

DATE: December 10, 2024

TO: Board of Trustees

FROM: Darrel Robertson, Superintendent of Schools

SUBJECT: 2025–2026 School Year Calendar

ORIGINATOR: Cliff Richard, Chief Infrastructure and Technology Officer

RESOURCE STAFF: Vicki de Haan, Terry Korte, Clair Sprake

REFERENCE [Education Act](#)
[GCA.BP](#) – Approval of the School Year Calendar
[GCA.AR](#) – The School Year Calendar

ISSUE

Section 60 of the *Education Act* states that “A board shall determine and make publicly available for each school year the days, dates and number of days of school operation.” Additionally, *GCA.BP Approval of the School Year Calendar* states, “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.”

BACKGROUND

The school year calendar is designed with a number of requirements and considerations including provincial and federal employment legislation, Alberta Education requirements, our Division’s board policies and administrative regulations, and collective agreements with staff groups. These requirements need to be incorporated when designing a school year calendar that best supports the educational programming of the Division.

Provincial and federal legislation lists a variety of holidays that must be included in the calendar. They are also required to be provided to some staff groups through collective agreements. These required holidays include New Year’s Day, Alberta Family Day, Good Friday, Easter Monday, Victoria Day, Canada Day, August Civic Holiday, Labour Day, the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, Thanksgiving Day, Remembrance Day, Christmas Day and Boxing Day.

Furthermore, provincial legislation identifies teachers’ convention and assigns the responsibility for these days to the Alberta Teachers’ Association. Alberta Education articulates the number of hours of instruction that students receive in a year and sets the diploma exam and provincial achievement testing schedules. The Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate testing schedules are set by their respective organizations.

Division Administrative Regulation *GCA.AR The School Year Calendar* requires a two-week winter recess inclusive of December 24 and January 2. Under the direction of the administrative regulation, the spring recess is to be five consecutive days beginning on the last Monday of March.

The Division has been approached by members of the community advocating for the inclusion of a number of specific holy days or days of significance as non-instructional days in the Division's calendar. The Board of Trustees is committed to exploring the incorporation of these days where feasible, with the goal of creating a more inclusive school year calendar.

Feedback from the 2022 Division Feedback Survey indicated strong support for a calendar that would allow students and families to participate in religious and cultural days that are special to them. It should be noted that a majority of respondents did not support a calendar with days off in the middle of the week. This suggests that caution should be employed when setting midweek non-instructional days. The concept of clustering versus distributing breaks was also confirmed in the 2022 Division Feedback Survey with over 75 per cent of respondents who had a preference indicating support for school breaks that happen less often but with more days grouped together.

In January 2024, the Alberta Teachers' Association and the Board of Trustees ratified a new collective agreement that includes provisions that impact the school year calendar, including committing to a four weekday fall break, and where possible, extending to a five weekday fall break. Two drafts of the calendar have been created with either a four or five weekday fall break with varying start dates, for the Board's consideration.

RELATED FACTS

Key points related to the draft 2025–26 School Year Calendars include:

- The calendar is built around 178 instructional days.
- The start date for students is:
 - Draft A: Thursday, August 28, 2025; this allows for a fall break consisting of five weekdays. The Board has the discretion to start classes before September 1 to allow for the five weekday fall break.
 - Draft B: Tuesday, September 2, 2025; this aligns with the preference for school to start in the first week of September, as indicated in the 2022 Division Feedback Survey and the Collective Agreement.
- The end date for students is Tuesday, June 23, 2026, aligning with the draft Alberta Education Diploma Exam schedule.
- Instructional days are balanced for first and second semesters.
- A breakdown of instructional days is as follows:
 - Draft A: 33 Mondays, 37 Tuesdays, 36 Wednesdays, 37 Thursdays, 35 Fridays
 - Draft B: 34 Mondays, 37 Tuesdays, 36 Wednesdays, 36 Thursdays, 35 Fridays
- A fall break that consists of:
 - Draft A: five weekdays that consist of: Remembrance Day, one day-in-lieu for parent-teacher interviews, and three Board declared non-instructional days
 - Draft B: four weekdays that consist of: Remembrance Day, one day-in-lieu for parent-teacher interviews, and two Board declared non-instructional days
- A May break of three days consists of: one Professional Development day, one day-in-lieu for parent-teacher interviews, and one Board declared non-instructional day.
- Professional Development days are as follows:
 - Draft A: seven Professional Development days
 - Draft B: six Professional Development days

- It should also be noted that the Professional Development day on October 20, 2025 is the municipal election and Diwali and Bandi Chhor Divas.
- As of December 4, 2024, Alberta Education has not yet finalized diploma examinations for the 2025–26 school year. Tentative dates supplied by the Province have been used in the development of this report; Administration will table an amendment for the Board’s consideration in the event these dates change.

A summary of the key differences between the draft calendars is provided in the table below.

	Draft A	Draft B
Student start date	Thursday, August 28, 2025	Tuesday, September 2, 2025
Fall break	5 weekdays	4 weekdays
Professional Development (PD) Days	7	6
Breakdown of Instructional Days	33 Mondays 37 Tuesdays 36 Wednesdays 37 Thursdays 35 Fridays	34 Mondays 37 Tuesdays 36 Wednesdays 36 Thursdays 35 Fridays
Considerations	Allows for a five weekday fall break by starting before September 1	Aligns with preference for school to start in the first week of September

RECOMMENDATION

That Draft A of the proposed 2025–26 School Year Calendar be approved.

OPTIONS

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

1. That Draft A of the proposed 2025–26 School Year Calendar be approved.
2. That Draft B of the proposed 2025–26 School Year Calendar be approved.
3. That Draft A or B of the proposed 2025–26 School Year Calendar be approved, with modifications.

CONSIDERATIONS and ANALYSIS

The attached draft calendars were developed in alignment with the various requirements outlined in the background section of this report and the Letter of Understanding #9 in the Collective Agreement with the Alberta Teachers’ Association.

Both proposed calendars maintain the 178 instructional days present in prior school year calendars. Both calendars have semesters that are balanced at 89 days per semester with a Professional Development day in the middle on Wednesday, January 28, 2026. In Draft A, students start before September 1 and there are seven Professional Development days in order to meet the terms and conditions of the Letter of Understanding #9 and to allow for the five weekday fall break. In Draft B, there is a four weekday fall break and six Professional Development days. This meets the terms and conditions of the Letter of Understanding #9 and allows students to start school on September 2, 2026. This aligns with a

preference for school to start in the first week of September as indicated in the 2022 Division Feedback Survey.

Revisions were made to GCA.BP *Approval of the School Year Calendar* in May 2024 to articulate that the Board prioritizes alignment with diverse days of significance as 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. It also reinforced the importance of grouping days off for students, rather than scheduling individual days off mid-week.

Professional Development days have been planned with consideration of days of significance and operational requirements. In both calendars, four of the Professional Development days fall on days of significance: Diwali, Bandi Chhor Divas, Lunar New Year, Eid al-Fitr and Eid al-Adha are grouped together with weekends, holidays, or other non-instructional days.

Consideration was given to the placement of the teachers' day in lieu and the board-approved non-instructional day in May, immediately following Victoria Day. Recognizing that Eid al-Adha occurs mid-week on Wednesday, May 27, it is recommended these days are scheduled on May 28 and 29 to maintain continuity in instruction. This also aligns with the majority of responses from the 2022 Division Feedback Survey that did not support a calendar with days off in the middle of the week.

NEXT STEPS

Following the approval of the School Year Calendar, it will be published on the Division website.

ATTACHMENTS and APPENDICES

ATTACHMENT I [Draft A 2025–26 School Year Calendar](#)

ATTACHMENT II [Draft B 2025–26 School Year Calendar](#)

VdH:al

2025–26 School Year Calendar

DRAFT – A
December 4, 2024



AUGUST • 2025

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

SEPTEMBER • 2025

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
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28	29	30				

OCTOBER • 2025

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
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12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
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NOVEMBER • 2025

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
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23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30						

DECEMBER • 2025

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
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14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

JANUARY • 2026

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
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4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

FEBRUARY • 2026

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
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15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28

MARCH • 2026

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15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

APRIL • 2026

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19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		

MAY • 2026

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24	25	26	27	28	29	30
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JUNE • 2026

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21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30				

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

Important dates

First Operational Day (no students)	August 27
First Day of Classes	August 28
Winter Break	Dec. 22–Jan. 2
Teachers' Convention	February 26–27
Spring Break	Mar. 30–Apr. 2
Last Day of Classes	June 23
Last Operational Day	June 24

Approved holidays

Labour Day	September 1
The National Day for Truth and Reconciliation	September 30
Thanksgiving	October 13
Remembrance Day	November 11
Christmas Day	December 25
Boxing Day	December 26
New Year's Day	January 1
Family Day	February 16
Good Friday	April 3
Easter Monday	April 6
Victoria Day	May 18

Dates of significance (no students)

Diwali and Bandi Chhor Divas	October 20
Lunar New Year	February 17
Eid al-Fitr	March 20
Eid al-Adha	May 27

Pink highlight indicates diploma exam days for reference only and will not be on final published calendar.

2025–26 School Year Calendar

DRAFT - B
December 4, 2024



AUGUST • 2025

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
					1	2
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10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

SEPTEMBER • 2025

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
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21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30				

OCTOBER • 2025

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
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12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
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NOVEMBER • 2025

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
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9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
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DECEMBER • 2025

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
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7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

JANUARY • 2026

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
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4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

FEBRUARY • 2026

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
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15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28

MARCH • 2026

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
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15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

APRIL • 2026

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19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		

MAY • 2026

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
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10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
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JUNE • 2026

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
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28	29	30				

LEGEND

- Public Holiday
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- Board Approved Non-instructional Day (no teachers or students)
- Winter/Spring Break

Important dates

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First Day of Classes	September 2
Winter Break	Dec. 22–Jan. 2
Teachers' Convention	February 26–27
Spring Break	Mar. 30–Apr. 2
Last Day of Classes	June 23
Last Operational Day	June 24

Approved holidays

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The National Day for Truth and Reconciliation	September 30
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Remembrance Day	November 11
Christmas Day	December 25
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