

DATE: May 28, 2024

TO: Board of Trustees

FROM: Trustee Marcia Hole, Policy Review Committee
Trustee Jan Sawyer, Policy Review Committee
Trustee Saadiq Sumar, Chair, Policy Review Committee

SUBJECT: Second, third and final reading of Board Policy GCA.BP Approval of the School Year Calendar

ORIGINATOR: Karen Mills, Director, Board and Superintendent Relations

RESOURCE STAFF: Angela Anderson, Naimo Bille, Grace Garcia Cooke, Kelsey Duebel, Trish Kolotyluk, Bob Morter, Nancy Petersen, Wanas Radwan, Elizabeth Shen

REFERENCE: [Trustees Handbook](#) Section 5.4 – Caucus Committee
[Board Policy CH.BP – Framework for Policy Development and Review](#)

ISSUE

The Policy Review Committee (PRC) is presenting Board Policy GCA.BP Approval of the School Year Calendar to the Board of Trustees (the Board) for second, third and final reading at public Board.

BACKGROUND

Board Policy GCA.BP Approval of the School Year Calendar provides direction on the development and approval of the Division calendar in accordance with collective agreement requirements, and applicable federal and provincial statutes and regulations. A review of Board Policy GCA.BP Approval of the School Year Calendar is an item on PRC's 2023-24 work plan and includes direction to administration on the inclusion of diverse days of significance.

RELATED FACTS

- At the February 6, 2024, public Board meeting, the Board completed the first reading of Board Policy GCA.BP Approval of the School Year Calendar and approved the draft policy for stakeholder feedback.
- An online public survey was open from February 12, 2024, to March 11, 2024, to collect feedback from stakeholders on the first draft of the policy. The survey was supported by a video informing the public about the various requirements and considerations framing the development of the school year calendar. To support accessibility, the video captions were translated into several languages.
 - A total of 972 respondents completed the survey. The majority of survey respondents were parents/guardians (approximately 56 per cent), while the rest were EPSB students (approximately 8 per cent), staff members (approximately 36 per cent) and community members (less than 1 per cent).
- A summary of the survey results, both quantitative and qualitative, was provided to the PRC for review on April 11, 2024, and to the Board on May 14, 2024.
 - A series of closed-ended questions and open-ended questions were asked in the survey. All open-ended questions were optional to answer and some of these questions only became

- available if respondents answered “no” to the related close-ended question.
- o As part of this survey, respondents were asked to choose whether they preferred to see a:
 - Board approved calendar two years in advance, knowing that occasionally there may be required changes (approximately 61 per cent of respondents chose this option), or a
 - Finalized calendar with less advance notice, knowing there is less likelihood of any required changes (approximately 39 per cent of respondents chose this option).
 - o In addition to choosing a preference, respondents were invited to answer the following open-ended question: “Is there anything else you would like to share regarding the two year advanced notice currently set out in the policy?”
 - As a result of the feedback shared from the survey, the following changes have been made to the policy:
 - o Extend the objective statement to explicitly state that the Board is committed to developing a school year calendar that prioritizes high-quality learning.
 - o Strengthen the clarity of the definitions for “Lunar calendar” and “Lunisolar calendar” by including examples of each term.
 - o Clearly indicate whether students are in school for each relevant definition.
 - o Revise the definition of “Teachers’ Days-in-Lieu” to clarify the rationale for providing these days.
 - o Remove direction relevant to the first day of classes that is already outlined in the collective agreement for teachers.
 - o Specify that by no later than December 15 the Board will approve a school year calendar for the following school year and add an example of a circumstance that would require an approved school year calendar to change.
 - Some responses received from the public survey shared questions that are best addressed outside of this policy (for example, how the first day of classes for students is determined). Where appropriate, these responses will be addressed in the administrative regulation, a supporting FAQ document that will come out with policy or the [calendar video](#).
 - The feedback from the survey also reinforced the importance of grouping days off for students, rather than scheduling individual days off mid-week. When able, the Division takes all efforts to prioritize grouping days off together while balancing all other requirements that frame the development of the school year calendar.

RECOMMENDATION

1. **That Board Policy GCA.BP Approval of the School Year Calendar be read for a second, third and final time and be approved.**

OPTIONS

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

1. Support the recommendation to approve Board Policy GCA.BP Approval of the School Year Calendar.
2. Complete the second reading of the policy and direct the PRC to adopt revisions to the policy prior to a third and final reading.

CONSIDERATIONS and ANALYSIS

The proposed policy revisions are intended to provide clarity for all readers of the policy and to provide the Division with the opportunity to include diverse days of significance as breaks in the school year calendar. The revisions have been informed by subject matter experts in the Division, feedback from community members around days of significance and by stakeholder feedback collected through the 2021-22 Division Feedback Survey.

The PRC's 2023-24 work plan includes a review of Board Policy GCA.BP Approval of the School Year Calendar. Approval to move forward with the draft of this policy will align with this timeline.

NEXT STEPS

Upon approval of the recommendation, the updated policy will be posted to the Division website and the Superintendent of Schools will oversee necessary steps to support the implementation of the updated policy.

ATTACHMENTS and APPENDICES

ATTACHMENT I Draft Board Policy GCA.BP Approval of the School Year Calendar

SS:wr

CODE: GCA.BP

EFFECTIVE DATE: (05-06-2014)

TOPIC: Approval of the School Year Calendar

ISSUE DATE: (dd-mm-yyyy)

REVIEW YEAR: (yyyy)

PURPOSE

To support the Board of Trustees' (Board) commitment to developing a school year calendar that respects diversity, commits to anti-racism, supports a sense of belonging for all students and prioritizes high-quality teaching and learning.

To outline the Board's direction for the development of the school year calendar in accordance with collective agreement requirements, and applicable federal and provincial statutes and regulations, as may be amended from time to time.

DEFINITIONS

Board Approved Non-instructional Day refers to a day in the school year when teachers and students are not in schools.

Day of Significance is a day of spiritual, religious or cultural significance.

Lunar Calendar refers to a dating system that uses the cycle of the moon to measure the passage of time throughout the year. For example, this calendar is used to determine the dates for the holy month of Ramadan.

Lunisolar Calendar refers to a dating system that uses the position of the sun and the phases of the moon to measure the passage of time throughout the year. For example, this calendar is used to determine the date for the Chinese New Year.

Multi-faith Calendar is the Division-created calendar intended to support the recognition of faith-based days of significance. This calendar is shared by the Division annually as a planning and information tool.

Operational Day refers to a day when teachers have duties assigned by the Board. Operational days include instructional days (when students receive instruction) and non-instructional days (when students are not receiving instruction). The school year typically begins with an operational day and ends with an operational day.

Professional Development Days (also known as **Professional Learning Days**), for the purpose of this policy and the establishment of the school year calendar, are non-instructional days where Division staff collaborate, learn new skills and strategies and connect with specialists and community partners about ways to improve their practice and enhance their knowledge, in support of student learning. Students are not in school on these days.

School Year Calendar is the Board-approved calendar that is used by the majority of Division schools.

Teachers' Days-in-Lieu are Board approved non-instructional days provided in recognition of time involved for parent-teacher interviews. Teachers and students are not in school on these days.

POLICY

The Board believes it is important that the school year calendar supports a high quality education system, enhances pathways to student success and supports an inclusive and welcoming environment. When staff, students and families can see themselves reflected in the school year calendar, their sense of belonging, inclusion, well-being, and ultimately their growth, is supported. These values are supported through the scheduling of operational days, professional development days, Board-approved non-instructional days and teachers' days-in-lieu.

The Board recognizes that respect for diverse days of significance enriches the learning and working environments and is important to the sense of belonging, inclusion and well-being of staff and students. As such, the Board prioritizes alignment with diverse days of significance to be the Division's primary consideration in the scheduling of the school year calendar's breaks for students, before the consideration of additional preferences for the placement of breaks (such as, but not limited to, the grouping of days to create long breaks or the avoidance of mid-week breaks). The Board expects that all decisions related to the scheduling of the school year calendar are made in accordance with collective agreement requirements, and applicable federal and provincial statutes and regulations.

The Board expects that the Division will use available data and feedback from students and families to inform the selection of days of significance to be included in the school year calendar each year, with the recognition that:

- A. Some days of significance follow the Lunar calendar or Lunisolar calendar and do not occur on the same date every year (i.e., occur on floating dates); therefore, the ability of the Division to include days of significance in the school year calendar may vary each year.
- B. There will be times when breaks cannot be scheduled on days of significance because of collective agreement requirements, and applicable federal and provincial statutes and regulations that must be adhered to by the Division.

Requirements that must be adhered to by the Division include, but are not limited to, the following:

- A. The *Education Act*, which directs the legal requirements that must be adhered to by all schools in Alberta.
- B. The *Guide to Education*, which communicates requirements for instructional hours, as mandated by the Minister of Education.
- C. *General Information Bulletins*, which communicate requirements for, and the scheduling of, diploma examinations, provincial achievement tests and provincial student learning assessments.
- D. The *Funding Manual*, which determines the expectations and timelines guiding school funding.

- E. The *Employment Standards Code of Alberta*, which outlines the general holidays that must be provided to employees.
- F. *Collective Agreements* for teachers, support staff, custodial staff and maintenance staff, which direct the terms and conditions of employment.
- G. *Terms and Conditions of Employment*, which communicate conditions of employment for exempt staff.

The Division will continue to use a range of methods to support the recognition of diverse days of significance for staff and students, including, but not limited to, the use of the Multi-faith Calendar to guide the setting of classroom assessment dates or assignments and the identification and planning of educational opportunities, events and activities across the Division.

EXPECTATIONS

The Board recognizes that the school year calendar impacts students, families and staff and believes that a consistent calendar allows the majority of the Division's students to start and end the school year and to be dismissed for breaks on the same dates. It is the Board's expectation that administration bring the school year calendar forward for approval in a timely manner, recognizing the value of sharing an approved calendar as soon as possible.

Each year, by no later than December 15, the Board will approve a school year calendar for the following school year. The approved calendar will be shared with parents, students, staff and community.

The calendar would only be revised if requirements set outside of the Division's control change (for example, changes to Alberta Provincial Achievement Test and Diploma examination dates).

Should circumstances arise at a school where the approved calendar does not meet the school's needs, the Superintendent of Schools is given the authority to modify the school calendar for that school on an annual basis.

ACCOUNTABILITY

The Superintendent will be responsible for implementing this policy through appropriate administrative regulations and communication with Division stakeholders, including staff, students and parents/guardians.

REFERENCES

Alberta Education *General Information Bulletin* - Alberta Provincial Student Learning Assessment
Alberta Education *General Information Bulletin* - Alberta Provincial Achievement Testing
Alberta Education *General Information Bulletin* - Diploma Examinations Program
Alberta Education - Funding Manual for School Authorities
Alberta Education - Guide to Education
Custodial Collective Agreement

Edmonton Public School Board - Multi-Faith Calendar

Education Act - Sections 7(4)(b), 33(1)(d), 60.

Employment Standards Code of Alberta

FBD.BP Designated Holidays

FCBD.AR Time in Recognition of Duties Related to Reporting Student Achievement

FLC.AR School Professional Development Days

GCA.AR The School Year Calendar

GCAA.AR Dismissal Times Before Vacation Periods

GCAB.AR Remembrance Day

GD.BP Instructional Time

GE.BP Organization for Instruction

GEA.AR Semester Changeover - Senior High Schools

HAA.BP First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Education

HAAB.BP Anti-racism and Equity

Maintenance Collective Agreement

Support Staff Collective Agreement

Teachers' Collective Agreement

Terms and Conditions of Employment - Exempt Non-Management

Terms and Conditions of Employment - Exempt Management