

DATE: June 6, 2023

TO: Board of Trustees

FROM: Darrel Robertson, Superintendent of Schools

SUBJECT: 2024–25 School Year Calendar

ORIGINATOR: Cliff Richard, Chief Infrastructure and Technology Officer

RESOURCE

STAFF: Terry Korte, Bob Morter

REFERENCE [GCA.BP](#) – Approval of the School Year Calendar
[GCA.AR](#) – The School Year Calendar
[Education Act](#)
[Funding Manual for School Authorities 2023/24 School Year](#)

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, *Board Policy GCA.BP – Approval of the School Year Calendar*, requires that the Board of Trustees approve calendars for two years following the current school year.

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 need to be incorporated into the calendar, and 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.

Both of the proposed 2024–25 calendars amend the typical start of the spring recess. This is due to diploma exams having been scheduled by the province starting the last Monday of March—March 31, 2025. The draft diploma exam dates are as follows:

- November 4–14, 2024
- January 12–28, 2025
- March 31–April 10, 2025
- June 11–25, 2025

A request has been made to Alberta Education to shift the spring diploma exams to run from April 1 to April 11, 2025. This would remove the diploma exam from March 31, which is also Eid al-Fitr. Contingency plans should this change occur are discussed below in Considerations and Analysis.

Additionally, the calendar is designed to balance the two semesters to facilitate curriculum delivery and to align with the terms and conditions of the “Letter of Understanding #9 Pilot Project on Revised School Calendar” within the Alberta Teachers’ Association September 1, 2018 to August 31, 2020 collective agreement.

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.

Both proposed versions of the calendar only have a single midweek, professional development day. This is January 29, which is both the start of the second semester and Lunar New Year. In this case, operational considerations of semester transition align with placing a professional development day here to allow families to celebrate Lunar New Year.

RELATED FACTS

Key points of the two draft 2024–25 School Year Calendars include:

- The calendar is built around 178 instructional days
- The start date for students is Tuesday, September 3, 2024; this aligns with a preference for school to start in the first week of September that was indicated in the 2022 Division Feedback Survey
- The end date for students is Wednesday, June 25, 2025, aligning with the draft Alberta Education diploma exam schedule
- Instructional days are balanced for first and second semesters

- A breakdown of instructional days as follows:
 - Version 1 has 32 Mondays, 39 Tuesdays, 36 Wednesdays, 36 Thursdays, 35 Fridays
 - Version 2 has 32 Mondays, 38 Tuesdays, 37 Wednesdays, 37 Thursdays, 34 Fridays
- A fall break for families of five days: two professional development days, one day in lieu for reporting, a Saturday and a Sunday
- A May break of five days consisting of: Saturday, Sunday, Victoria Day, one day in lieu for reporting and one Board declared non-instructional day
- Eight professional development days
- The proposed calendar generally reflects clustering of days, the preferred approach indicated by family and staff in the open-access opinion poll administered from January 31 to February 10, 2020, and supported in the 2022 Division Feedback Survey

RECOMMENDATION

That the 2024-2025 School Year Calendar (Version 1) as shown in Attachment I be approved.

OTHER OPTIONS

1. That Version 1 of the proposed 2024–25 School Year Calendar be approved with amendments.
2. That Version 2 of the proposed 2024–25 School Year Calendar be approved.
3. That Version 2 of the proposed 2024–25 School Year Calendar be approved with amendments.

CONSIDERATIONS and ANALYSIS

The attached calendars were developed in alignment with the various requirements outlined within the background section of this report. The proposed calendars maintain the 178 instructional days present in prior school year calendars. Building the calendar around the same number of days results in greater consistency of school hours of operation from year-to-year, and allows schools, for the most part, to retain existing timetables for students and staff. This assists parents with creating consistency of drop-off and pick-up times and contributes to efficient routing and scheduling of buses.

Both versions of the calendar have Semester 1 broken into a first quarter of 46 days and a second quarter of 43 days. Due to constraints of when the year begins along with the draft diploma exam schedule, it is not possible to create more balance between Quarter 1 and 2. Even this is only achieved by placing all non-instructional days into the first quarter. Version 1 has a distribution of 43 and 46 days in Quarters 3 and 4, while Version 2 provides a better balance of days between Quarters 3 and 4; 45 and 44 days respectively.

In the last few years, a request was made to the Board of Trustees, and in subsequent meetings with the administration, for the Division to organize a number of specific days as non-instructional days in such a way as to avoid school on specified holy days or days of significance from a number of faiths and cultures.

For the 2024–2025 school year, two of those dates fall on the weekend (Eid al-Adha and the summer solstice/National Indigenous Peoples day), three have been proposed as non-instructional days (Yom Kippur, Diwali/Bandi Chhor Divas and the Lunar New Year), and one is an instructional day (Eid al-Fitr). Eid al-Fitr, March 31, 2025, currently has a draft diploma exam scheduled for the day. Administration has contacted Alberta Education requesting that the diploma exams scheduled to begin on March 31, 2025 be delayed until April 1, 2025. Should this change be made by Alberta Education, suggestions for adjusting the calendar are outlined below and a revised calendar would be brought back to the Board of Trustees for approval.

As mentioned above, current administrative regulation requires that spring recess begin the last Monday of March. Based on the draft Alberta Education schedule, spring recess will need to be moved. The first semester of both proposed versions of the school year calendar are identical. The second semester differs primarily with the placement of spring break. Version 1 places spring break a week early. Under this version, Quarter 3 is shorter, and there are few non-instructional days in Quarter 3. This also means that the three professional learning days in Semester 2 must be placed in Quarter 4, the last portion of the school year.

Version 2 has a number of impacts. Spring break is moved after the April diploma exams to the middle of April, much later than traditionally the case. This model ties the break into the Easter weekend. Due to the fact that this break includes Good Friday, it will make an additional day available in the second semester. This day could be used as a Board declared non-instructional day and tentatively placed on Friday, March 28, 2022. The draft diploma exam schedule has the first exam in the April administration occurring on Monday, March 31, which is also Eid al-Fitr. If the schedule is adjusted by Alberta Education, it would allow Boards the flexibility to have March 31 as a non-instructional day allowing students and families the chance to celebrate this significant day in the Islamic calendar. If the diploma exam schedule is adjusted to allow for this, it would be the suggestion of the administration to move the Board declared non-instructional day from Friday, March 28 to Monday, March 31. It should be noted that if Version 1 is selected, there is no possibility for an additional Board declared non-instructional day; in this case it would be proposed that the professional learning day scheduled for either April 16, 2025, or June 9, 2025, be moved to March 31, 2025.

As referenced earlier, the Division included a number of questions related to the calendar in the 2022 Division Feedback Survey. A number of these questions related to the Fall, Winter, Spring and May breaks. For the majority of these questions, there was a significant number of responses that indicated “no preference”. One finding seems to be of particular note—regarding spring recess, there was not a strong preference for the break beginning on the last Monday in March, as currently required in administrative regulation. A further question found greater support for spring recess being set around the Easter weekend. While the concept of a spring recess that floats may have other challenges in future years, it is incorporated into calendar Version 2 for the Board’s consideration.

NEXT STEPS

Once approved, the calendar shall be published on the Division website.

ATTACHMENTS and APPENDICES

ATTACHMENT I	Draft 2024–25 School Year Calendar Version 1
ATTACHMENT II	Draft 2024–25 School Year Calendar Version 2
APPENDIX I	2022 Division Feedback Survey Results, as related to calendar

BM/al

2024–25 Division Calendar – DRAFT v1 May 24, 2023

epsb.ca

AUGUST • 2024

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SEPTEMBER • 2024

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OCTOBER • 2024

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NOVEMBER • 2024

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DECEMBER • 2024

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JANUARY • 2025

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MARCH • 2025

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APRIL • 2025

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MAY • 2025

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JUNE • 2025

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APPROVED HOLIDAYS

Labour Day	September 2
The National Day for Truth and Reconciliation	September 30
Thanksgiving	October 14
Remembrance Day	November 11
Christmas Day	December 25
Boxing Day	December 26
Winter Break	Dec. 23–Jan. 3
New Year's Day	January 1
Family Day	February 17
Teachers' Convention	February 27–28
Spring Break	March 24–28
Good Friday	April 18
Easter Monday	April 21
Victoria Day	May 19

First Operational Day (No Students)	August 29
First Day of Classes	September 3
Last Day of Classes	June 25
Last Operational Day	June 26

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

DATES OF SIGNIFICANCE

Yom Kippur	October 11
Diwali and Bandi Chhor Divas	November 1
Lunar New Year	January 29
Eid al-Fitr	March 31
Eid al-Adha	June 8
Summer Solstice and National Indigenous Peoples Day	June 21

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

2024–25 Division Calendar – DRAFT v2 May 24, 2023

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AUGUST • 2024

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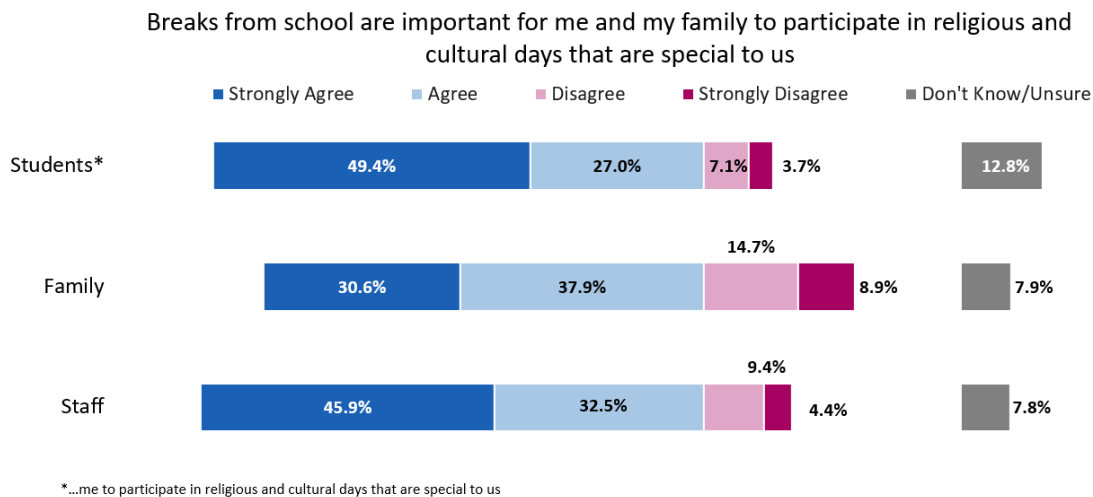
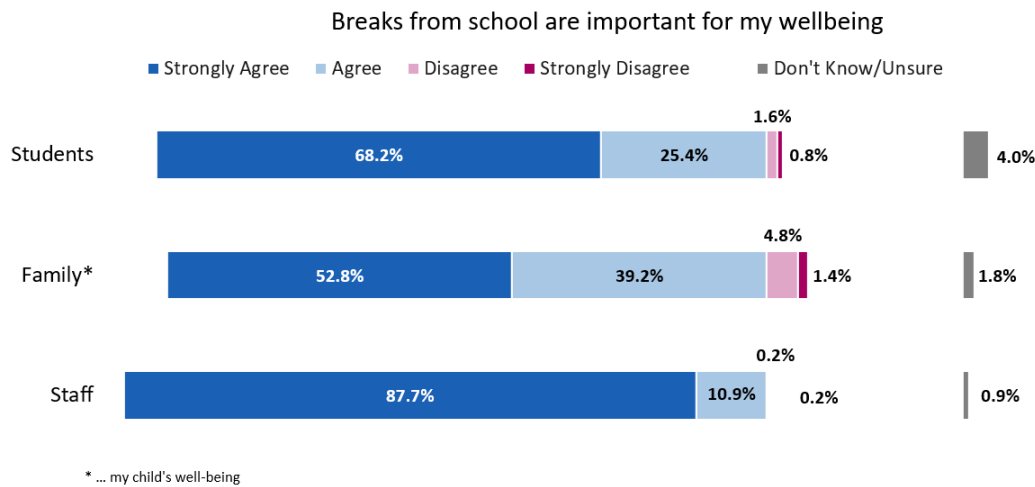
Pink highlight indicates diploma exam days for reference only and will not be on final published calendar.

2021-2022 DIVISION FEEDBACK SURVEY - CALENDAR QUESTIONS ANALYSIS

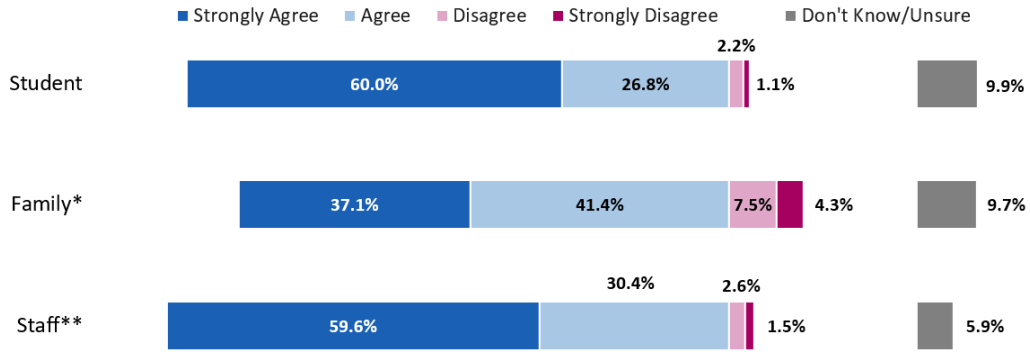
A series of closed-ended questions related to the EPSB school calendar were asked in the 2021-2022 Division Feedback Survey, open for stakeholders to complete from April 4 to May 6, 2022. Student, staff and family responses for each of these questions related to the EPSB school calendar are visualized below. Tables that detail the number of respondents for each question option are also included.

FIGURES

Cultural and Religious Days

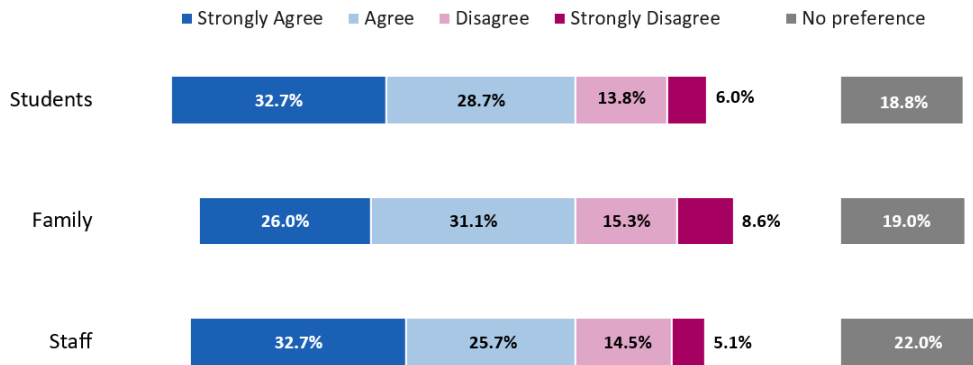


Breaks from school are important for my classmates to participate in religious and cultural days that are special to them

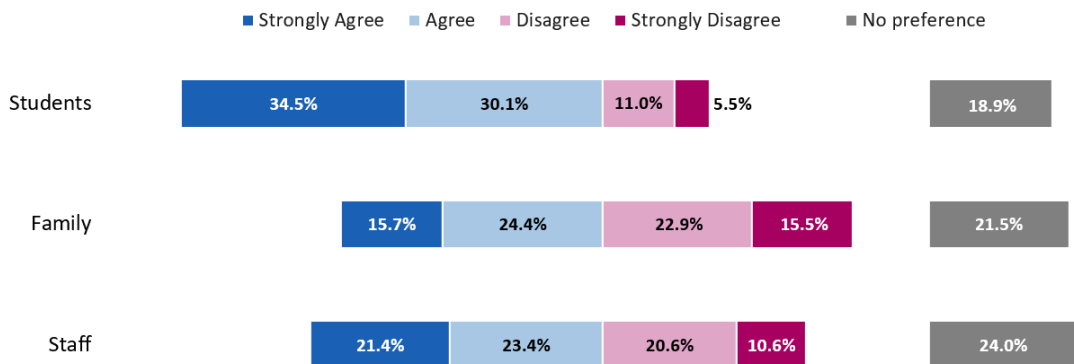


* ...people from my school community to participate in religious and cultural days that are special to them
 **...people from my school or work community to participate in religious and cultural days that are special to them

To include more cultural and religious holidays, I support school breaks that happen less often but with more days grouped together



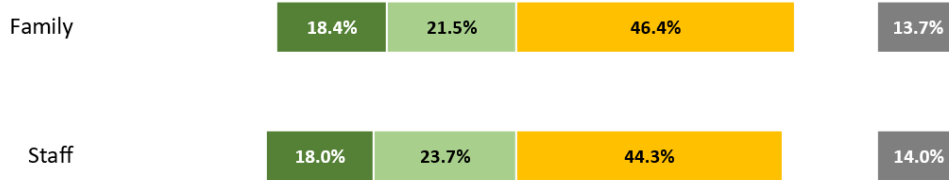
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School Start Date

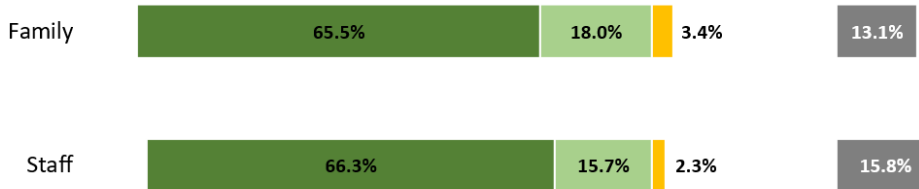
How supportive would you be if school started the last week of August?

■ Very supportive ■ Somewhat supportive ■ Not Supportive at All ■ No preference



How supportive would you be if school started the first week of September?

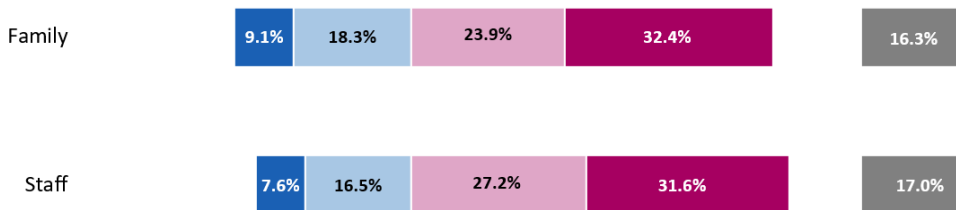
■ Very supportive ■ Somewhat supportive ■ Not Supportive at All ■ No preference



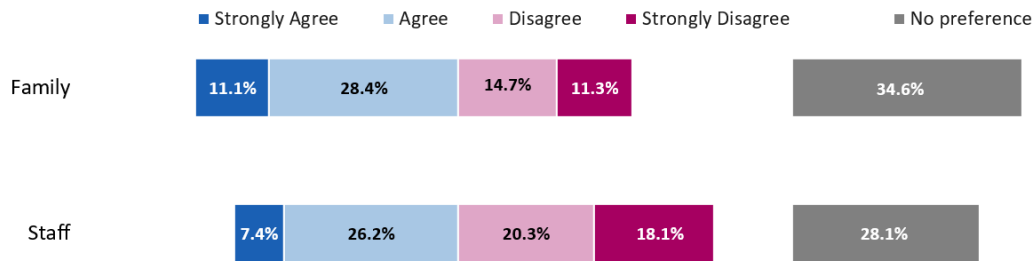
Potential School Calendar Adjustments

Keeping in mind that the total number of days off in the school year will stay the same, I am supportive of a school calendar with days off in the middle of the week

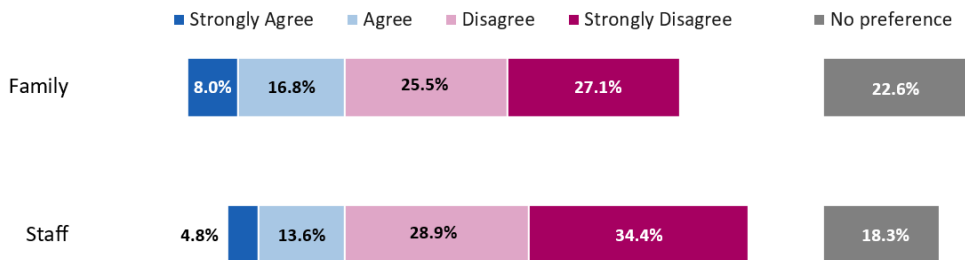
■ Strongly Agree ■ Agree ■ Disagree ■ Strongly Disagree ■ No preference



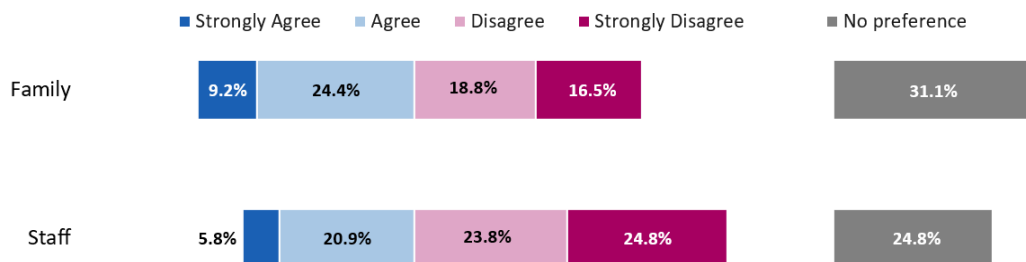
Keeping in mind that the total number of days off in the school year will stay the same, I am supportive of changing November fall break



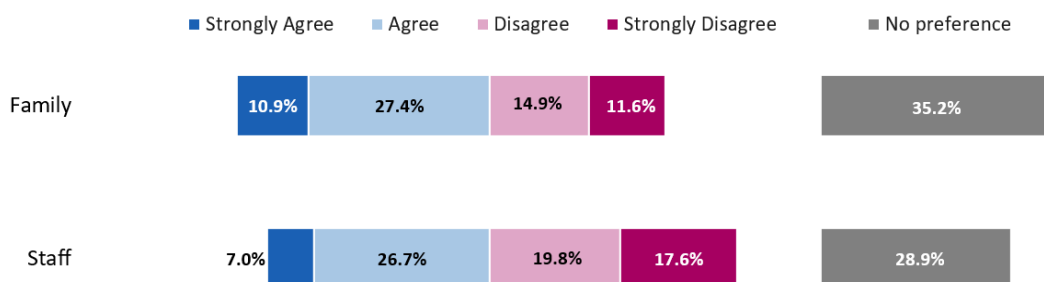
Keeping in mind that the total number of days off in the school year will stay the same, I am supportive of changing winter break



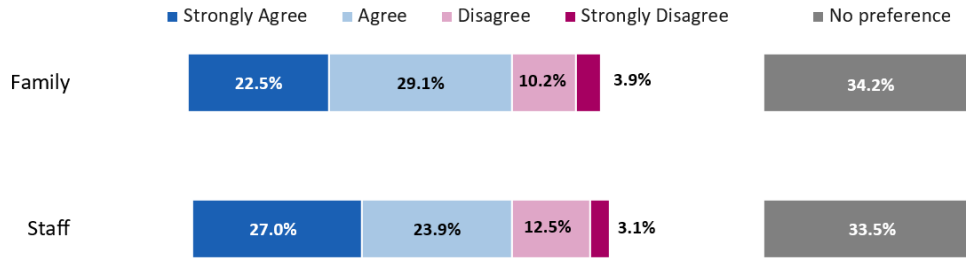
Keeping in mind that the total number of days off in the school year will stay the same, I am supportive of changing spring break



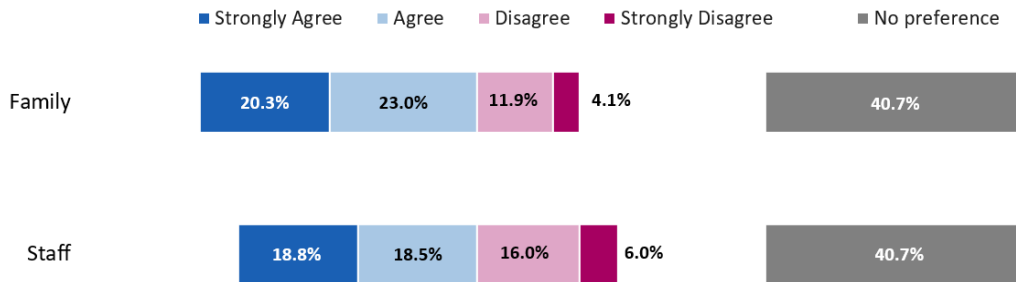
Keeping in mind that the total number of days off in the school year will stay the same, I am supportive of changing May break



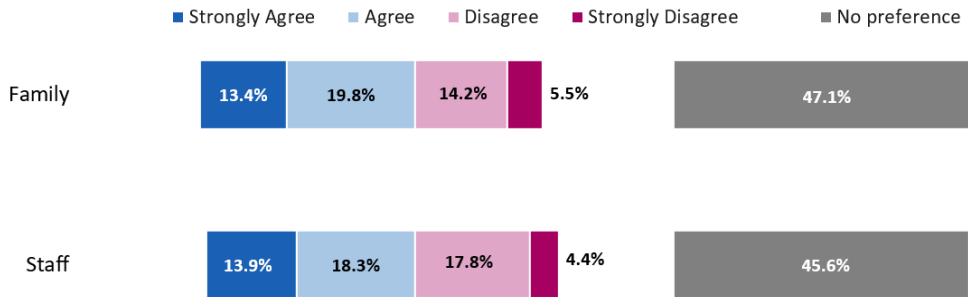
It is important that fall break includes Remembrance Day



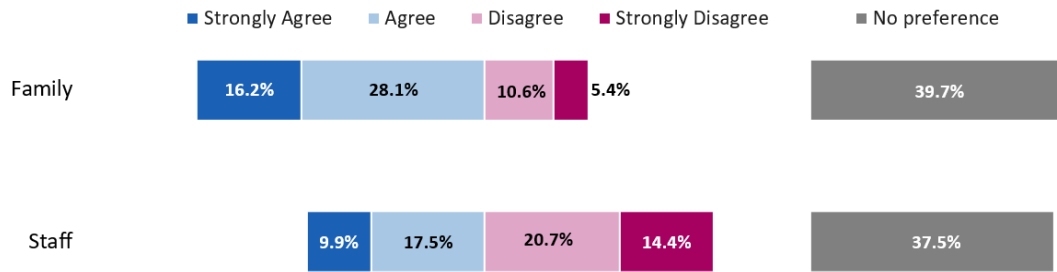
It is important that winter break starts on a Monday



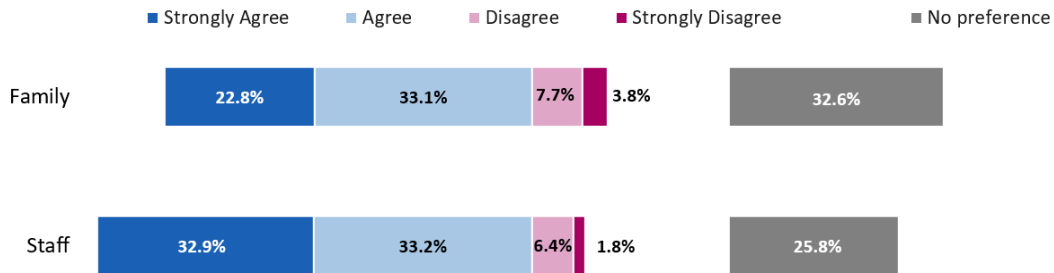
It is important that spring break is always the last week of March



It is important that spring break is set around the spring Monday and Friday holidays

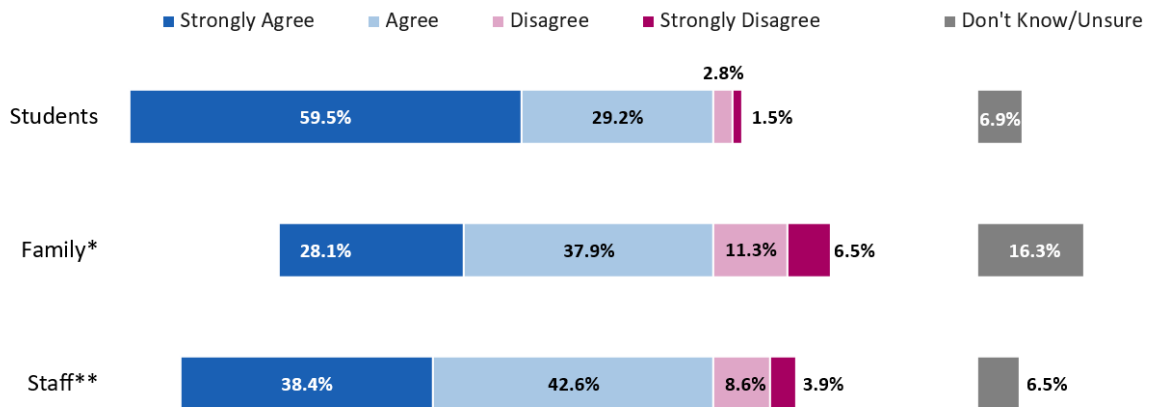


It is important that there is a May break that includes May long weekend



Revised 2020-2021 School Year Calendar

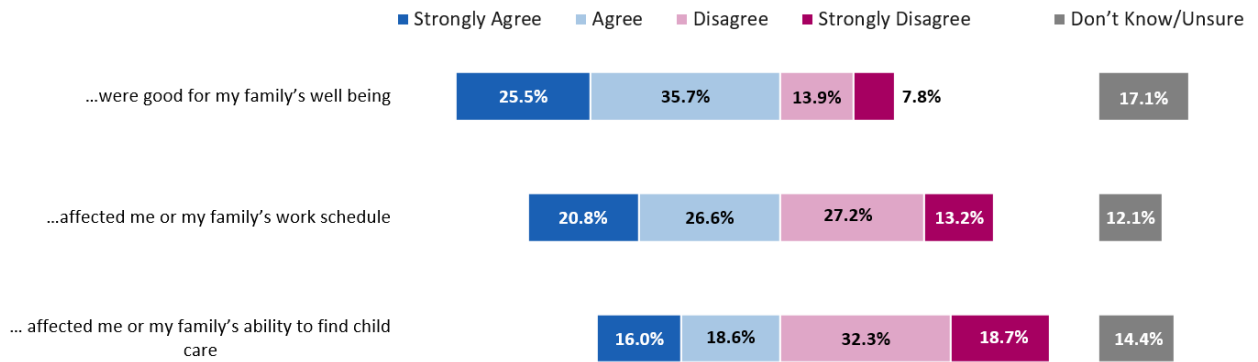
These five extra days off were good for my well being



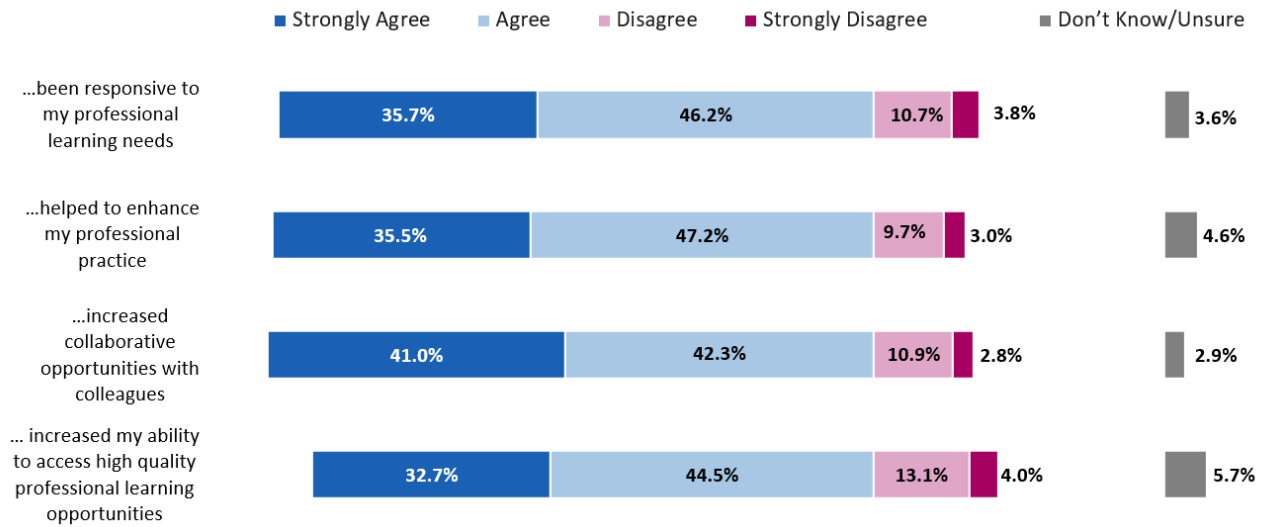
* My child's wellbeing

**The additional PD days have positively impacted my well being.

Family: These five additional days...



Staff: These five additional PD Days...



TABLES

Cultural and Religious Days

Breaks from school are important for my well being

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know/Unsure	Total
Students	27,602	10,283	642	316	1,610	40,453
Family*	1,966	1,458	180	53	67	3,724
Staff	5,214	647	14	11	56	5,942

*...my child's well-being

Breaks from school are important for me and my family to participate in religious and cultural days that are special to us

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know/Unsure	Total
Students*	19,980	10,924	2,866	1,508	5,175	40,453
Family	1,141	1,411	548	330	294	3,724
Staff	2,726	1,932	560	260	464	5,942

*...me to participate in religious and cultural days that are special to us

Breaks from school are important for my classmates to participate in religious and cultural days that are special to them

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know/Unsure	Total
Students	24,289	10,837	896	443	3,988	40,453
Family*	1,380	1,543	281	160	360	3,724
Staff**	3,542	1,806	153	89	352	5,942

* ...people from my school community to participate in religious and cultural days that are special to them

**...people from my school or work community to participate in religious and cultural days that are special to them

To include more cultural and religious holidays, I support school breaks that happen less often but with more days grouped together

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know/Unsure	Total
Students	12,891	11,332	5,459	2,352	7,419	39,453
Family	968	1,158	570	321	707	3,724
Staff	1,875	1,471	831	291	1,259	5,727

To include more cultural and religious holidays, I support school breaks that happen more often but with fewer days grouped together

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know/Unsure	Total
Students	13,507	11,792	4,316	2,141	7,405	39,161
Family	584	910	852	577	801	3,724
Staff	1,210	1,322	1,166	599	1,360	5,657

School Start Date

How supportive would you be if school started the last week of August?

	Very supportive	Somewhat supportive	Not Supportive at All	No preference	Total
Family	685	801	1,727	511	3,724
Staff	1,071	1,408	2,632	831	5,942

How supportive would you be if school started the first week of September?

	Very supportive	Somewhat supportive	Not Supportive at All	No preference	Total
Family	2,438	670	128	488	3,724
Staff	3,937	930	134	941	5,942

Potential School Calendar Adjustments

Keeping in mind that the total number of days off in the school year will stay the same, I am supportive of a school calendar with days off in the middle of the week

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No preference	Total
Family	340	681	889	1,208	606	3,724
Staff	453	981	1,616	1,880	1,012	5,942

Keeping in mind that the total number of days off in the school year will stay the same, I am supportive of changing November fall break

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No preference	Total
Family	412	1,056	548	421	1,287	3,724
Staff	440	1,556	1,205	1,073	1,668	5,942

Keeping in mind that the total number of days off in the school year will stay the same, I am supportive of changing winter break

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No preference	Total
Family	297	625	951	1,008	843	3,724
Staff	286	807	1,716	2,046	1,087	5,942

Keeping in mind that the total number of days off in the school year will stay the same, I am supportive of changing spring break

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No preference	Total
Family	342	909	700	613	1,160	3,724
Staff	342	1,241	1,414	1,474	1,471	5,942

Keeping in mind that the total number of days off in the school year will stay the same, I am supportive of changing May break

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No preference	Total
Family	406	1,022	556	431	1,309	3,724
Staff	418	1,584	1,174	1,047	1,719	5,942

It is important that fall break includes Remembrance Day

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No preference	Total
Family	838	1,085	381	146	1,274	3,724
Staff	1,603	1,420	744	184	1,991	5,942

It is important that winter break starts on a Monday

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No preference	Total
Family	757	857	443	152	1,515	3,724
Staff	1,118	1,098	953	355	2,418	5,942

It is important that spring break is always the last week of March

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No preference	Total
Family	498	738	530	203	1,755	3,724
Staff	827	1,087	1,059	260	2,709	5,942

It is important that spring break is set around the spring Monday and Friday holidays

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No preference	Total
Family	604	1,048	393	200	1,479	3,724
Staff	587	1,038	1,230	856	2,231	5,942

It is important that there is a May break that includes May long weekend

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No preference	Total
Family	850	1,231	286	142	1,215	3,724
Staff	1,957	1,972	378	104	1,531	5,942

Revised 2020-2021 School Year Calendar

These five extra days off were good for my well being

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know/Unsure	Total
Students	24,073	11,831	1,142	603	2,804	40,453
Family*	1,045	1,413	419	241	606	3,724
Staff**	1,384	1,534	310	140	233	3,601

* My child's wellbeing

**The additional PD days have positively impacted my well being

Family: These five additional day

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know/Unsure	Total
...were good for my family's well being	948	1,331	516	291	638	3,724
...affected me or my family's work schedule	776	991	1,013	492	452	3,724
... affected me or my family's ability to find child care	597	691	1,202	696	538	3,724

Staff: These five additional PD Days

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know/Unsure	Total
...been responsive to my professional learning needs	1,286	1,663	386	138	128	3,601
...helped to enhance my professional practice	1,279	1,699	349	108	166	3,601
...increased collaborative opportunities with colleagues	1,478	1,525	392	102	104	3,601
... increased my ability to access high quality professional learning opportunities	1,177	1,601	473	143	207	3,601