

School Start Date

Current Texas law mandates a school start date of the fourth Monday in August. This current school year, the fourth Monday in August was August 28. For the 2018-19 school year, the fourth Monday of August is August 27. This late start limits the number of instructional days that can take place in the first semester of the school year while also allowing the first semester to end prior to the holiday break.

The Texas Legislature created the District of Innovation process to provide school districts with increased local control and a way to gain exemptions from certain laws, such as the school start date, which limit a school district's ability to meet student needs. In order to meet the needs of all students, Lubbock ISD entered into the District of Innovation (DOI) process in the fall of 2017 to study what the district could do to improve student learning and achievement. The DOI process included elected representatives from every school, in addition to parents and community stakeholders.

After several months of in-depth study, the DOI committee identified three exemptions that would help meet the district's goals regarding student achievement and learning. Adjusting the calendar to provide more days of instruction was one of the three things the committee identified as key elements to increase student learning. Through the District of Innovation process, Lubbock ISD sought exemption from the current law, which does not allow school to begin prior to the fourth Monday in August. The committee developed three draft calendars and posted a survey to obtain public feedback as one of the factors to consider prior to making a calendar recommendation to the Board of Trustees.

About four percent of parents participated in the survey, and more parents demonstrated a preference for the August 20 school start instead of the August 15 start date. Having had more opportunity to study the educational needs of students, the DOI committee made a recommendation to approve Calendar Draft A, with the August 15 start, which was also the calendar option with the most instructional days. Draft "A" also begins school on a Wednesday, which was preferential to the majority of the DOI committee because it gives students three days to adjust to the school routine before a weekend break. The 2018-19 start date may appear as a major shift when compared to the mandated start dates of recent years; however, it is aligned with Lubbock ISD start dates prior to the Legislature taking control of setting the date for the first day of school, as evidenced in the table below.

Historical Record of School Starts

School Start Dates PRIOR to Mandated Start Date of Fourth Monday of August	School Start Dates AFTER Mandated Start Date of Fourth Monday of August
2001 August 20	2007 August 27
2002 August 19	2008 August 25
2003 August 18	2009 August 24
2004 August 16	2010 August 23
2005 August 15	2011 August 22
2006 August 14	2012 August 27
	2013 August 26
	2014 August 25
	2015 August 24
	2016 August 22
	2017 August 28

The need for an earlier school start date has been recognized by school districts across Texas. More than 600 school districts in Texas have sought a District of Innovation designation, with the vast majority including an earlier school start date. Of the 50 largest school districts in the Metroplex, 41 have a start date prior to the fourth Monday in August, according to the Dallas Morning News.

