



This sheet contains some common Questions and Answers associated with Coloma Community Schools adoption of a Pre-Labor Day start. If your particular questions is not addressed, please email dehlers@ccs.coloma.org. Your question will be added to this document and answered.

Q1: Why start school before Labor Day?

This year Labor Day is late (September 7) which means we would start school 1 week later as opposed to 2019-20, which means, the school-year would run into the third week of June 2021.

Q2: Is there an educational benefit to a Pre-Labor Day start?

Yes, we believe that starting a little early allows for the first semester to end prior to Christmas Break which means all exams will be taken before our students leave for Christmas Break. This provides a natural break in the calendar and means there should be no work for students to complete over the break other than maintaining their reading, working on long-term projects, or practicing a skill. In addition, we believe this allows for more instructional time as teachers are not spending time reviewing material covered just before the break in order to get students caught up after a two-week break.

Q3: Does the school district receive more money for a Pre-Labor Day start date?

No. School revenue is based on a per-pupil funding rate established by the legislature and governor as part of the State budgeting process. Schools receive the per-pupil amount if they have 180 days of student instruction that contains a minimum of 1098 hours of instruction so the start date does not matter.

Q4: Will local businesses be affected by a Pre-Labor Day start?

No. Currently, most of our tourists reside in Illinois which starts school in Mid-August and a large portion of our secondary students who work also begin fall sports practice and games in early August. This will remain unchanged with a Pre-Labor Day start.

Q5: Will my Labor Day weekend vacation be affected?

No. State law requires that schools that choose to start before Labor Day must not have school on the Friday before Labor Day and Labor Day which results in a four day weekend.

Q6: What was the process that led the district to decide to a Pre-Labor Day start?

The initial discussion resulted as our county schools, who share many services for our students (CTE, Special Education, Early College Options), discovered that of that on less than $\frac{1}{3}$ of the 180 days school was in session, all county schools were in session on a full, standard day of school. This led to the county schools looking to standardize school calendar that would allow students who participate in shared programming to receive those services.

This lead to a common start date within the county for all schools which is why the Berrien RESA obtained the waiver for a Pre-Labor Day start on our behalf. This year (20-21) several schools will start early and in 2021-22, all but one county school will start before Labor Day.

Finally, Coloma Community Schools surveyed all our stakeholders so that we could solicit their opinion on a Pre-Labor Day start. A little over 80% of our staff wanted a Pre-Labor Day start, and 75% of our parents responded that they favored a pre-Labor Day start. The Board of Education listened to the results and have worked with the teachers to develop a calendar for the 2020-21 school year that has a Pre-Labor Day start of August 31.