

**DATE:** February 25, 2020

**TO:** Board of Trustees

**FROM:** Darrel Robertson, Superintendent of Schools

**SUBJECT:** Revised 2020-2021 School Year Calendar

**ORIGINATOR:** Lorne Parker, Assistant Superintendent

**RESOURCE STAFF:** Sonia Boctor, Diane Brunton, Bob Morter, Vicki de Haan

**REFERENCE:** [GCA.BP](#) – Approval of the School Year Calendar  
[GCA.AR](#) – The School Year Calendar  
January 14, 2020 Board Report [Changes to the 2020-21 School Year Calendar for Cost Savings \(Response to Request for Information #58\)](#)

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## ISSUE

At the January 28, 2020, Public Board meeting, the following motion was debated and approved: *“That Edmonton Public Schools Administration conduct a survey or otherwise gather parent and staff input regarding preferences on how a calendar that has an additional three PD days and two non-instructional days, while maintaining overall instructional time and the quality of the Division’s students’ education could be structured and bring that information back as a recommendation report to the Board.”*

## BACKGROUND

The School Year Calendar is designed with a number of considerations, many of which are included in *Administrative Regulation GCA.AR – The School Year Calendar*. This regulation includes requirements such as the fact that winter recess is two weeks long and includes December 24 and January 2 and that spring recess will take place at a prescribed time.

Other considerations that the calendar includes are Diploma Exam dates, Provincial Achievement Test dates and Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate exam dates. Additionally, the calendar is designed to balance the length of first and second semesters and to align with the terms and conditions of the pilot program on the school year calendar within the Alberta Teachers’ Association collective agreement.

In November 2019, the Board of Trustees made a Request for Information regarding what cost savings could be realized by revising the 2020-2021 School Year Calendar. The response to this request was presented at the January 14, 2020 Board Meeting. Subsequently, at the January 28, 2020, Public Board meeting, the Board approved a motion to seek input from parents and staff on their preferences for how five additional non-classroom days could be organized into the school calendar – either clustered or spread out. Administration was tasked with collecting the data and incorporating it into a revised calendar which would be brought back to the Board on February 25, 2020.

For the past number of years, the calendar has been organized with 183 instructional days. The days are used to meet 950 hours of instruction for elementary and junior high students and 1,000 hours of

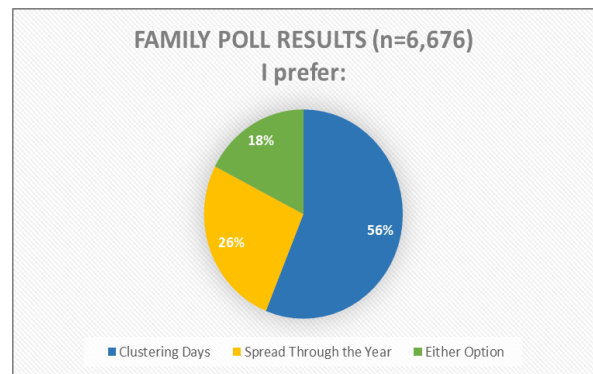
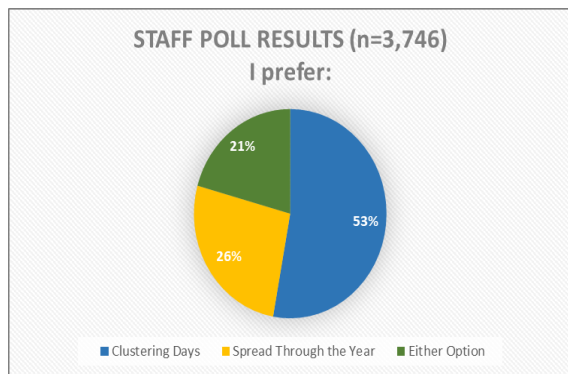
access for high school students. By adding five additional days when the students are not at school, the hours of instruction must be distributed over the remaining 178 instructional days, thereby not impacting the total hours of instruction provided to students.

**Results of Input Received from Families and Staff:**

In order to understand family and staff preferences about how the five additional days that students would not be in school could be arranged in the school year calendar, the Division administered an open-access opinion poll from January 31 to February 10, 2020. Through this poll, families and staff were invited to identify if their preference was to have the additional days clustered or distributed throughout the year, or if they had no preference. Participants were also asked to select factors from a predetermined list that contributed to their preference (up to three factors for families and up to two factors for staff).

The Division received 6,676 completed responses to the family poll and 3,746 completed responses to the staff poll. The results of the polls are as follows and represent the opinion of those who participated.

	Clustering Days	Spreading Days Throughout the Year	Either Option
Family Poll (n=6,676)	56.2%	26.4%	17.5%
	3,750	1,760	1,166
Staff Poll (n=3,746)	52.9%	26.5%	20.7%
	1,980	991	775



Of those who participated in the polls, the following is a listing of the factors they selected in order of preference:

Families	Staff
Opportunities for family vacations or activities	My health and well-being
Ease of childcare arrangements	Positive impact on student learning
My child's health and well-being	Opportunities for increased collaboration with colleagues
Fits my work schedule	Opportunities for professional development and learning
Enhanced quality learning for my child	Other
Fits my family routine	
Opportunity for increased participation in community programs	
Other	

#### Summary of families' responses to the poll:

In reviewing the factors available to families when completing the poll, 'opportunities for family vacations or activities', 'ease of child care arrangements' and 'my child's health and well-being' were among the top three overall chosen by the participating families.

- Of the 3,750 families who selected *clustering* the days in the year as their preference, the most significant factor was 'opportunities for family vacations or activities' (84.7 per cent). This was followed by 'ease of child care arrangements' (38.3 per cent) and 'my child's health and well-being' (28.8 per cent).
- Of the 1,760 families who selected *spreading the days* in the year, the top three factors identified were 'child's health and well-being' (46.5 per cent), 'ease of child care arrangements' (41.5 per cent) and 'enhanced quality learning for my child' (39.8 per cent).
- Of the 1,166 families who did not have a preference, the top three factors chosen were 'opportunities for family vacations or activities' (55.5 per cent), 'my child's health and well-being' (45.4 per cent) and 'fits into work schedule' (30.5 per cent).

#### Summary of staff responses to the poll:

In reviewing the factors selected by staff when completing the poll, 'my health and well-being' and 'positive impact on student learning' were the overall top two.

- Of the 1,980 staff who selected *clustering* the days in the year as their preference, the overwhelming factor was 'my health and well-being' (78.5 per cent). This was followed by 'positive impact on student learning' (34.5 per cent).
- Of the 991 staff who selected *spreading the days* in the year as their preference, the top two factors they identified were 'my health and well-being' (58.5 per cent) and 'positive impact on student learning' (50.1 per cent).
- There were 775 staff who did not have a preference. The top two factors they chose were 'my health and well-being' (58.5 per cent) and 'positive impact on student learning' (39.9 per cent).

## RELATED FACTS

Both of the proposed options for the 2020-2021 School Year Calendars reflect the following:

- A start date for students of Thursday, September 3, 2020, prior to the Labour Day long weekend;
- The end date for students is Monday, June 28, 2021, aligning with the Alberta Education Diploma Exam schedule;
- Balanced first and second semesters;
- A November break of three days composed of: Remembrance Day, one Board-Approved non-instructional day and one day in lieu for reporting;
- Eight Professional Development days, an increase of three professional development days.

## RECOMMENDATION

**That Attachment I, the revised 2020-2021 Division School Calendar, be approved.**

## OPTIONS

Based on the information provided in this report, the following options are considered most appropriate:

1. Approve Attachment I, adjusting the school year from 183 to 178 instructional days.
2. Approve Attachment II, adjusting the school year from 183 to 178 instructional days.

## CONSIDERATIONS and ANALYSIS

The attached calendars were developed in alignment with a number of Division Board policies and administrative regulations, most notably GCA.BP and GCA.AR. In addition, the calendars are aligned with the current Letter of Understanding - "Pilot Project on Revised School Year Calendar" between the Division and the local of the Alberta Teachers' Association. As such, the calendars are designed around an annual figure for teachers' instructional duties of approximately 890 hours, but no more than 896.2 hours annually, versus a weekly maximum for instructional minutes.

Attachments I and II were designed to reflect the feedback gathered in the polls. Both these proposed calendars are very similar and comprised of 89 days per semester. In each case the first semester is identical, offering the following:

- Two consecutive Professional Development Days. This two-day block could support the offering of multi-day courses.
- A three-day break for student and teaching staff incorporating November 11, 2020.
- Four Professional Development days.

Attachments I and II vary in the organization of the second semester. In Attachment I, Spring Recess is extended by one day and the May long weekend is extended by two days. This contrasts with Attachment II where Spring Recess is extended by four days to be two weeks for students. The key consequence of this variance is that in Attachment II, there is only one day in May and June when students are not in school, the Victoria Day holiday. Health and well-being was one of the top three factors for both families and staff. Attachment I gives better consideration to health and wellness of students and staff by having a more extended break on the May long weekend.

It is important to note that both proposed calendars reflect a modification to the calendar originally approved in May 2019. In that calendar, the last day of classes was Friday, June 25, 2021, based on the draft Alberta Education Diploma Exam schedule. Since that time, Alberta Education has finalized the Diploma Exam schedule and extended the schedule such that the final exam is now on June 28, 2021.

#### **NEXT STEPS**

Upon approval of the 2020-2021 School Year Calendar, Communications will post the approved calendar on the Division website.

#### **ATTACHMENTS and APPENDICES**

ATTACHMENT I Draft 2020-2021 Division Calendar

ATTACHMENT II Draft 2020-2021 Division Calendar

BM:vdh

# 2020–21 Division Calendar

Attachment I

epsb.ca

## AUGUST • 2020

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
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## SEPTEMBER • 2020

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## OCTOBER • 2020

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## JANUARY • 2021

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## APPROVED HOLIDAYS

Labour Day	September 7
Thanksgiving	October 12
Remembrance Day	November 11
Winter Break	December 21– January 1
Christmas Day	December 25
Boxing Day	December 26
New Year's Day	January 1
Family Day	February 15
Teachers' Convention	February 25–26
Spring Break	March 29–April 1
Good Friday	April 2
Easter Monday	April 5
Victoria Day	May 24
First Operational Day (No Students)	September 1
First Day of Classes	September 3
Last Day of Classes	June 28
Last Operational Day	June 29

## LEGEND

	PUBLIC HOLIDAY
	PD DAY (NO STUDENTS)
	FIRST/LAST DAY OF CLASSES
	OPERATIONAL DAY (NO STUDENTS)
	TEACHERS' CONVENTION
	TEACHERS' DAY IN LIEU (NO TEACHERS OR STUDENTS)
	BOARD APPROVED NON-INSTRUCTIONAL DAY (NO TEACHERS OR STUDENTS)
	WINTER/SPRING BREAK

# 2020–21 Division Calendar

Attachment II

epsb.ca

## AUGUST • 2020

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## OCTOBER • 2020

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## NOVEMBER • 2020

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	BOARD APPROVED NON-INSTRUCTIONAL DAY (NO TEACHERS OR STUDENTS)
	WINTER/SPRING BREAK