



Communications Dept. • 525 Mill St., Springfield, OR 97477 • (541) 747-3331 • pr@springfield.k12.or.us • www.springfield.k12.or.us

Media Advisory:
July 9, 2015

Contact: Deb Jolda
Phone: 541-726-3325

District Releases 2015-2016 Calendar

Springfield, Ore.— The school board has approved the district’s official academic calendar for the coming school year. Once again, the calendar represents a full school year with no furlough days, again with 175 student contact days.

“A full calendar is one very tangible benefit of our slowly improving financial situation,” says Superintendent Sue Rieke-Smith. “The additional resources will allow us to build up our reserves and to allocate funds for key initiatives to help ensure student success.”

The calendar reflects the district’s implementation of full-day kindergarten. To help students transition to school, elementary schools will be using a staggered start schedule for kinders during the first week of school, with half the kinders designated to start on September 9 and the other half on September 10. More information about full-day kindergarten and the staggered start schedule is available at www.springfield.k12.or.us/fdk.

The calendar also again reflects the district’s commitment to providing staff collaboration time.

“Collaboration time not only provides vital professional development opportunities for staff, but also gives staff a chance to work together to provide the best possible education to our students,” says Rieke-Smith.

In an ongoing effort to make the best possible use of collaboration time, the district has made some tweaks to simplify the schedule for the coming year. High schools will now also have early release every other Friday, rather than late starts. (Note that the Academy of Arts and Academics, which uses a completely different calendar, will continue to have late starts.) Early release days will continue for elementary and middle school students, but elementary students are out first this year, and the times have changed to accommodate the logistics of more kids needing buses.

Last year, professional development opportunities ranged from district-level training to establish a baseline of best practices for teachers, to teacher-directed training that allowed teachers to share their expertise in specific areas with other teachers—for example, integrating technology into the classroom or strategies for transition to Common Core standards. The district also encourages teachers to apply for the district’s Teacher Leader Cadre to provide more opportunities for leadership.

“A teacher’s knowledge of management, instructional strategies, curriculum planning and motivation guide the multiple decisions they make every minute of every day,” says Laura Scruggs, who leads the district’s professional development efforts. “It makes sense to empower teachers to share their knowledge and expertise with the goal of making everyone a better teacher.”

The calendar and detailed schedule can be downloaded from the district’s website at www.springfield.k12.or.us/calendar. A Spanish version will be released soon.

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