

**DATE:** December 16, 2014

**TO:** Board of Trustees

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

**ORIGINATOR:** Mary Michailides, Assistant Superintendent, Support for Schools

**SUBJECT:** Year-Round Schooling for At-Risk Students (Response to Request for Information #057)

**RESOURCE STAFF:** Jennifer Allen, Jan Favel, Jan Krysko, Nancy Petersen

**REFERENCE:** October 21, 2014 Board Meeting (Trustee Martin)

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**ISSUE**

The following information was requested: provide information on the advantages and disadvantages of year-round schooling, especially for at-risk students.

**BACKGROUND**

The compilation of data comparing Eastwood/Parkdale students with the City Centre Education Project (CCEP) schools became the subject of a trustee initiative in 2007. In 1999, following a three-year pilot of seven Calgary schools operating on a year-round calendar, the Calgary Board of Education (CBE) compiled a report on their findings.

**CURRENT SITUATION**

In Edmonton Public Schools, Vimy Ridge and Donnan are currently the only year-round schools. These school calendars are driven by the nature of their alternative programs. Eastwood and Parkdale were previously year-round schools.

Evidence (Attachment I) collected from Donnan, Eastwood and Parkdale schools demonstrated there is no definitive answer to advantages and disadvantages to a modified calendar.

A 2011 review of the impact of year-round schooling in CCEP schools showed that the perceived benefits in achievement and attendance due to a modified calendar are not borne out by the data. In all cases, schools with modified calendars scored below the CCEP schools without a modified calendar on district Highest Level Achievement Tests (HLATs) and Provincial Achievement Tests (PATs). In addition, attendance of students on the modified calendar was lower than those in schools without a modified calendar.

According to a survey of achievement results on the posted Annual Education Results Review, data for Elk Island Public School District showed a slight drop in achievement since the institution of a modified calendar. When Elk Island Public School District implemented this modified calendar, after the fall break there was no definitive difference in staff attendance or absenteeism.

Not captured in the research but expressed and noted by leaders in central services and in the schools, was the fact that the systemic disconnect between the District Calendar and the

modified calendar posed challenges to service delivery and coordination of meetings and communication.

An advantage of a modified calendar as described by Haser and Nasser (2003) was that year-round schooling can promote teacher motivation and retention. Edmonton Public School teachers involved with year-round schooling reported positive response to the calendar change.

A more in-depth study was conducted in 1999 by CBE after approving a motion to pilot year-round programs for a three-year duration. Modified calendars were instituted in seven CBE schools. Schools chose to institute either a modified multi-track or single track calendar. The rationale was to investigate impact on academic results, teacher and student absenteeism, behavioural referrals and cost savings through better utilization of buildings.

The evaluation of the pilot after three years provided information that, while not highly indicative of a positive effect, was sufficiently positive to encourage continuation of the modified calendars in CBE. See CBE evaluation document attached (Attachment II).

Regarding the issue of the advantages and disadvantages of year-round schooling for at-risk students, research is limited and the definition of at-risk varies across North America. Clarification on the District's definition of at-risk would be required and analyzed before proceeding with a calendar change to ensure it will meet district purpose and need.

**KEY POINTS**

- CCEP schools on a modified calendar had lower achievement results and attendance than CCEP schools on a regular calendar.
- Four main areas of impact to consider with any change to school calendars are parents, student achievement and attendance, school staff and operations.
- Research is divided as to the advantages and disadvantages of year-round schooling.
- Research for year-round schooling and its effect on at-risk students, whether positive or negative, is limited. The definition of at-risk varies across North America.

**ATTACHMENTS & APPENDICES**

ATTACHMENT I     Summary of Advantages and Disadvantages of Shortening the Summer Break and Adding a Fall Break, 2011-2012

APPENDIX I         Calgary Board of Education Report to the Education Committee  
January 19, 1999

JA:jk

## **Summary of the Advantages and Disadvantages of Shortening the Summer Break and Adding a Fall Break 2011-2012**

Below is evidence collected from district year-round schools. Currently Vimy Ridge and Donnan are the only year round schools in our District. Eastwood and Parkdale were previously year-round schools.

Four main areas of impact of any change to school calendars are parents, students (achievement and attendance), school staff, and school operation. Advantages and disadvantages are provided below.

### Parents

An obvious initial disadvantage would be childcare arrangements. A second disadvantage would be some parents needing to make concessions in holiday planning to be home for school start up prior to the traditional September start date. It could be argued that this disadvantage would diminish after the initial year of implementation and parents and caregivers would adjust as needed. This was noted in anecdotal comments from residents of Elk Island Public Schools (EIPS) who adopted an early start and fall break week calendar in the 2008 school year. Prior to that, they had two years of partial fall break that included November 11 and an equivalent number of days before September to balance the days off in November.

During the 2005-2006 and 2006-2007 school years, a number of Edmonton Public Schools stakeholders were consulted related to the transformation of outdated board regulation (HCA.BR) into board policy (HCA.BP) and an administrative regulation (HCA.AR). Parents at the Key Communicators meeting in March of 2006 insisted that students should not start school until September. Indeed most wanted to start after Labour Day, but this would be impossible in years when Labour Day falls on the fifth, sixth or seventh day of September with current district collective agreements that prevent increasing the length of the school day to compensate for fewer instructional days. (e.g., current Alberta Teachers' Association collective agreement sets a maximum of 1,430 minutes of instructional duties per week).

A stated advantage by EIPS parents as well as others who support modified calendar is the ability for parents to have a fall vacation with their children at a time when it is not a peak period for tourism.

### Student Achievement and Attendance

In this area the research seems divided as to benefit. Again, this is related to what is considered year-round schooling and the longer summer break in American schools. Cooper (1996), in his major review of research on summer vacation and achievement found limited if any benefit on student achievement from a shortened summer vacation.

Stated advantages to the shortened summer and fall break are a shorter time away from studies and the opportunity for students to have a break from the rigour of fall start-up of the school year. Again, in anecdotal comments from Elk Island as well as a survey of achievement results on the posted Annual Education Results Review data for EIPS shows no significant improvement in achievement and indeed a slight drop since the institution of the modified calendar.

A compilation of data undertaken by Student Information and Student Assessment for a Trustee initiative in 2007, showed the following results for achievement and attendance in modified calendar schools compared to unmodified calendar schools.

**Eastwood/Parkdale compared with City Centre Education Project (CCEP) schools following the unmodified calendar:**

- The perceived benefits in achievement and attendance due to the modified calendar are not borne out by the data. Table 1 reports the HLAT and PAT results for the 2006-2007 school year for Parkdale/Eastwood compared with the CCEP schools that follow the non-modified calendar (Abbott, Delton, John A. McDougall, McCauley, Norwood, and Spruce Avenue). In all cases, the schools with the modified calendar score significantly below the CCEP schools that follow the non-modified calendar.
- Homeroom attendance for elementary students at Eastwood/Parkdale for the 2006- 2007 school year was 90.2 per cent compared with 92.7 per cent at CCEP schools that follow an unmodified calendar.

**Table 1 - Aggregated HLAT, PAT and Attendance data for the 2006-2007 School Year Eastwood and Parkdale Schools Compared with CCEP schools.**

<b>Test Instrument</b>	<b>Parkdale/ Eastwood</b>	<b>Non-Modified CCEP</b>
HLAT Reading at or above grade level	59.0%	64.4%
HLAT Writing at or above grade level	61.1%	73.4%
PAT Language Arts meeting standard Grade 3	63.3%	67.5%
PAT Language Arts meeting standard Grade 6	42.6%	62.0%
PAT Language Arts meeting standard Grade 9	27.8%	47.5%
PAT Mathematics meeting standard Grade 3	56.7%	67.3%
PAT Mathematics meeting standard Grade 6	27.8%	51.7%
PAT Mathematics meeting standard Grade 9	31.4%	38.1%
PAT Science meeting standard Grade 6	35.8%	53.7%
PAT Science meeting standard Grade 9	31.4%	37.1%
PAT Social Studies meeting standard Grade 6	37.7%	61.2%
PAT Social Studies meeting standard Grade 9	34.3%	37.1%
Elementary Home Room Attendance	90.2%	92.7%

**Donnan compared with schools in the same geographical area that follow the unmodified calendar:**

- The perceived benefits in achievement and attendance due to the modified calendar are not borne out by the data. Table 2 reports the HLAT and PAT results for the 2006-2007 school year for Donnan compared with the schools located in the same geographical area that follow the non-modified calendar (Clara Tyner, Hazeldean, Hardisty, Holyrood, Kenilworth, Mill Creek, and Rutherford). In nine of 12 cases, Donnan School scored significantly below the other area schools that follow the non-modified calendar.
- Homeroom attendance for elementary students at Donnan for the 2006-2007 school year was 93.3 per cent, compared with 94.5 per cent at the other area schools that follow an unmodified calendar.

**Table 2 - Aggregated HLAT, PAT and Attendance Data for the 2006-2007 School Year  
Donnan School Compared with Schools in the same Geographical area**

<b>Test Instrument</b>	<b>Donnan</b>	<b>Non-Modified Schools in Area</b>
HLAT Reading at or above grade level	84.4%	91.2%
HLAT Writing at or above grade level	92.8%	92.6%
PAT Language Arts meeting standard Grade 3	72.7%	92.9%
PAT Language Arts meeting standard Grade 6	77.1%	93.3%
PAT Language Arts meeting standard Grade 9	90.9%	84.3%
PAT Mathematics meeting standard Grade 3	79.5%	89.1%
PAT Mathematics meeting standard Grade 6	80.0%	88.0%
PAT Mathematics meeting standard Grade 9	68.2%	75.4%
PAT Science meeting standard Grade 6	82.9%	87.2%
PAT Science meeting standard Grade 9	63.6%	77.1%
PAT Social Studies meeting standard Grade 6	84.3%	94.0%
PAT Social Studies meeting standard Grade 9	86.4%	75.8%
Elementary Home Room Attendance	93.3%	94.5%

#### School Staff and School Operations

The advantages and disadvantages for school staff and school operations begin with the fall break. Teachers at EIPS in anecdotal conversation have provided strong positive response to the break. Edmonton Public Schools teachers involved with year-round schooling and modified calendar have reported similar positive response to the fall break. However, it should be noted EIPS found that after the institution of a fall break there was no significant difference in staff attendance or absenteeism. Haser and Nasser (2003) noted that year-round schooling can promote teacher motivation and retention.

#### Conclusion

It is difficult to provide a clear picture beyond the obvious positives and negatives of beginning school in August and having a fall break. As noted by Shields and Oberg (2003) any district wanting to implement a calendar change must “carefully consider whether the selected calendar meets the needs of the local area”. With this in mind it is critical that District parent, staff and student input must be gathered and carefully analyzed before proceeding with calendar change to ensure it will meet district purpose and need.

CALGARY BOARD OF EDUCATION

REPORT TO THE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

January 19, 1999

**RE. YEAR-ROUND EDUCATION: EVALUATION OF 3 YEAR PILOT PROJECTS:**

Dr. Oakley School (single track)  
Falconridge Elementary School (single track) Grant MacEwan Elementary School  
(single track) McKenzie Lake Elementary School (2 tracks) O.S. Geiger Elementary  
School (single track) Riverbend Elementary School (4 tracks) William Roper Hull  
School (single track)

**I. BACKGROUND**

In December 1991 the Calgary Board of Education approved a motion to pilot yearround programs for a 3 year duration. Schools that chose to implement a modified or multi-track school year calendar in 1993 and 1994 included Dr. Gordon Townsend, Rosscarrock, Terry Fox (5 tracks) and Louise Dean. Each of these schools have continued with their modified calendars.

The Calgary Board of Education currently has 17 schools operating with modified school calendars as indicated in Attachment 4.

Parents and staff members at Dr. Oakly, Falconridge, Grant MacEwan, McKenzie Lake, O. S. Geiger, Riverbend and William Roper Hull considered possible adoption of year-round or modified school year calendars during the 1995-1996 school year. Dr. Oakley, Falconridge, Grant MacEwan, O. S. Geiger and William Roper Hull communities voted to approve single track, modified school year calendars which were implemented in August, 1996. McKenzie Lake parents voted for the school to open with two tracks, traditional and modified, while parents of children eligible to attend Riverbend Elementary School approved a multi-track (4 tracks) school year calendar which was implemented at the school on July 21, 1996. Riverbend Elementary became the first elementary school in Canada to operate with a multitrack calendar. Current calendars are included in Attachment 1.

The seven schools have operated with modified school calendars for 1996-1997, 1997-1998, and the 1998-1999 school years. A decision to continue or not continue with the modified calendars was required.

## II. ABSTRACT

### A. Community And Staff Surveys:

The following reflects initial parent votes during the 1995-1996 school year:

School	Parents In Favor	Parents Opposed
Dr. Oakley	76%	24%
Falconridge	68%	32%
Grant MacEwan	77%	23%
McKenzie Lake - 2 tracks - 43.1%, traditional - 39.5%, multi-track - 17.4%		
O. S. Geiger	61%	39%
Riverbend	75%	25%
William Roper Hull	100%	-

In accordance with Board direction, parents who did not wish their children to attend a school operating on modified school year calendar were given the opportunity to attend a school offering the traditional school year calendar. Transportation was provided by the Board although parents were required to cover the per pupil transportation annual fee. Experience with the modified school year calendars has indicated very few parents opted to transfer their children from their home community:

Dr. Oakley	- 0 of 137 students
Falconridge	- 5 of 569 students
Grant MacEwan	- 3 of 559 students
McKenzie Lake	- both options available at the school
O. S. Geiger	- 4 of 481 students
Riverbend	- overflow busing to Acadia is still necessary
William Roper Hull	- 0 of 151 students

Twice a year, community and staff surveys are conducted and reported to the communities, staffs and the Calgary Board of Education." The latest survey was completed in November 1998. The results for individual schools, along with a graphic summary for the seven schools are included in Attachment 2.

School Councils assisted in determining the most effective method of obtaining the *greatest* number of responses from parents regarding community input in the review of modified school year calendars. School Council representatives were involved in revising the parental questions. A number of the schools handed out the November 1998 surveys during parent-teacher interviews. Surveys were translated and made available in Punjabi, Chinese and Vietnamese. These efforts were positive steps in obtaining a good number of parental responses.

Parent and teacher survey responses indicate a very high level of satisfaction with the modified school year calendars, as indicated in the Parent, Teacher and Staff responses in the questions shown below, Dr. Oakley, Falconridge, Grant MacEwan, McKenzie Lake, O. S. Geiger and William Roper Hull utilized the system survey. Riverbend Elementary distributed a survey developed by their parents. A summary of the complete November 1998 results from the seven schools is included in Attachment 2.

## Parents

10. I want the school to continue with the modified calendar: (1,422 responses)

Strongly Agree/Agree        75.7%  
 Uncertain                    1.8%  
 Disagree/Strongly Disagree   22.6%

School	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Dr. Oakley	27(28.1%)	44(45.8%)	15(15.6%)	5 (5.2%)	5 (5.2%)
Falconridge		199(70.0%)		87(30.0%)	
Grant MacEwan		223(72.2%)		86(27.8%)	
McKenzie Lake	81 (71.7%)	23(20.4%)	5 (4.4%)	1 (0.9%)	1 (0.9%)
O. S. Geier		247(75.5%)		80(24.5%)	
Riverbend		223(81.4%)		51(18.6%)	
William Roper Hull	1 (5.3%)	8(42.1%)	5(26.3%)	3(15.8%)	2 (10.5%)
Totals:		1076 (75.7%)	25 (1.8%)	321(22.6%)	

## Teachers:

14. I want the school to continue with the modified calendar: (138 responses)

Strongly Agree/Agree        92.8  
 Uncertain                    3.6%  
 Disagree/Strongly Disagree   3.6%

School	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Dr. Oakley	15 (78.9%)	2 (10.5%)		2 (10.5%)	
Falconridge	18 (62.1 %)	5 (17.2%)	3 (10.3%)	1 (5.3%)	2 (10.5%)
Grant MacEwan	24 (80.0%)	5 (16.7%)	1 (3.3%)		
McKenzie Lake	7 (100.0%)				
O. S. Geiger	24 (100.0%)				
Riverbend		22 (100.0%)			
William Roper Hull	3 (42.8%)	3 (42.8%)	1 (14.3)		
Totals:		128 (92.8%)	5 (3.6%)	5 (3.6%)	

**Support Staff:**

9. I want the school to continue with the modified calendar: (58 responses).

Strongly Agree/Agree      86.2%  
 Uncertain                      5.2%  
 Disagree/Strongly Disagree   8.6%

School	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Dr. Oakley	4 (66.7%)	1 (16.7%)	-	1 (16.7%)	-
Falconridge	1 (11.1%)	4 (44.4%)	1 (11.1%)	3 (33.3%)	-
Grant Mac Ewan	5 (71.4%)	1 (14.3%)	1 (14.3%)	-	-
McKenzie Lake	-	-	-	-	-
O. S. Geiger	12 (85.8%)	2 (14.3%)	-	-	-
Riverbend	-	8 (88.9%)	-	1 (11.1%)	-
William Roper Hull	9 (69.2%)	3 (23.1%)	1 (7.7%)	-	-
Totals:		50 (88.2%)	3 (5.2%)	5 (8.6%)	

**Summary:**

	Yes	Undecided	No
Parents	75.7%	1.8%	22.6%
Teachers	92.8%	3.6%	3.6%
Support S.	86.2%	5.2%	8.6%

**B. Academic Testing Results:**

Provincial Testing results for Grade 3 and Grade 6 students were examined. It is difficult to draw specific conclusions regarding the results due to a number of factors:

- Dr. Oakley School and William Roper Hull School serve special needs students. Many of these students are in the program for less than one year. Therefore, comparisons between different years is not relevant.
- McKenzie Lake Elementary and Riverbend Elementary were new schools when they opened in 1996. Therefore, there is no comparative data available for pre and post modified school year calendars. Provincial testing results for McKenzie Lake include results for both the traditional calendar and the modified school year students.
- Falconridge Elementary School, Grant MacEwan Elementary School and O. S. Geiger Elementary School experience a very high degree of mobility, therefore, comparison between years is again difficult.
- The number of student exemptions from testing varies from year to year.

- Alberta Education has provided the following statement pertaining to the Grade 3 and Grade 6 Mathematics results: "Note: For 1997-1998, the standards for mathematics were adjusted using standard-setting procedures. Therefore, the percentage of students meeting standards should not be compared to previous years."

Comparing the test results between pre and post modified school year calendars for Falconridge, Grant MacEwan and O. S. Geiger (1994-1998), the following generalized statements could be made:

*Grade 3	Language Arts(1994-1998)	- improvement
*Grade 3	Mathematics (1994-1997)	- improvement
*Grade 6 °	Language Arts(1994-1998)	- improvement
*Grade 6	Mathematics (1994-1997)	- improvement
*Grade 6	Science (1994-1998)	- lower results
*Grade 6	Social Studies(1994-1998)	- lower results

### C. Teacher Absenteeism:

An analysis of 121 teacher attendance records from the seven pilot schools was made. Records were examined to determine each teacher's attendance while teaching at a school with a modified school year calendar, as well as their attendance in previous school years (1994-1995, 1995-1996, 1996-1997, and 1997-1998). The average number of days absent per year during modified school years compared to absenteeism in previous years was:

#### System Averages:-Elem.

##### Traditional School Year Calendars:

1994-1995	- 5.7 days
1995-1996	- 6.0 days

##### Modified School Year Calendars:

1996-1997	- 3.9 days	5.8 days
1997-1998	- 5.0 days	5.9days

A comparison between pre and post modified school year calendar attendance indicated teacher attendance improved slightly (e.g. approximately 1.4 fewer days absence per' year per teacher). Better teacher attendance ultimately saves *the school* district in substitute expenditures (e.g. over a two year period, the seven schools required approximately 205 fewer substitute days = \$25,625 saving) and provides greater student-teacher continuity.

A teacher absenteeism comparison was also made between the two tracks at McKenzie Lake Elementary. The comparison yielded the following:

Red Track - Traditional School Year Calendar (September June), 1996-1997 teacher absenteeism rate: 6.3 days / teacher 1997-1998 teacher absenteeism rate: 6.3 days / teacher

Green Track - Modified School Year Calendar  
1996-1997 teacher absenteeism rate: 5.2 days / teacher 1997-1998 teacher absenteeism rate: 4.6 days / teacher

Once again, teacher absenteeism was less for teachers on the modified school year calendar.

#### **D. Student Absenteeism**

The Board's current student *record system* (SRS) is not capable of providing student attendance data for the period of 1994-1998 therefore it was not possible to complete a comparison of student attendance for pre and post modified school years. A comparison was made between red track and green track student attendance at McKenzie Lake during the 1997-1998 school year. Students on the traditional track averaged slightly better attendance (approximately .5 days per year).

Red Track (traditional school calendar) 6.64 days absence Green Track (modified school calendar) 7.17 days absence

.53 days difference,

#### **E. Behaviour referrals to the office;**

Most schools reported a reduction in the number of student behavioral difficulties and the number of discipline referrals to the office. Specific data is not available to substantiate the statements.

#### **F. Multi-Track Schools - Costing Data**

Attachment 3 includes a statement comparing Riverbend Elementary multi-track costs to traditional costs. The increased cost to operate Riverbend Elementary School as a multi-track school is estimated at approximately \$120 per student (\$62,760).

Multi-track, year-round schools must provide coverage for staff that are on their vacation breaks. In addition, the school attempts to provide equal opportunity and access regarding program availability, instructional time, pupil-teacher ratio, administrative attention and student services. To provide coverage for positions such as

Music, Physical Education, Resource Teacher and Teacher-Librarian, an additional 1.0 FTE teacher was assigned to *the school* for 1998-1999 school year.

McKenzie Lake Elementary received an additional 0.5 FTE teacher and 30 substitute teacher days to provide coverage for the specialists' assignments at a net cost of \$40,500.

Significant cost savings are realized by the Provincial Government in capital cost avoidance. For example, three multi-track schools can accommodate the same number of students as four traditional calendar schools.

### **III. SUPERINTENDENTS' TEAM DECISIONS**

The following decisions were made by Superintendents' Team on January 13, 1999.

1. Approval was granted for continuation of the modified school year calendars for Dr. Oakley School, Falconridge Elementary School, Grant MacEwan Elementary School, McKenzie Lake Elementary School, O. S. Geiger Elementary School, Riverbend Elementary School, and William Roper Hull School.
2. Future parental input during the third year of a modified school year pilot will be obtained through surveys and/or ballots distributed at parent-teacher interviews in the Fall.
3. Following a school decision to operate with a modified school year calendar, parents desiring their children attend a traditional school year calendar do so in accordance with the operational, optional attendance boundary policy (# 3,001).
4. Administration recommends to the Board that efforts continue to secure provincial funding support for multi-track schools,

### **IV. RECOMMENDATIONS**

THAT the Board receive this report as information in accordance with Executive Limitations Policy #8—Communication and Counsel to the Board.

DR. BRENDAN I. CROSKERY, SUPERINTENDENT SCHOOL, STUDENT AND PARENT SERVICES