

## *Should we continue having the semester end before winter break?*

### *Career Center*

It helps students to study hard and be finished before break. This simulates a college environment as well.

It is effective to have the semester break before Winter Break because we don't have to spend as much time reviewing the material after a student comes back from Winter break.

absolutely!

worked great this year!! more efficient use of time!

Makes more sense to have students test over subject matter prior to winter break than be expected to be prepared on return.

I think that it was good for students to not have to study or work on projects over break. There was at least a week gain in instructional time by not having to review so long after break to get them ready for finals.

It's MUCH better for students and instructors alike. Students feel better about being testing immediately over material, rather than waiting over the 2-week winter break. Also, they are able to truly have a break instead of worrying about studying for finals. Teachers are able to work on grading finals and final projects at their leisure, giving them time to do the student work justice.

### *Douglass*

While I believe that ending before winter break is good for students and teachers in an ideal environment, there seems to be no way to make the two semesters similar in length. A possible solution might be to create an intersession for a couple of weeks in the second semester.

Makes for a LONG second semester, but with Spring Break in 2nd semester where some content is lost and reviewed anyway, it makes sense to me.

It was hard to be prepared for 2nd semester to begin right after the break.

### *Gentry*

It is a perfect break in the school year for kids and for the semester to end. My own high school students saw a definite benefit from having the semester end before winter break.

For courses that are only one semester it makes second semester longer even when the 4 days of MAP testing is considered.

The first semester is almost two weeks shorter than the second semester.

1st semester is shorter than 2nd semester

### *Gentry, Lange*

For semester classes this schedule isn't conducive to keeping the classes equal for all students enrolled.

This effects classes a great deal.

### *Hickman*

the students can truly relax during break and final exams should better represent what has been learned while still fresh in their minds.

This has been a long time coming. Please keep it the way it is this year. It makes a huge impact on students to have finals before a 2 week break.

This worked perfectly. However, I would like to have a few days after returning to school to have contact with students to make-up work when absent prior to or during the semester finals. The immediate due date for grades to guidance made it necessary to update excused absences work later. This caused more work for both teacher and guidance staff to make the changes. An additional 2-3 days would have helped.

It is difficult for new students, who begin in the second semester, to receive full credit for classes. This difficulty arises when they enroll late in January and participate in positive attendance, complete homework, take tests and do not receive credit. These students feel that the semester was a waste of time and are disillusioned when they discover that they need to spend extra time to complete graduation credits.

I think there was better use of instructional time by ending semester without a break in continuity.

It felt a little rushed though- could we start school a few days earlier and end school earlier instead of going all the way to June?

### *Jefferson Jr.*

Semester long classes struggle to provide consistent experiences for their students with unequal length semesters. In light of district mandated assessments, equity in the instructional time becomes more significant than it would have been a few years ago.

It makes sense for the Senior high schools, but not at any of the other 10 levels (K-9).

For semester courses, the semesters need to be of equal length.

Not if it means we have to start the year early in the extreme heat. Not if it means there will be a huge difference in the semesters. I have heard the argument that testing takes up much of second semester but those who make that argument seem to be counting the entire testing window, not the instructional time that is lost (which doesn't add up to more than a couple of days).

### *Lange*

It worked out better than I thought it would. Students especially were happy to be done by break.

We start too early in August.

However, I do not like that 2nd semester is longer than 1st semester.

### *Oakland*

My perception was that it was great for both students and teachers to end the semester before break started.

I support the idea of having the students take their exams prior to winter break, however, there are not as many days in the first semester as in the second semester but the same amount of content to cover. If there was some way to equalize the days in each semester, then it would be much better.

I think we should continue to have the semester end before winter break, however, I feel that a few items must be taken into consideration. First of all, there needs to be a scheduled workday that will provide adequate time for teachers to grade and input grades. Also, time needs to be built into the schedule to allow for the possibility of inclement weather.

### *Rock Bridge High*

Although the semester was a bit shorter and there was increased time pressure due to snow days, I think the rewards of having finals before break far outweigh these costs.

The argument that having finals before break removes the need for students to be preparing for finals during break, hence students will do better on finals. The evidence does not support this assumption; scores show no significant difference. It is more important to have an equal number of days in each semester.

We should continue only if we balance out the number of days in the semesters. Senior days should be the ones counted.

There are benefits to each set up, and it's not good that first semester is so much shorter than second, but I think the "mental break" it gives us and our students is the most valuable part of the new arrangement.

the disparity in days is too big. Students were too stressed by all the activities before the break...there's less happening in Jan

Yes, it fits well with the college schedule and is much more realistic in terms of preparing our students for what college will be like.

The semesters aren't the same length then and it rushes the curriculum.

It is more like college. Plus the students are less likely to forget everything that we have taught them, like they seem to do when we have the semester end after the winter break. Realistically, who wants to study over the break? This should be a time spent with family. Also it is better for those students who start taking some college courses 2nd semester and have a conflict in their schedule for a week of overlap between the first semester high school schedule and the spring semester college classes.

### *Smithton*

The problem with this is when we have snow days before winter break. This makes the first semester even shorter than second semester.

It does not allow for a end of the semester work break that makes sense. Having a work day during the break is the biggest joke ever. In additon, having 2 fewer weeks is a curriculum issue. Why do we all have to be on the same schedule for secondary?

### *West Junior*

Parents and students like the semester ending before the break.

This makes for a much better academic start to the second semester. As teachers adjust over time to this schedule I believe we will continue to see an improvement in first semester final scores.

definitely a plus for final exams

Too soon to try to get everything in. Also makes the semesters of unequal length.

Absolutely

I don't like starting school in the middle of August when my school is NOT air conditioned.

Parents and students really like the semester ending before the break.