



MEMORANDUM

January 23, 2024
Regular Board Meeting

TO Board of Trustees

FROM Shauna Boyce, Superintendent

ORIGINATOR Scott Johnston, Associate Superintendent

GOVERNANCE POLICY Board Policy 1: Division Foundational Statements
Board Policy 2: Role of the Board
Board Policy 12: Role of the Superintendent

ADDITIONAL REFERENCE BP 1: Vision, Foundational Statements
BP 2: Education Planning and Programming
AP 114: School Day and Year

SUBJECT **2024-2025 SCHOOL-YEAR CALENDAR**

PURPOSE

For information. No recommendation required.

BACKGROUND

The school-year calendar shall generally be approved by the Superintendent no later than March 1st of the previous year for that calendar. This report is in support of this responsibility.

REPORT SUMMARY

Parkland School Division continues to support school-based Professional Development opportunities that provide schools with the opportunity to focus on Division Priorities and their Education Plans. Proposed amendments to the calendar accommodate the strong interests represented through stakeholder feedback.

In total, 2,292 respondents provided feedback to the calendar survey, between November 29th, 2023 and December 21, 2023. This survey represented responses from:

- Parkland School Division Parents or Guardians (1,487 | 65.5%);
- Parkland School Division Staff Members (521 | 22.8%)
- Evergreen Catholic Parents or Guardians (117 | 4.6%)
- Evergreen Catholic Staff Members (86 | 3.6%)
- Private/independent School Parents or Guardians (Living Waters / SML Christian Academy) (57 | 2.4%)
- Private/independent School Staff Members (Living Waters / SML Christian Academy) (13 | 0.6%);

- Students (11 | 0.4%); and
- Members of the Community, students or none of the above (0 | 0.0%).

The survey asked respondents to consider the placement of non-instructional (professional development) days.

Respondents noted a preference for the following days:

- September 20th (1,090 of 2,292 – 667 had no preference);
- October 11th (1,812 of 2,292 – 301 had no preference);
- November 8th (1,591 of 2,292 – 201 had no preference);
- February 14th (1,222 of 2,292 – 291 had no preference); and
- March 28th (1,361 of 2,292 – 338 had no preference).

The calendar includes the current schedule for Diploma Examinations.

The 2024-2025 Calendar is presented in a visual form on the last page of the report.

Administration would be happy to answer any questions.

SJ:kz



2024-2025 PARKLAND SCHOOL DIVISION CALENDAR

JANUARY 23, 2024

Presented to the Board of Trustees, January 23, 2024
 Scott Johnston, Associate Superintendent, Education and System Services

Our Students Possess the confidence, resilience, insight and skills required to thrive in, and positively impact, the world.

BACKGROUND

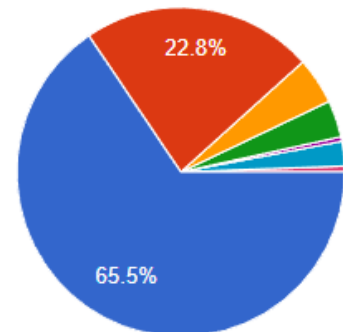
1. PSD Executive generate a calendar survey well in advance of the approval of the next calendar.
2. The survey, to received feedback from **2,292** respondents. Last year saw 2,254 by the time the survey closed.
3. This calendar briefing note provides a summary of responses received prior to the approval of the school-year calendar for 2024-2025.
4. Based on the results from the survey, the proposed 2024-2025 Calendar shall include:
 - a. 194 Operational Days,
 - b. 181 Instructional Days,
 - c. 13 Non-Instructional Days, and
 - d. A reasonable balance of Semester Days (90/90 with one day for transition).
5. Participant emails were required for completion of the survey.

Alberta students in grades one through nine must have a minimum of 950 hours of instruction. High School students must receive a minimum of 1,000 hours of instruction.

SURVEY AFFILIATION

Question 1: Please identify your role as it relates to your responses. How are you primarily responding? (2,292 responses)

- As a Parkland School Division Parent or Guardian (1,487 | 64.9%)
- As a Parkland School Division Staff Member (521 | 22.7%)
- As an Evergreen Catholic Parent or Guardian (117 | 5.1%)
- As an Evergreen Catholic Staff Member (86 | 3.8%)
- As a Private School Parent or Guardian (57 | 2.5%)
- As a Student (11 | 0.5%)
- As a Private School Staff Member (13 | 0.6%)
- As a Member of the Community or none of the above (0 | 0.0%)



Parkland School Division Parent/Guardian responses continue to provide the majority of responses for this survey.

Our Calendar Survey indicated that 77% of respondents are familiar with calendar rationale, and only 23% opted for more information at the start of the survey.

The calendar provides 181 days of learning between August and June. Staff require one day to close out the year, and so the end-date for students will be fixed at June 26th, with a non-instructional day placed on June 27th, and a non-operational day placed on Monday, June 30th.

The survey asked respondents to consider the following:

- PD Placement for September, October, November, February, and March-April; and
- Anything else stakeholders wanted us to consider.

Given that we have surveyed extensively over the years, and given that we have some fixed items are not open for consideration, the following items are already determined for the 2022-2023 school year:

- Truth and Reconciliation Day (September 30th) as a non-operational day;
- Statutory Holidays as non-operational;
- Diploma Exam dates (provincially determined);
- Teachers' Convention on February 6th and 7th;
- The placement of Spring Break (beginning Monday, March 31st); and
- September 28th as the start date, and June 26th as the last day for students.

QUESTIONS RESPONSES BY DEMOGRAPHIC

What is your PD preference for September (students do not attend on PD Days)?				
Demographic	Total	September 20	September 23	No Preference
All Groups (#)	2,292	1,090	535	667
Parkland SD Parent	1,487	683	326	478
Parkland SD Staff	521	258	151	112
Evergreen CSD Parent	117	55	25	37
Evergreen CSD Staff	86	46	22	18
Private Parent	57	31	7	19
Private Staff	13	11	1	1
Student	11	6	3	2

What is your PD preference for October (students do not attend on PD Days)?				
Demographic	Total	October 4	October 11	No Preference
All Groups (#)	2,292	179	1,812	301
Parkland SD Parent	1,487	111	1148	228
Parkland SD Staff	521	38	438	45
Evergreen CSD Parent	117	11	95	11
Evergreen CSD Staff	86	11	69	6
Private Parent	57	5	43	9
Private Staff	13	1	12	0
Student	11	2	7	2

What is your PD preference for November (students do not attend on PD Days)?				
Demographic	Total	November 1	November 8	No Preference
All Groups (#)	2,292	500	1,591	201
Parkland SD Parent	1,487	293	1032	162
Parkland SD Staff	521	145	351	25
Evergreen CSD Parent	117	21	88	8
Evergreen CSD Staff	86	26	58	2
Private Parent	57	6	48	3
Private Staff	13	5	8	0
Student	11	4	6	1

What is your PD preference for February (students do not attend on PD Days)?				
Demographic	Total	February 14	February 18	No Preference
All Groups (#)	2,292	1,222	779	291
Parkland SD Parent	1,487	804	475	208
Parkland SD Staff	521	267	203	51
Evergreen CSD Parent	117	59	40	18
Evergreen CSD Staff	86	39	44	3
Private Parent	57	36	12	9
Private Staff	13	9	3	1
Student	11	8	2	1

What is your PD preference for March-April (students do not attend on PD Days)?				
Demographic	Total	March 28	April 7	No Preference
All Groups (#)	2,292	1,361	593	338
Parkland SD Parent	1,487	901	339	247
Parkland SD Staff	521	301	165	55
Evergreen CSD Parent	117	64	37	16
Evergreen CSD Staff	86	44	34	8
Private Parent	57	37	11	9
Private Staff	13	10	3	0
Student	11	4	4	3

ADDITIONAL THOUGHTS SHARED BY PSD PARENTS

Start Date Preferences: Of those who left comments, several stakeholders express a strong preference for school to start after the September long weekend, specifically citing dissatisfaction with an August start date. They emphasize the importance of enjoying the full summer, aligning with traditional schedules, and ensuring that school starts when families are more likely to be settled after summer vacations.

Professional Development (PD) Days and Breaks: There is a notable discussion around the placement and necessity of PD days and school breaks. Several comments suggest reducing or reorganizing PD days, with some stakeholders preferring fewer breaks during the school year. The idea of aligning PD days with long weekends or existing breaks is also mentioned.

Alignment with Other School Divisions: Many stakeholders express a desire for the school calendar to align with neighboring school divisions, particularly for ease of childcare and family scheduling. This includes matching days off, breaks, and start/end dates with divisions such as Edmonton Public Schools. We surveyed specifically on this question last year, and the majority of responses requested not to align with other jurisdictions.

Holiday Considerations: The scheduling of school around major holidays like Christmas and Easter is a point of concern. Some stakeholders request specific consideration for Christian holidays, while others suggest accommodating religious holidays like Eid.

Fall Break Opinions: The existence and timing of the fall break is a contentious issue. A group of stakeholders advocates for removing the fall break, suggesting it disrupts the school routine and makes childcare challenging. Others see value in having regular breaks throughout the year.

General Calendar Structure: Comments indicate a preference for a more streamlined and consistent calendar. Suggestions include longer breaks in favor of shorter summers, adjusting the length of the school year, and concerns about the excessive number of non-instructional days.

Miscellaneous Concerns: Some stakeholders mention specific days like post-Halloween or individual concerns such as bell times and childcare during parent-teacher interviews.

ADDITIONAL THOUGHTS SHARED BY PSD STAFF

Start Date Concerns: Several staff members express a strong preference for a school start date after the September long weekend. They mention the positive impact of a later start on both teachers and students, and the alignment with family vacation plans.

Professional Development (PD) Days: There's significant discussion about the number and timing of PD days. Staff suggest that having too many PD days, especially close to the start of the school year or in February, is not productive. Some propose reducing the number of PD days or redistributing them throughout the year.

Alignment with Other School Divisions: Staff frequently mention the importance of aligning the school calendar with other divisions like Black Gold School Division (BGSD) and Edmonton Public Schools (EPS). This alignment is desired for better coordination of family schedules and vacations. Several staff members highlight difficulties in managing childcare and work-life balance due to the mismatch of their school calendar with other divisions where their children attend.

Fall Break Opinions: Opinions vary on the fall break. Some staff suggest shortening or eliminating it to allow for a later start date in August, while others appreciate the break but want it restructured.

Parental Feedback on Calendar: Staff members report that parents often complain about the number of PD days and the early start date. They suggest that reducing PD days and starting later would align better with parental expectations.

Impact on Curriculum and Classroom Management: High school teachers, in particular, note the impact of the calendar on curriculum coverage and the balance of days across semesters. Teachers also mention the challenge of managing classrooms effectively with the current distribution of PD days and breaks.

Operational Days Comparison: Some staff question why there are discrepancies in the number of operational days between different school divisions, emphasizing the need for a rationale behind these differences.

Preference for Specific PD Days: Preferences are expressed for the timing of PD days, with some staff favoring Fridays and others suggesting trying Mondays or Tuesdays. The idea is to maximize the effectiveness of PD and minimize disruptions to the school routine.

ADDITIONAL THOUGHTS SHARED BY EVERGREEN PARENTS

School Start Date: A dominant theme is the preference for school to start after the Labour Day long weekend. Parents express dissatisfaction with the early August start date, citing the desire to maximize summer vacation time and align with other school districts like Edmonton Public.

Professional Development (PD) Days: There are suggestions to reorganize PD days to facilitate a later start date. Parents propose moving some PD days to August or attaching them to existing breaks, thereby reducing the number of days off during the school year.

Alignment with Other School Divisions: Similar to staff comments, some parents express a desire for the school calendar to align with other divisions, particularly for facilitating family holidays and allowing children to attend camps during breaks.

Holiday Scheduling: Some parents suggest scheduling breaks around major holidays like Christmas to allow for travel and family time. For example, breaking a few days before Christmas is mentioned as beneficial for travel planning.

Teacher Convention Scheduling: There's a suggestion to move the teachers' convention closer to Family Day to potentially give students a longer break during that period. (Note, these days are set by the Alberta Teachers' Association).

Spacing of PD Days: Parents advocate for better spacing of PD days, preferring a mix of longer weekends and breaks rather than attaching PD days to longer holiday periods. They believe this approach provides more regular mental breaks for both students and teachers. There's a sentiment that some PD days may be unnecessary and could be reduced to compensate for a later start date in the school year.

ADDITIONAL THOUGHTS SHARED BY EVERGREEN STAFF

Timing of Professional Development (PD) Days: Staff members express a preference for PD days to be scheduled after breaks rather than before. They feel that PD days are more productive when teachers are refreshed after a break, as opposed to when they are exhausted and looking forward to time off.

Start Date Concerns: There is a strong sentiment that the August start date is too early, both for staff and students. Staff suggest a preference for starting after the Labour Day long weekend, noting that an earlier start leads to students missing the initial days of school.

Effectiveness of PD Days: Concerns are raised about the effectiveness of PD days when they are attached to holiday breaks like Christmas, Fall Break, and Spring Break. Staff suggest that PD days are more effective when not immediately preceding these breaks.

Number and Distribution of PD Days: There are suggestions to reduce the number of PD days at the start of the school year and to spread them more evenly throughout the year. Some staff members propose having fewer PD days at the beginning of the year in exchange for a later start date.

Alignment with Other School Divisions: Some staff members express a desire for the school calendar, especially spring break, to align with other boards in the metro Edmonton region. This alignment is seen as beneficial for families and staff with connections in neighboring areas.

Impact on Summer Plans: The early start date in August is seen as interfering with summer plans, leading to a request for a later start date.

Overall Calendar Structure: Questions are raised about the rationale for starting the school year early and ending at the same time as usual, suggesting a desire for a more balanced school calendar.

ADDITIONAL THOUGHTS SHARED BY PRIVATE SCHOOL PARENTS

Two comments noted a preference to start after the long weekend. One comment asked for the Fall Break to align with the American Thanksgiving.

ADDITIONAL THOUGHTS SHARED BY PRIVATE SCHOOL STAFF

One comment in favour of a PD Day after Halloween.

ADDITIONAL THOUGHTS SHARED BY STUDENTS

One comment asked for shorter weeks (generally). Another student indicated a preference to start after the long weekend. A third student indicated more class choice would be beneficial.

ALTERATIONS BASED ON FEEDBACK

After a thorough review of the comments, we decided to proceed with a calendar based on 181 days of learning, to be accommodated by an 11-minute addition per week (2 minutes and 15 seconds per day). We will find ways to achieve this without disruption to transportation.

The 2024-2025 Calendar is included below.

PARKLAND SCHOOL DIVISION

2024-2025 PROPOSED CALENDAR



LEGEND

- Student First: 28
- Student Last: 26
- PD / Non Instructional: x
- Non Operational: x
- Statutory: x
- TRC Day: 30
- Diploma Exam: x
- High School Transition:

AUGUST

M	T	W	T	F
			1	2
5	6	7	8	9
12	13	14	15	16
19	20	21	22	23
26	27	28	29	30

SEPTEMBER

M	T	W	T	F
2	3	4	5	6
9	10	11	12	13
16	17	18	19	20
23	24	25	26	27
30				

OCTOBER

M	T	W	T	F
	1	2	3	4
7	8	9	10	11
14	15	16	17	18
21	22	23	24	25
28	29	30	31	

NOVEMBER

M	T	W	T	F
				1
4	5	6	7	8
11	12	13	14	15
18	19	20	21	22
25	26	27	28	29

DECEMBER

M	T	W	T	F
2	3	4	5	6
9	10	11	12	13
16	17	18	19	20
23	24	25	26	27
30	31			

JANUARY

M	T	W	T	F
		1	2	3
6	7	8	9	10
13	14	15	16	17
20	21	22	23	24
27	28	29	30	31

FEBRUARY

M	T	W	T	F
3	4	5	6	7
10	11	12	13	14
17	18	19	20	21
24	25	26	27	28

MARCH

M	T	W	T	F
3	4	5	6	7
10	11	12	13	14
17	18	19	20	21
24	25	26	27	28
31				

APRIL

M	T	W	T	F
		1	2	3
7	8	9	10	11
14	15	16	17	18
21	22	23	24	25
28	29	30		

MAY

M	T	W	T	F
			1	2
5	6	7	8	9
12	13	14	15	16
19	20	21	22	23
26	27	28	29	30

JUNE

M	T	W	T	F
2	3	4	5	6
9	10	11	12	13
16	17	18	19	20
23	24	25	26	27
30				

222 TOTAL DAYS
 10 STATUTORY
 17 NON OPERATIONAL
 194 OPERATIONAL
 13 PD DAYS
181 DAYS OF LEARNING

Month	Total Days	STAT	NON-OP	NON-INST	TRC	Operational	Instructional	Total
8	6			3		6	3	3
9	21	1		1	1	19	18	21
10	23	1		1		22	21	42
11	21	1	4	1		16	15	57
12	22	2	5			15	15	72
1	23	1	2	1		20	19	91
2	20	1		3		19	16	107
3	21		1	1		20	19	126
4	22	2	4			16	16	142
5	22	1		1		21	20	162
6	21		1	1		20	19	181
Totals	222	10	17	13	1	194	181	