

Hurricane Makeup Days Survey

5271 Responses

14:49 Average time to complete

Closed Status

1. Please type your lawson number.

5271
Responses

Latest Responses

"126416"

"172184"

"213290"

2. Please rank the following options by putting your most preferred option at the top and your least preferred option at the bottom.



3. Optional: Use the space below to provide an explanation to your answer or provide input regarding the hurricane makeup days.

2049
Responses

Latest Responses

2. Please rank the following options by putting your most preferred option at the top and your least preferred option at the bottom.

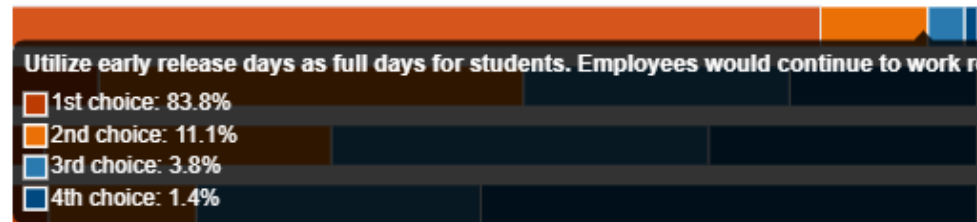
4838 Responses

1-268 | 4838 < >

Rank Options

First choice 1st 2nd 3rd 4th Last choice

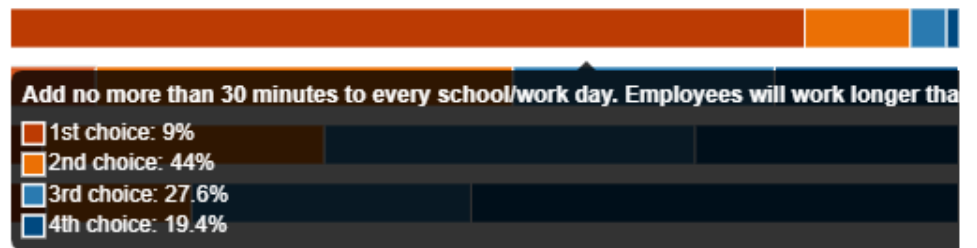
- 1 Utilize early release days as full days for student...
- 2 Add no more than 30 minutes to every school/...
- 3 Change some of the calendared holidays into re...
- 4 Add days to the end of the school year as neces...



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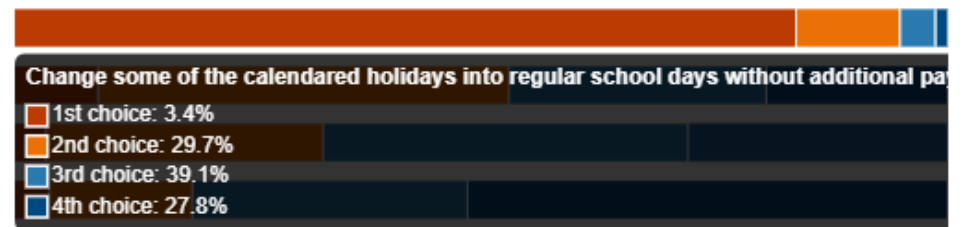
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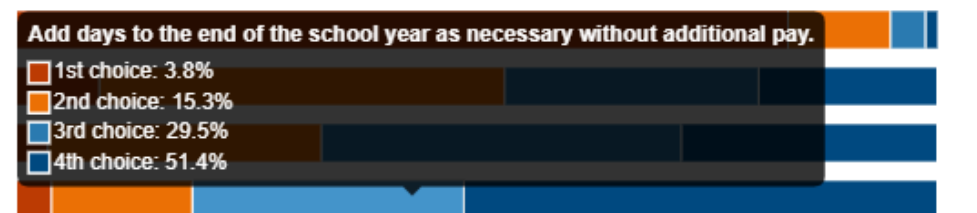
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Expanded Thematic Analysis of HCTA Member Hurricane Makeup Days Survey October 18-23, 2024

Introduction

The survey on hurricane makeup days received over 5,270 responses from HCTA members which included 1,900+ individual written responses, offering valuable insights into the preferences and concerns of employees, many of whom are also parents of students, in Hillsborough County Public Schools. The following analysis distills key themes from the comments collected, highlighting these employees' suggestions, frustrations, and expectations. The analysis is presented in 10 detailed thematic points and concludes with actionable recommendations based on the data and final summary.

1. Utilizing Early Release Days

A prominent suggestion was converting early release days into full school days. Employees saw this as a practical solution to recover lost time without sacrificing planned vacations. Many felt that students and teachers would adjust easily since early release days are already in the school calendar.

- **Common sentiment:** *"We should make early release days full days to avoid cutting into holidays."*

2. Extending the School Day

Several employees suggested adding extra minutes to the school day over a period of time to gradually recover the missed instructional time. This option was seen as less disruptive than cutting into holidays or other non-workdays.

- **Key concern:** Employees, including many of those who identify as parents, noted that extending the school day might lead to fatigue, particularly for younger students or those already struggling with long days.
- **Common sentiment:** *"Adding 15–30 minutes a day seems like a fair compromise."*

3. Maintaining Holiday Breaks

A large portion of the responses emphasized the importance of **preserving holiday breaks**, particularly Thanksgiving and winter holidays. Employees, including those who identified as parents, highlighted that these are crucial times for family bonding, travel, and rest. There was strong resistance to taking away these holidays, though some were willing to accept adjustments if absolutely necessary.

- **Common sentiment:** *"Please don't take away our holiday breaks. Families need this time together."*

4. Avoiding June Extension

Many employees expressed frustration at the possibility of extending the school year into June. This was one of the most unpopular options, as it would interfere with pre-arranged summer plans, vacations, and

childcare arrangements. Employees, in particular, noted that they count on a certain end date to schedule family activities.

- **Common sentiment:** *"Extending the year into June would be very frustrating and disruptive for everyone."*

5. Impact on Teachers

The survey revealed a significant concern for the well-being of teachers. Many employees pointed out that teachers already work long hours, and extending their workday or cutting into their personal time would be unfair. Some suggested that teachers shouldn't have to bear the brunt of the makeup days, emphasizing that the storm was beyond anyone's control.

- **Common sentiment:** *"Teachers are already doing so much—don't add more to their plates unnecessarily."*

6. Focusing on Minimal Disruption

Across the board, employees wanted solutions that would cause the least disruption to families' schedules and routines. Many felt that the makeup days should be handled in a way that minimally affects the current school calendar. This included suggestions to spread out the impact over multiple small adjustments, like adding time to existing days or using teacher in-service days.

- **Common sentiment:** *"Find a way to spread the adjustments throughout the year to avoid major disruption."*

7. Logistical Concerns

Several comments touched on the logistical challenges of making up time. Extending school hours might complicate bus schedules, after-school activities, and family transportation arrangements. Respondents expressed concerns that such changes would disproportionately affect employees who are also parents, especially those relying on after-school care.

- **Common sentiment:** *"If you extend the school day, please consider the transportation and after-school program impacts."*

8. Increased Burnout Concerns

Teachers and those who identified as parents raised concerns about **student burnout**, particularly if makeup days involve long stretches of additional time. There was widespread recognition that while making up time is necessary, it should be done in a way that does not compromise students' focus or energy, especially given the intensity of modern curricula.

- **Common sentiment:** *"Adding too much time to the school day will just exhaust students and teachers."*

9. Importance of Communication

A recurring theme was the need for clear and timely communication from district and school administrators regarding makeup days. Many employees emphasized the importance of transparency in decision-making processes, allowing employees and families to plan accordingly.

- **Common sentiment:** *"Make sure we know the plans ahead of time so we can plan around them."*

10. Involvement of Department of Education and State-Level Decision Makers

Several comments touched on the role of the **Department of Education** and state-level authorities in determining the makeup day policies. Some employees expressed frustration that decisions regarding hurricane makeup days often seem reactive, with little flexibility given to local schools or districts. There were calls for **state-level decision-makers** to proactively adjust state requirements to allow more flexibility in how schools recover lost time. Employees also mentioned that the state should **standardize guidelines** to ensure fairness across districts, as some felt local policies varied too much.

- **Common sentiment:** *"The Department of Education needs to give schools more flexibility to deal with these situations. We need consistent guidance from the state."*

Recommendations Based on Survey Responses

Based on the detailed thematic analysis, here are actionable suggestions for managing makeup days in the future:

- **Use early release days as full instructional days:** This was a popular and widely accepted solution to avoid cutting into holidays or weekends.
- **Extend the school day slightly over time:** Rather than adding full days, consider adding no more than 15–30 minutes to regular school days for a period of time, minimizing disruption while making up the required hours.
- **Avoid cutting into major holiday breaks:** Thanksgiving and winter holidays are highly valued by families and employees. As a last resort, consider using holidays only if other options are exhausted.
- **Do not extend the school year into June:** This was the least popular option, with strong resistance from both teachers and employees who are parents. Avoid this unless absolutely necessary.
- **Consider teacher in-service days:** Adjusting in-service days or using these as instructional time could spread out the makeup days without disrupting student learning or vacations.
- **Provide clear communication:** Ensure employees and families are informed well in advance about any changes to the schedule, with detailed reasoning to help them plan ahead.
- **Build flexibility into future calendars:** Proactively include additional buffer days in the school year calendar to handle unforeseen events like hurricanes without needing last-minute adjustments.

- **Coordinate with state-level authorities:** Advocate for more flexibility from the Department of Education and state-level decision-makers to allow schools to handle makeup days in ways that best suit their local communities.
 - **Focus on student and teacher well-being:** Ensure any solution takes into account the mental and physical health of both students and teachers to prevent burnout.
 - **Address logistical challenges:** When adjusting the schedule, carefully coordinate transportation, after-school programs, and family schedules to minimize additional burdens on working parents and families.
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Conclusion

The feedback from the survey highlights a clear preference for solutions that minimize disruption to both students and employees, particularly those who are also parents. Employees overwhelmingly favored options that preserve holiday breaks, avoid extending the school year into June, and maintain clear communication about schedule changes. There was also a strong emphasis on ensuring that makeup days do not overburden teachers or lead to student burnout. The feedback suggests that practical adjustments, such as converting early release days into full days or adding minutes to the school day, would be the most acceptable solutions.

Furthermore, the involvement of state-level decision-makers and the Department of Education emerged as a key area of concern, with respondents advocating for greater flexibility and clearer guidelines in handling unexpected disruptions like hurricanes. Moving forward, it will be crucial to balance the operational needs of the school system with the well-being of families and teachers, ensuring that any changes are communicated transparently and made with minimal disruption to established routines.

Other notes:

Out of a total of 1,923 full written responses (*excludes N/A and “none” responses*), the most mentioned themes were concerns related to the school schedule, compensation, and family impact. Below is a breakdown of the top three themes based on the feedback:

- **School Schedule (31.6%):** Respondents expressed concerns about changes to the school schedule, including adjustments to holidays, makeup days, and the overall academic calendar.
- **Compensation (16.9%):** A significant portion of feedback focused on concerns about extra work without additional pay, highlighting issues of fairness and financial impact.
- **Family Impact (9.0%):** Respondents frequently mentioned the effects that changes to the schedule and work hours would have on their family life, particularly with regard to childcare and maintaining a work-life balance.

Footnote: Other concerns identified in the feedback include fairness (6.9%), planning time loss (5.1%), mental health (3.1%), student learning and learning loss (3.1%), %, and teacher workload (0.9%). These topics were

*mentioned to a lesser extent, making up smaller percentages of the overall feedback. Beyond the top themes already identified in the summary, an observation from the feedback is the frequency of comments about **fairness and equity** concerns, which stood out as a notable issue. While fairness ranked fourth overall (6.9%), the responses often linked it to the perception of unequal treatment between different types of employees, such as teachers versus administrative staff, or concerns about unpaid extra work.*

Some feedback was gathered related to the School Board, Superintendent and District Leadership. These comments focused on stronger leadership in advocating for waiving these days due to the uncontrollable nature of the disaster. Suggestions included better communication with state-level decision makers, such as the governor, and ensuring that the plight of students and staff was fully conveyed to the authorities. Many respondents urged leadership to find more equitable solutions and avoid penalizing staff and students for events beyond their control.