FCPS SY25-26 Calendar Survey Results

Office of Research and Program Evaluation
June 2026

MEMORANDUM

TO:	Dr. Michelle C. Reid, Division Superintendent
FROM:	Dr. Kellie Kim, Director, Office of Research and Program Evaluation (ORPE)
DATE:	June 30, 2026
RE:	**SY25–26 Calendar Survey Results**

This memo summarizes the results of the SY25–26 Calendar Survey, administered to FCPS parents/caregivers and staff in June 2026 at the request of the School Board, for your review. Key findings and important caveats for interpreting them are outlined below; the full results appear on the pages that follow.

The Calendar Survey results suggest that respondents hold mixed views about the current calendar structure. Staff respondents reported higher satisfaction with the current calendar than parent/caregiver respondents, with 56 percent of staff respondents and 39 percent of parent/caregiver respondents reporting that they were extremely or somewhat satisfied. In the tradeoff questions, parent/caregiver and staff respondents most consistently prioritized preserving winter break and spring break. When asked which modification would be most acceptable if the calendar required a change, both groups most often selected modifying holidays recognizing religious and cultural observances, while shortening spring break or winter break was selected least often.

These results should be understood as responses to a constrained calendar tradeoff, not as a measure of support for or opposition to any individual holiday. The survey asked respondents to compare several calendar features and identify relative priorities if changes were necessary. If respondents gave a calendar feature a lower priority ranking or selected it as the most acceptable modification, it does not mean that they oppose or devalue that holiday or calendar feature; it means that, when asked to choose among specific survey options, respondents indicated comparatively more flexibility on that item.

These findings should be interpreted as input from survey respondents, not as results that can be generalized to all FCPS parents/caregivers or staff. The parent/caregiver response rate was approximately 17 percent, and the staff response rate was approximately 36 percent. Because participation was voluntary, respondents may not reflect the full FCPS community, and people with stronger views about the calendar may have been more likely to respond. The findings therefore provide useful directional information about respondent preferences and tradeoffs, but should not be presented as representative of all parents/caregivers or staff.

FCPS SY25–26 Calendar Survey Results

Background

At the request of the Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS) School Board, FCPS administered the SY25–26 Calendar Survey to parents and staff on June 5, 2026.[1] Following the initial electronic distribution, FCPS sent two reminder emails before closing the survey on June 22, 2026. To ensure accessibility, the survey was offered in 44 languages, with respondents completing it in 30 languages. Among respondents, 95 percent completed the survey in English, 3 percent in Spanish, and 2 percent in other languages.

Response Rate

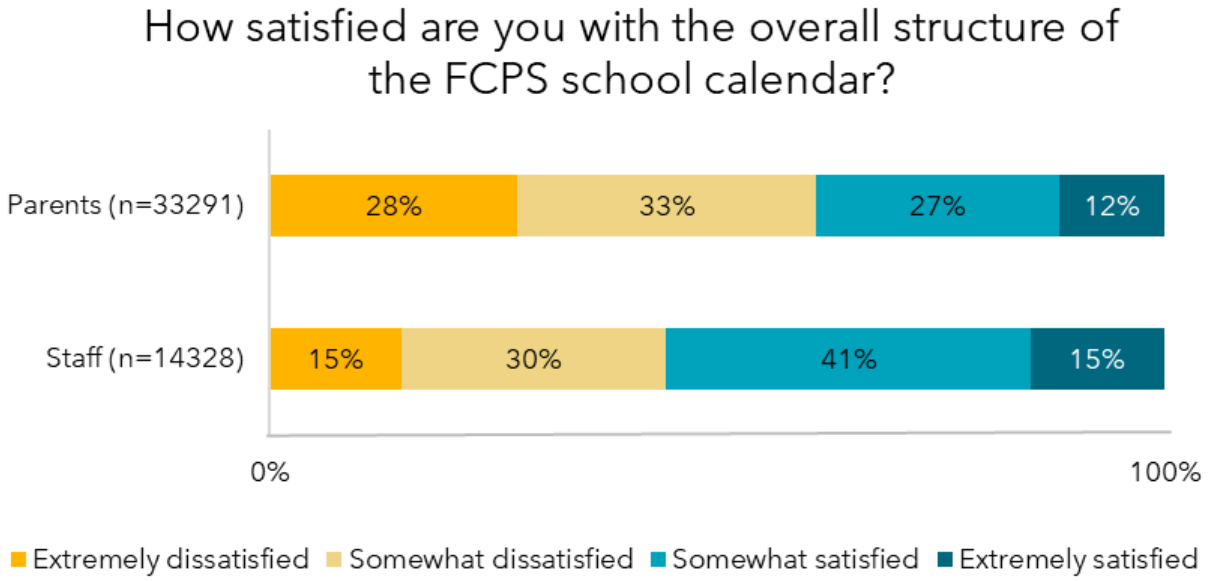
The response rate was high compared to other divisionwide surveys but not high enough to represent the entire FCPS community. Divisionwide surveys have an average response rate of 9 percent for parents and 34 percent for staff, and the response rate for this survey was nearly double for parents and slightly higher for staff. However, a large number of people did not complete the survey, and their opinions are not represented. Weighting responses is not appropriate because the response rate was still relatively low, and we cannot assume that non-respondents had the same opinions as respondents. Thus, interpret results with caution.

Group	# Invited to Survey	# Completed Survey[2]	Response Rate
Parents/ caregivers	194,184	33,389	17%
Staff	39,971	14,402	36%

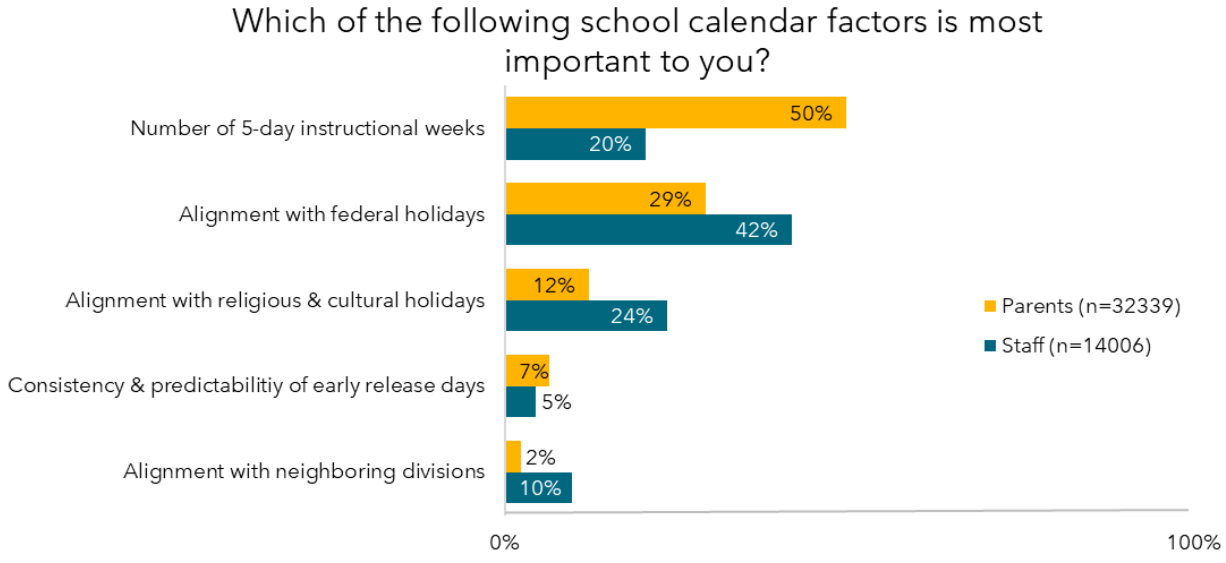
Findings

- Parents and staff had different perceptions about the current status of the school calendar and potential changes.[3]

- On average, staff reported being more satisfied with the current calendar (56 percent) than parents (39 percent). However, the school board changed the calendar policy in the middle of the survey window, so it is not clear which calendar respondents had in mind when answering the question.



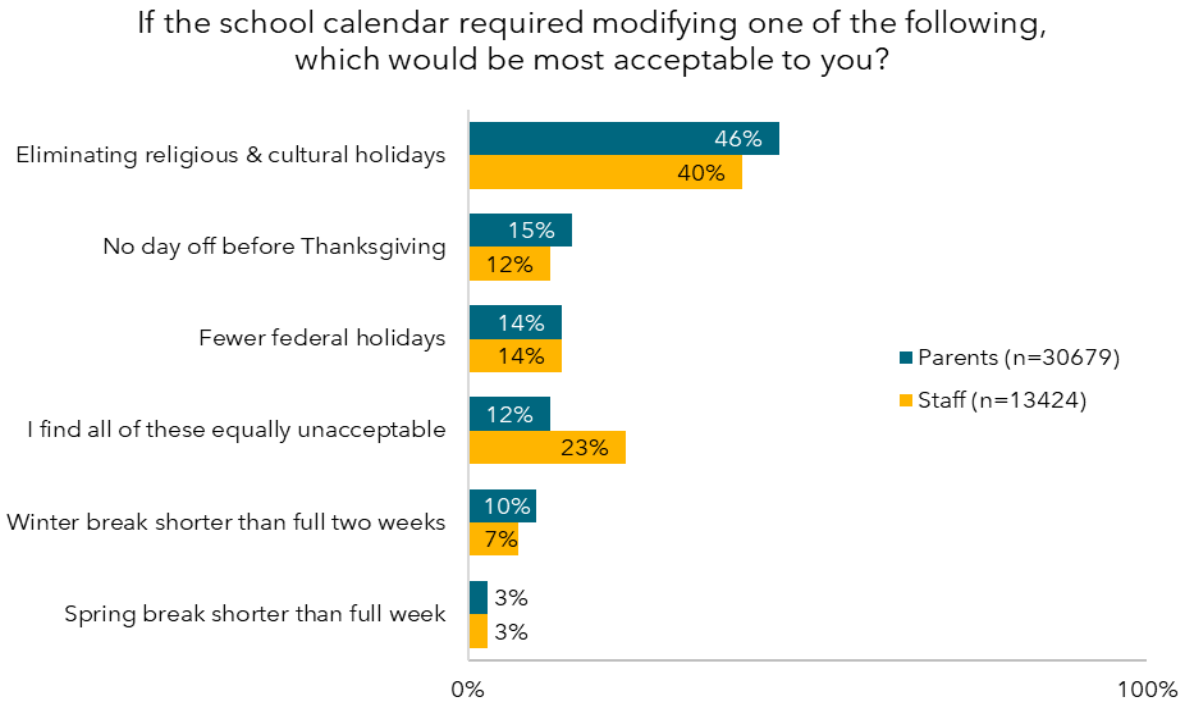
- Half of parents reported that the number of 5-day instructional weeks was their most important school calendar factor. Staff reported that the alignment with federal holidays was the most important for them (42%).



- When ranking what was most important to them, on average, both parents and staff ranked having a full two weeks of winter break and a full week of spring break as their highest two priorities, and maintaining all religious and cultural observances as their lowest priority.

Item	Avg. Parent Priority Ranking		Avg. Staff Priority Ranking
Full two weeks of winter break	1		1
Full week of spring break	2		2
All federal holidays observed	3		4
Day off before Thanksgiving	4		3
Maintaining religious and cultural observances	5		5

- Of the potential modifications presented in the survey, both parents and staff said they would most accept eliminating religious and cultural holidays (46 percent and 40 percent, respectively). However, no option received a majority of votes, and 12 percent of staff and 23 percent of parents said all of the options were equally unacceptable.



End Notes

[1] Surveys were sent to all parents with emails in SIS who were attached to a student enrolled in FCPS as of May of the 2025–2026 school year. Parents of rising kindergarten students were excluded. Surveys were sent to all staff employed by FCPS but excluded roles funded by outside organizations (e.g., public health nurses funded by the Fairfax County Health Department, school resource officers funded by the Fairfax County Police Department, etc.)

[2] A respondent is considered to have completed the survey if they answered at least one question. Because not all respondents answered all questions, the n-size varies from question to question.

[3] Chi-square tests for each survey question revealed a statistically significant association between the respondent's role (parent or staff) and the distribution of their survey answers ($p < 0.001$). That is, parents and staff had different calendar preferences