

WHY SUPPORT LEGISLATION PROHIBITING STUDENT INSTRUCTION FROM BEGINNING EARLIER THAN THE FOURTH MONDAY IN AUGUST....

Federal Education Reporting Requirements stipulate school choice options must be given to parents at least 14 days before the first day of school. Early-August School Start Dates Jeopardized Federal Funds:

Federal education reporting requirements have changed. In years past, the state was tasked with issuing Adequate Yearly Progress Reports no later than the first day of school. Beginning with the 2010-2010 school year reports are due at least 14 days before the first day of school. While the Mississippi Department of Education is issuing reports earlier than most states, without a starting date for schools to begin the state could still be non-compliant and face financial sanctions. If the MDE is able to issue reports on August 3rd, as they did last year, and parents receive school choice notification two days later, the school year would not be able to begin until August 23rd, the forth Monday in August.



Research clearly shows school calendar configurations don't impact academic performance.

States increased standardized test scores after school start date laws took effect. The last three states to pass school start date laws, Texas, Florida and South Carolina, all showed increased standardized test scores and college entrance exam scores the year following the implementation of school start date laws. *(Please note we are not saying later school start dates increase academic performance. We are simply showing that the school start date does not impact academic excellence or standardized test scores.)*



A K-12 calendar better aligned with that of higher education will maximize summer learning opportunities for teachers. Teachers need time in the summer for continuing education.

Early-August school start dates make it almost impossible for teachers to take classes during both of the summer sessions offered by colleges and universities. Early-August school start date prohibit teachers from enjoying the benefits of the second summer session and thus increase the time needed for teachers to earn advanced degrees.



The traditional school calendar keeps kids in school during the school year with limited breaks. Using the 12 week summer for innovative learning experiences will increase summer learning for our neediest children and should reduce the achievement gap. Research shows low-income students fall behind an average of two months in reading during the summer while their middle-income peers tend to make gains. A recent study of students by Johns Hopkins researchers showed 65 percent of the achievement gap between poor and affluent children can be explained by unequal summer learning experiences during the elementary school years.



It takes 48 percent more energy to cool schools in August than in May. Reducing cooling days in August would decrease annual cooling costs for schools – allowing more money to flow into instructional supplies: Regardless of the school calendar configuration students attend school 180 days. According to the National Climatic Data Center the average cooling degree day in Mississippi in May is 206.87. In August the average cooling degree day is 431.81. According to the Houston Chronicle, “since (school start date) mandate, energy bills have fallen by millions. The August 20, 2008 article said some districts reported using half as much energy in August as before the mandate. Why waste taxpayer dollars when teachers are buying classroom supplies with personal funds?



For many economically disadvantaged students working is not an option, but a necessity. The longer students have to work over the summer the less they may need to work during the school year. The less hours students need to work during the school year the more time they have to get involved in school activities. Often times students need to see for themselves the value of furthering their education. Hearing about the value of an education is nothing compared to seeing how little your 40 hours a week paycheck will buy. Any job can be fun for three or four weeks but by the end of a three month summer the newness has worn off and students often see the benefits of learning a trade or getting an advanced degree. Additionally, research shows the more involved students are in school activities the less likely they are to drop-out of school before graduation.



A January 2010 public opinion poll by The Bradley Research Group showed 76.3 percent of those surveyed supported moving the start date closer to Labor Day. Fifty-three percent of respondents thought non-traditional school holidays should be removed in order to push back the start date and 46 percent preferred extending the school year later in May. The survey was a random telephone survey of 1,000 Mississippi residents age 21 and above and was conducted in December 2009. The assessment was conducted at the statewide level and then segmented into four regions. With a sample size of n = 1000, the proportional margin of error is +/- 3.1 percent with a 95 percent confidence level.

A forth Monday in August school start date would create an additional \$153 million in new economic output. Moving start dates back would generate more than \$100 million in new tourism spending, \$40 million in new wages and over 1,500 jobs. Economic impact estimated by the Gulf Coast Business Council Research Foundation in the January 2010 report: *An Introductory Study of Later School Start Dates in Mississippi.*



Texas, Florida, South Carolina, North Carolina and seven other states currently have laws governing the first day of student instruction. School start date legislation has also been introduced this year in other southern states, such as Alabama and Tennessee. Legislatures in six other states are also considering school start date legislation.

For More Information Please Contact:

Tina Bruno

Executive Director

The Coalition for a Traditional School Calendar

(assisting the efforts of the Mississippi parent group Save Mississippi Summers)

TEL: 210.559.5277

EMAIL: SchoolCalendarCoalition@gmail.com
