

POLICY 19

SCHOOL YEAR CALENDAR GUIDING PRINCIPLES

It is the responsibility of the Board of Trustees to establish a School-Year calendar to accommodate and guide the operational and instructional needs of the school division.

The Board will therefore direct the Superintendent to establish a calendar for each school year in accordance with Alberta Education requirements, student and parent needs, and system requirements. The calendar must provide for sufficient Available Instructional Hours and accommodate timelines as outlined in the Guide to Education (Alberta).

Accordingly, the Superintendent will develop a rolling series of draft calendars, and make them available to the public by placing them on the jurisdiction website.

The Board recognizes that there are many variables involved in developing a school calendar, and understands that establishing a school calendar in the best interests of student learning will involve finding a compromise between several competing needs and priorities. Accordingly, the Board has considered the following desirable outcomes of the calendar creation process, and will use these outcomes to guide their decisions when validating the calendar.

Without specific order or preference, the Superintendent will consider the following desired outcomes in order to arrive at a calendar for each school year:

- A] Duration:** While the school year is limited to a maximum of 200 operational days, any calendar design must, as a first priority, meet student needs; and thus, where appropriate, may contain less than 200 days.
- B] Consistency:** The calendar design will seek consistency from year-to-year by attempting to incorporate predictable school opening, year-end and holiday placements.
- C] School Week:** With the exception of the first or last week of school, any school week (for students) will attempt to contain a minimum of three instructional days. A consistent exception to this guideline is Teacher's Convention, held on the third week of February, in the same week as Family Day.
- D] Exams:** Recognizing the unique needs of semestered courses and Provincial Exam schedules, attempts will be made to balance the number of instructional days in semesters one and two. Additionally, scheduling of Provincial Exams may affect the start/end of holiday breaks.

- E] Efficiencies:** The calendars of neighboring school divisions will be considered, as well as the scheduling of major Professional Development events and programs to maximize efficiencies.
- F] Holiday Breaks:** The Board recognizes the value of more frequent, substantial breaks in instruction. Therefore, the following extended breaks may form part of the Calendar:
- Fall Break - Having 2 breaks built into the same semester cannot always be accomplished, as the calendar construction is subject to several constraints. Therefore, the Superintendent will strive to schedule a 9-consecutive-day Fall break only in those years where it can logically fit into the calendar.
 - Christmas Break – The Board recognizes the value of the traditional Christmas break and the desire to gather families together at that time of year. Therefore, the Superintendent will strive to schedule at least 2 travel days prior to Christmas Day with holidays scheduled until after January 1, for a minimum of 10 consecutive days.
 - Spring Break – The Superintendent will strive to construct the calendar such that there is a 9-consecutive-day break in the last week of March.
- G] PD Days:** Professional development days will be scheduled into the calendar, and will be aligned across the school jurisdiction.
- H] Operational Days:** The school year will include two Summer Institute days and teacher planning/preparation.
- I] Interviews:** The calendar will also incorporate two non-operational days (in-lieu for Parent-Teacher Interviews) as well as all Statutory Holidays.
- J] Differentiation:** Further differentiation of calendar may occur if schools substantially exceed minimum instructional hours as mandated by the WCPS Board as per Administration Procedure 130.
- K] Collaboration:** Prior to board review of the calendar, the ATA Local #3 Executive will be provided with an opportunity to review and provide feedback to the Superintendent.

Adopted: **October 2005**

Reviewed: **February 2016**

Revised: **March 2006**
 November 2006
 January 2012
 October 2014
 April 2017