

DATE: September 27, 2011

TO: Board of Trustees

FROM: Edgar Schmidt, Superintendent of Schools

SUBJECT: Cost Benefits of Adopting New School Calendar (Information – Response to TT #105)

ORIGINATOR: David Fraser, Executive Director, Corporate Services

RESOURCE STAFF: Diana Bolan, Darrel Robertson

REFERENCE: June 14, 2011 Board Meeting (Trustee Shipka)

ISSUE

The following information was requested: Provide an estimated cost benefit projection of adopting a school calendar similar to that of Foothills, Wildrose and Elk Island school districts whereby by slight extensions to the school day and the elimination of early dismissal Thursdays would afford additional professional development days for instructors and educational assistants (E.A.'s).

BACKGROUND

There has been growing interest and discussion across the province regarding changing school calendars to increase time available for teacher professional development and collaboration. Alberta Education, the Alberta School Boards Association and the Alberta Teachers' Association have all indicated that providing additional time for professional development and collaboration could assist in achieving the goals of *Inspiring Education*. This idea was central to the recent tripartite discussions which took place in the winter of 2011.

CURRENT SITUATION

Foothills, Wildrose and Elk Island Public School Divisions all provide for fewer instructional days than Edmonton Public Schools, while still meeting the provincial requirement for instructional time for students throughout the year (i.e., 950 hours for elementary and junior high students and up to 1000 hours for high school students). The following table outlines the differences between the four school divisions:

Type of Days	Elk Island	Wildrose	Foothills	Edmonton Public
Instructional	182	181	180	191
Professional Development Days	6	10	15	3
Teachers' Convention	2	2	2	2
*Other	4	3	2	2
Total	194	196	199	198

*Other includes teacher days in lieu for reporting progress, operational days, etc.

KEY POINTS

- The three school divisions cited (Elk Island Public, Wildrose, Foothills) do not have any requirements regarding instructional time for teachers in their collective agreements. Edmonton Public Schools has a weekly requirement of a maximum of 1430 minutes of instruction per full-time teacher.
- Some of the benefits of moving to a school calendar whereby the number of instructional days is decreased and the number of days for teacher professional development and collaboration is increased include:
 - Increased opportunities to focus professional development and collaboration on key aspects of the District Plan and school plans (e.g., literacy and numeracy; student transitions; student citizenship, health and creativity; diversity and inclusion)
 - Increased opportunities for professional development and collaboration for support, custodial and exempt staff in schools
 - Increased opportunities to schedule heavy duty cleaning and maintenance projects in schools
 - Reduced transportation costs
 - Reduced supply services costs
- Some of the concerns of moving to the school calendar model include:
 - Supply staff lose opportunities for work as there is a reduction in the number of instructional days
 - Public and community optics regarding the reduction in the number of instructional days
 - Increased costs to parents to accommodate the increase in the number of days students are absent from schools
 - Increased cost to hire additional teachers to meet the collective agreement requirement of a maximum of 1430 minutes of instruction per full-time teacher. It is estimated that the increased cost to the District of hiring additional teachers would be up to \$22 million. This cost is based on the District:
 - moving from 191 to 182 instructional days (reduction of 9 days), similar to Elk Island Public Schools
 - meeting the provincial requirements for student instructional hours and the collective agreement requirements for teacher instructional time
 - hiring an additional 221.13 FTE teachers (165.34 FTE for elementary and junior high schools and 55.79 FTE for high schools)

DMF:pn