

## **Misconceptions about the Change to the AJUSD School Calendar**

There are several misconceptions circulating about the change from the four-day to five-day school calendar. In an effort to correct any confusion, a simple fact sheet has been created. The public is also invited to review documents regarding school attendance, transportation costs, cohort enrollment data, school budgets, student achievement, calendar survey results and other data at [www.ajusd.org](http://www.ajusd.org) under Quick Link/Calendar Advisory Committee Updates.

### **Teachers are not being paid for the additional 5th day of school.**

When the calendar originally changed from a five-day to a four-day calendar there was no change in salary. The only change was the number of hours worked each school day. Teacher contracts for the 2018-2019 school year will reflect an increase in salaries, as well as a decrease in cost for health benefits for most employees.

### **The AJUSD School Governing Board made their decision about the Calendar prior to the meeting.**

The Board has been studying the data and markers regarding the school calendar for three years. The GB first heard the recommendations made by the Calendar Advisory Committee on Dec. 12, 2017 and the Board requested additional information. Additional information was provided on Jan. 23 and Feb. 13. After reviewing the recommendations and studying the follow-up information, the Board cast their votes and the decision was made on Feb. 13 at the AJUSD Board Governing meeting. No Board vote or official decision was made prior to that time.

### **Transportation costs are going to rise.**

No. Costs went up when the calendar went from a five-day to a four-day format. In 2017, AJUSD hired a transportation consultant to review transportation costs and efficiencies. The consultant made recommendations and it was his opinion that if AJUSD followed his recommendations, AJUSD could anticipate a decrease in transportation costs. At a minimum, the transportation cost savings will be at least \$100,000 for the 2018-2019 school year.

### **Bus transportation is running harder/more expensive on the four-day calendar.**

The analysis of a transportation specialist indicates that transportation costs should decrease and run more efficiently with the five-day schedule due to more efficient use of bus routing scheduling and other cost-saving measures.

### **EVIT and the ROTC programs will be adversely affected.**

The EVIT and ROTC programs will NOT be adversely affected by the calendar change.

**Air conditioning costs will soar.**

There may be an increase in air conditioning costs with the increased number of school days. However, even under the four-day calendar utilities were not shut off on Fridays as school facilities were still in use for sports events and other activities. Also, completely shutting down the air conditioning off when it is not in use and then restarting it puts a strain on the system which could result in other increased expenses. With careful management the costs associated with the increased calendar days should not be significant.

**School should start after Labor Day like east coast districts.**

AJUSD has not started school after Labor Day for more than 30 years. Educational research indicates that an earlier start date is more advantageous for student learning patterns. These findings have also been reported in respected consumer magazines such as The Atlantic.<sup>1</sup> States that choose to go with the later start dates largely make their decision to take advantage of tourism dollars.

**Attendance has declined in the past few years.**

Attendance has not been adversely affected by the calendar (four day or five day). Enrollment has declined approximately 17% since the 2014-2015 school year, but attendance has remained relatively stable.

**The District did not have all the parent emails when the survey about the calendar was sent out.**

True. The survey was sent out early in the school year and not all the email information had been updated from the previous school year. AJUSD estimates approximately 400 emails were missing.

**The board had a hidden agenda other than doing what was best for our students!**

We sincerely believe that all of our Governing Board members had only the best interest of students and student learning in mind when they studied the calendar issue and cast their votes.

**Kindergarten student who will not turn five years of age until after the start of school will not be able to start school.**

The age to start Kindergarten has not changed. Students must turn five years of age by Sept. 1.

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<sup>1</sup> Why School Still Starts After Labor Day in Michigan, The Atlantic, Emily Richmond, Aug. 24, 2017. Online article.