Parents and students are split between preferring 8:00 AM and 8:30 AM as the latest possible start time.

Q: Assuming the same length of the school day, what is the latest start time that you would support for Park City High School?
Early Release vs. Later Start Time

- Over half of Park City community members, staff, and parents prefer an early release time to a later start time.
- Students vary on their preference for an early release versus later start time, with almost half of students preferring each.

Q: Currently schools in PCSD have early release one day a week. Do you prefer schools have an early release day or a later start time?
SECTION III:
BREAKS & HOLIDAYS
Preferred Break Length

- Park City stakeholders generally prefer longer, less frequent breaks, with parents being significantly more likely than staff members to prefer these breaks.

Q: Overall, would you prefer PCSD to have longer, less frequent breaks or shorter, more frequent breaks?

- **Community member (n=55) [A]**
  - Longer, less frequent breaks: 49%
  - Shorter, more frequent breaks: 33%
  - No preference: 18%

- **PCSD staff member (n=315) [B]**
  - Longer, less frequent breaks: 42%
  - Shorter, more frequent breaks: 40%
  - No preference: 18%

- **Parent of a current PCSD student (n=694) [C]**
  - Longer, less frequent breaks: 52%
  - Shorter, more frequent breaks: 32%
  - No preference: 16%

- **Current student (n=17) [D]**
  - Longer, less frequent breaks: 59%
  - Shorter, more frequent breaks: 41%
  - No preference: 18%
Importance of Break Schedule Options

- Half or more of staff members, parents, and students find it very or extremely important to have two full weeks off during the December break.
- Community members are more likely than staff members and parents to think that concluding semester one before December break is important.

Q: How important is it to...

- ...to you that semester one concludes before December holiday break?
- ...to you to have two full weeks off during December holiday break?
- ...to end the semester for PCSD secondary students before winter (December) break?
- ...to adjust school breaks around the Sundance film festival?
- ...to continue to close school for students for two days during the annual UEA (Utah Education Association) convention which takes place mid- to late October?

Note: Graph showing % very important + % extremely important
Do you prefer the school district to close for two long holiday weekends or the entire week of Thanksgiving?
Preferred Winter Break Length

- At least three-in-five Park City stakeholders would prefer a two week winter break. Staff members are significantly more likely to prefer a two week winter break than parents.

Q: Would you prefer PCSD to schedule winter (December) break for:

- Community member (n=55) [A]
- PCSD staff member (n=315) [B]
- Parent of a current PCSD student (n=694) [C]
- Current student (n=17) [D]
About half of Park City stakeholders would prefer that spring break is put on a fixed timeline rather than coinciding with Spring holidays.

Q: Would you prefer PCSD to schedule spring break to coincide with:

- Spring holidays (such as Easter) - 36% BC
- A fixed timeline (such as mid-April) - 59%
- No preference - 18%

Survey respondents include:
- Community member (n=55) [A]
- PCSD staff member (n=315) [B]
- Parent of a current PCSD student (n=692) [C]
- Current student (n=17) [D]
Preferred Non-religious Holiday Breaks

- Most Park City stakeholders prefer that the district observe Presidents’ Day and Martin Luther King, Jr. Day.
- Parents are significantly more likely to prefer Presidents’ Day than staff members.

Q: Which of the following holidays would you prefer the school district to close? Please select two.
Preferred Religious Holiday Breaks

- Most stakeholders prefer that Park City allow families to keep students home to observe a religious holiday.
- Community members are most likely to prefer that the district close school on major religious holidays, while staff would like to be able to take a personal day to observe a religious holiday.

Q: What approach should the school district take regarding the observation of religious holidays?
Over half of Park City stakeholders do not observe Good Friday, Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, or Kwanzaa.

About one-quarter of stakeholders observe Good Friday.
SECTION IV: OTHER CONSIDERATIONS
Q: In your opinion, what are the three most important factors that PCSD should take into account when considering school start and end times? Please select up to three.

Park City stakeholders consider timing of extracurricular activities, research on child/adolescent sleep, and traffic congestion at the beginning and end of the school day to be the three most important factors that should be taken into account when considering the school start and end times.
Emergency Weather Days

- Most Park City stakeholders think that the district should have either one or no emergency weather days built into the school year schedule.
- Staff members are significantly more likely than parents or community members to think that one day should be built in.

Q: Currently, PCSD does not have any emergency weather days built into the school calendar. PCSD has only had two official (school cancelled) snow days in the past 13 years. How many emergency weather days do you feel are appropriate to build in?
Advanced Placement (AP) Testing Schedule

- Two-in-five current students think the AP testing schedule should be considered in planning the school calendar.
- Only one-third or fewer of other Park City stakeholders agree.

**Q:** How important do you think it is to consider AP testing in planning the school calendar start and end dates?

**Current student (n=16):**
- Not at all important: 38%
- Slightly important: 6%
- Moderately important: 13%
- Very important: 25%
- Extremely important: 19%

**Community member (n=54):**
- Not at all important: 19%
- Slightly important: 26%
- Moderately important: 20%
- Very important: 24%
- Extremely important: 11%

**Parent of a current PCSD student (n=649):**
- Not at all important: 27%
- Slightly important: 22%
- Moderately important: 26%
- Very important: 16%
- Extremely important: 9%

**PCSD staff member (n=293):**
- Not at all important: 27%
- Slightly important: 28%
- Moderately important: 25%
- Very important: 12%
- Extremely important: 8%
SECTION V:
RESPONDENT CHARACTERISTICS
Which of the following best describes your affiliation with Park City School District? (n=1,094)

- Community member
- PCSD staff member
- Parent of a current PCSD student
- Current student

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School/Work Location</th>
<th>#</th>
<th>%</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>District office</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ecker Hill Middle School</td>
<td>169</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jeremy Ranch Elementary</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>McPolin Elementary</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Park City High School</td>
<td>234</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Park City Learning Academy</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parley’s Park Elementary</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PCSD Preschool</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trailside Elementary</td>
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<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Treasure Mountain Junior High</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>1%</td>
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Note: Only students, parents, and staff members were shown this question.
Respondent Characteristics (Cont.)

Which of the following best describes your role at PCSD? (n=317)

- School-based staff: 88%
- Central office staff: 7%
- Other staff: 4%

Note: Only staff members were shown this question.

How many children do you currently have enrolled in PCSD? (n=701)

- 1 child: 31%
- 2 children: 50%
- 3 children: 15%
- 4 children: 4%
- 5 or more children: 0%

Note: Only parents were shown this question.

Are you also a PCSD parent? (n=317)

- Yes: 42%
- No: 58%

Note: Only staff members were shown this question.

Are you also a PCSD staff member? (n=701)

- Yes: 15%
- No: 85%

Note: Only parents were shown this question.