



What's New?

Changes for 2011-12

Calendar

Due to recent changes in legislation, Durham Public Schools has adjusted its 2011-12 calendar to increase instructional hours. North Carolina General Statute 115c-84.2 requires an increase of instructional hours from 1,000 to 1,025 and an increase of instructional days from 180 to 185.

The requirements were effective July 1, 2011 and are required for the 2011-12 school year unless a waiver was submitted and approved by the State Superintendent's Office.

Durham Public Schools submitted a waiver and the request was approved to utilize early-release days and retain professional development teacher workdays to train all teachers in assessed subject areas on the new Common Core and Essential Standards.

With the calendar changes, February 15, March 14 and May 23 will become regular instructional days for the traditional and year-round calendars. In addition, October 28 and March 26 will be converted to regular Teacher Workdays, rather than Protected Teacher Workdays.

For more information on calendars for the 2011-12 school year, visit

<http://www.dpsnc.net/schools/calendars>.

Discipline

The Board of Education has adopted significant changes in regards to discipline policies. Please see Board Policy [4301](#) and [4303](#) for details.

Magnet Schools

The Magnet season has undergone a few changes for the upcoming year. The Magnet Fair that is usually held in November will now tentatively move to January. The application period will also be a little later than in previous years. Be sure to visit the webpage for the [Office of Student Assignment](#) for updates.

New Schools

Three new schools are opening this year. Sandy Ridge Elementary is located at 1417 Old Oxford Road and will open as an arts magnet school serving students in Kindergarten through Grade 5. In addition to teaching the core subjects, this creative school will have an arts focus including instruction in both visual and performing arts.

City of Medicine Academy (CMA) has relocated to its brand new building at 301 Crutchfield Street. This state-of-the-art facility is perfectly suited to assist students in their medical field pursuits. The new campus is adjacent to Durham Regional Hospital and ideal for partnering with the hospital for classes, meetings and student internships.

Lakewood Montessori Middle will begin the school year at the Staff Development Center while its new building is being completed. The school is expected to move into its new facility in November. The new school will be attached to the Lakewood YMCA at 2119 Chapel Hill Road. Previously serving sixth-grade students, Lakewood Montessori Middle will serve seventh-grade students this year and add eighth-grade students in 2012-2013.

Volunteers

DPS will launch an electronic volunteer management system in early October. Volunteers will be able to submit applications on line, browse for opportunities posted directly by the schools and interact with Facebook, Twitter and other social networking sites. The current DPS volunteer application is available at <http://www.dpsnc.net/community/get-involved/volunteers>. Completed forms should be submitted to the volunteer coordinators at your school or to Sheila Miglarese in the office of Public Affairs (sheila.migliarese@dpsnc.net). Important reminder – a volunteer clearance is required for all day and overnight field trips!

English Language Learners

Durham Public Schools appreciates its diverse population and wants to ensure that all parents and community members have access to important information. To that end, DPS has made “Culturally Responsive Schools” a major focus. Changes include:

- DPS has launched its new Spanish-language Web site. This site houses a variety of information from areas including registration, transportation, school orientations, calendars and more: <http://www.dpsnc.net/spanish>.
- Training for all principals and assistant principals took place this summer, and will continue into the school year, on building culturally responsive schools and processes/procedures for communication services.
- The following statement has been included in the DPS Parent Handbook and on ESL Resource Center documents:

“Durham Public Schools expects all employees, students, and other members of the school community to conduct themselves in an appropriate manner with concern and respect for all members of the school community. Discrimination and harassment on the basis of race, sex, religion, creed, disability, national origin, or language minority status will not be tolerated.”
- The ESL Resource Center has been reorganized to better meet the needs of students and families. A directory of phone numbers will be on the website.
- DPS has adopted new school and district Communication Standards for English Language Learner families, including what information should be translated and/or interpreted.
- DPS has adopted new processes/procedures for schools and district administrators to secure translating and interpreting services.
- All DPS Board policies are being translated and posted on the website in Spanish.
- DPS has adopted a new communication plan to expand Spanish communications to communities.
- DPS has a new bilingual welcome letter and parent assistance form that will be in all schools. This resource will allow parents to voice concerns and receive assistance in a timely manner.
- DPS is planning an ESL Parent Night with interpreters and a parent focus group in the fall.

Transportation

Transportation Services is challenged with providing efficient and cost effective bus service while maintaining safe operations. "Double Runs" will be used at some schools this year to increase efficiency. Double Runs are defined as using a single bus to transport two loads of students to/from the same school. Typically, Double Runs are limited to neighborhoods that are concentrated very close to a school. Use of double runs will result in supervised wait time on campus for some groups of students. Transportation will seek to minimize wait times for students as we continually seek cost-effective transportation solutions.

- 1) Bus stop information is available on line at dpsnc.net under SmoothStart link. Parents may also attend open house at schools to obtain this information.
- 2) A student without an assigned bus stop may ride the bus by going to the bus stop location closest to their home. In order to request bus service, parents must visit the students school and make the request through the NCWISE Data Manager.
- 3) To request a different stop location for the afternoon drop off, parents must make that request at the student's school.
- 4) Call volume is normally very heavy during the 10-day period around school opening. Transportation is committed to serving all parent and student requests as timely as possible, but some delays are inevitable during this time.

Race to the Top

In accordance with NC Race to the Top guidelines, and the Durham Public Schools proposal, three schools are being transformed with implementation beginning this school year. Lowe's Grove Middle and W.G. Pearson Elementary have initiated 1-to-1 iPad integration in which every student and teacher will have access to an Apple iPad loaded with teaching and learning applications. Neal Middle will become a STEM school with intensified instruction in the areas of Science, Technology, Engineering and Math. In conjunction with Citizen Schools of North Carolina, the school will have an expanded learning program for sixth-grade students as well. Be sure to visit the [DPS Race-to-the-Top site](#) for more information.

Child Nutrition

There have been many changes in the area of Child Nutrition Services for the new school year:

- Parents can now access LunchPrepay.com to view meal history and make lunch payments.
- September 23 is the last day for traditional students to use the previous year's meal status.
- October 1 – November 15 is the verification period for meal benefits.
- Discard all Free and Reduced applications and instruction letters for 2010-2011 school year.
- Free and Reduced applications for the 2011-2012 school year are available on the DPS website and courtesy copies will be sent to schools from our Duplication Center. Please let us not duplicate our efforts; therefore, we are requesting that Free and Reduced applications **are not sent** home again.
- Help us process applications in a timely manner by sending applications via courier service daily.
- Inform parents to expect a notification letter of benefits which they should maintain in their files for confirmation of benefits.
- Direct Certification letters will be mailed to all prequalified households within one week after receiving the file from the Department of Public Instruction.
- Child Nutrition Services will change the point of sales system to better serve our customers. The software change will improve the flow of student data and provide an option to work offline in the event of network failure.
- The State funding for the Kindergarten Free Breakfast program was eliminated July 1, 2011. All students must pay the applicable meal price.
- Effective July, 2011 all meals provided during intersession for remediation or academic enrichment will operate under a separate grant program. We will need 30 days to process the application and attain approval from Department of Public Instruction. Please submit your request in a timely manner.

End-of-Course Tests

House Bill 48 was ratified in March and it calls for the elimination of North Carolina End-of-Course tests for the following subjects:

- Algebra 2
- Civics and Economics
- Physical Science
- U.S. History