



# BLOOMSBURG AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT CALENDAR UPDATES

Whether you are joining us on campus or online, it is important that we provide you with information about school events. Planning for the 2020-2021 school year differs greatly from planning in previous years, however.

Given the uncertainty of some event planning, you received a calendar that includes fewer events this year. Rather than forego the calendar altogether, we are providing our Panther families with updated printable inserts each month. Simply cut and place the new calendar in the space allotted for each month.

In order to be as accurate as possible, we will release the next month's calendar during the last week of the previous month. These inserts are available at:

[www.bloomsd.org/printablecalendar](http://www.bloomsd.org/printablecalendar)

*Please note that the printable October calendar found in this packet includes the extension of our four-day instructional week.*

**The announcement and rationale for continuing Fridays off through Thanksgiving is also included in this packet.**

# OCTOBER 2020

Cut along these lines and insert this calendar into the official school calendar you received in August.



				1	2 ACT 80 DAY  No School for Students	3
4	5	6	7 W.W. Evans Picture Day	8	9 At-Home Virtual Learning Day	10
11	12 ACT 80 DAY  No School for Students	13	14	15	16 At-Home Virtual Learning Day	17
18	19	20	21	22	23 At-Home Virtual Learning Day	24
25	26	27	28	29  End of First Nine Weeks Memorial Picture Retake Day	30 At-Home Virtual Learning Day	31

## **BASD Extends 4-day School Week through Thanksgiving**

On September 8, 2020 our School Board of Directors approved our administrative recommendation to extend the 4-day school week, with Fridays becoming virtual learning days through Thanksgiving. Our administrative recommendation to extend our current schedule and our school board's decision to approve this recommendation is our deliberate and well-considered decision to take the necessary steps to keep our schools open. Below, please find our rationale.

- ***Our current plan is working.*** We have made shifts in our arrival and dismissal times, mask break schedules, staggered starts, and programming. By attending school four days in a row and then using the 5<sup>th</sup> day for teachers to plan and our kids to complete work at home, we have the mental, physical, and emotional opportunity to both establish a routine in school and plan and recover for the following week.
- ***We have a fragile ecosystem.*** The exponential increase in our Blended program has been a significant benefit for ability to maintain our current schedule. Every benefit has a downside. Ours is that our staffing model is taxed to its maximum flexibility and with the need to assign support teachers to direct instruction, our ability to cover staff absences is critically low. If our current system is working better than we could have anticipated, it seems logical to maintain it the best we can. Our greatest fear is increasing demand on our schedule and systems will push us to the point of breaking as our faculty, staff, and students become sick and/or exhausted.
- ***In-Person 4 days is better than At-home 5 days.*** As the schools around us who tried to operate on a 5-day schedule shift back and forth to hybrid and some ultimately move to fully remote learning, we may be best served by a cautious and balanced approach to extend our time together in session. Otherwise, by default, we are likely choosing an all-or-nothing approach, which does not serve our kids, our faculty and staff or our community well at all if we are forced to close. In the end, 4 days a week seem more effective for our kids, our community, and our teachers than multiple shifts to varying schedules, or ultimately fully remote learning by trying to maintain a traditional 5-day-a-week schedule during this unprecedented pandemic. Our decision to utilize Fridays for at-home learning is discussed next:

- *Why Fridays?*
  - *Our kids have an opportunity to establish a system and routine for the week. Our Health and Safety Plan is working and our current student enrollment has us nearing the ideal 60% capacity for research-based hybrid learning.*
  - *Our community, who relies on our schools, can better plan at work for students being home. While we acknowledge that having Fridays off is inconvenient, Wednesdays do not allow for structure and routines to take hold. As noted, 5-days a week will not be sustainable under current conditions.*
  - *Our teachers have the opportunity to plan, provide guided practice for students on pace, and provide remediation for students who fall behind or who have had extended absences.*
- **We need to opportunity to test our virtual learning model.** Our instructional model, although both awkward and new, is having positive effects of student learning and our teaching practices. As we prepare for implementing what could be fully online instruction at some point this year, experiencing at-home learning on Fridays when we can get back together on the following Monday to recalibrate would be an exponential benefit.

In times like these, when virtually every decision is written in pencil, the conversation and process become critical to our shared work and goals. We appreciate that extending the 4-day week will be strongly opposed by some. Ultimately, however, we believe that our learning approach is our best chance to balance the often-opposing goals of faculty and student health, community need for schooling, and our most important mission—student learning.

Thank you,

Dr. Donald Wheeler