

EDUCATION: PROGRAMS

Policy 511.2-G (previously 601.2-G)

School Calendar Guidelines

Calendar changes have been identified as either Level 1 changes, which involve the length of day, or Level 2 changes, which involve changes to days in session. It should be noted that the total number of minutes of instruction cannot be altered when a calendar is changed at either level.

All proposed calendar changes will be subject to Board approval.

Level 1 Changes (Minor Changes to Length of Day)
(Examples: shortened lunch hour; amended start and finish times)

1. The Principal will provide notification and explanation of proposed change to Area Superintendent, parents and employees a month prior to holding a meeting that is open to the public to discuss the change. This notification will include, but not be limited to, a rationale for the change, potential impact on students and parents, costs or cost savings (if any), and timelines for proposed implementation.
2. The Principal will hold a meeting open to the public to explain proposed changes, the rationale for the proposal, and the timeline for implementation. The meeting is also an opportunity to obtain feedback and answer questions.
3. The Principal will hold a meeting with all staff members to explain the proposed changes, the rationale for the proposal, and the timeline for implementation. Explain and discuss the proposed change and rationale to students if appropriate. Allow for feedback and questions.
4. Given that there is strong consensus that the change is acceptable, principals notify the school community regarding the change. If strong consensus is not forthcoming, the proposed change will be considered a Level 2 proposal and be subject to the procedures outlined for this level.

Level 2 Changes (Alternate Hours or Non Standard Days in Session)
(Examples: alternate hours on one day each week, extended winter or spring break, modified calendar including alternate starting and ending dates for the school year)

These changes have the potential to impact the school community in significant ways, and therefore require a more extensive process of proposal, notification, consultation and approval than Level 1 changes. Level 2 changes should be examined in view of the following considerations before they become proposals.

Preliminary Considerations

Before proposing any Level 2 amendment to a school calendar, those making the proposal should consider the following to evaluate the overall merit of the change.

The proposed change should:

- be educationally sound;
- enhance teaching and learning;

- be in the best interests of students;
- complement the needs and services of the school district as an organizational system and avoid undue disruption;
- complement the interests of the community and avoid undue disruption
- be fiscally defensible.

If the proposed Level 2 calendar change is deemed by the Board to address the above considerations in a satisfactory manner, notification, voting and approval will proceed as follows.

Notification

1. The Parent Advisory Council of a school or the employees regularly assigned to a school, through their unions or, in the event that they are not unionized, through the persons chosen by the employees as their representatives, may make a proposal for an alternate school calendar by advising the board in writing of their proposal. Upon receipt of the proposal and approval by the Board for consultation to occur, the Board will provide a copy of the proposal to the Principal, the Parent Advisory Council, students, members of the community potentially affected by the changes and the employees of the school, through their unions or representatives.
2. The Board may also make a proposal for an alternate local school calendar, in which case it will provide a copy of the proposal to the Principal, the parents through the Parent Advisory Council, students, members of the community potentially affected by the changes and the employees of the school, through their unions or representatives.
3. Where a proposal for an alternate school calendar has been received for consideration by the Board and forwarded to the school, the Principal will schedule a meeting or series of meetings at the school to discuss the proposed calendar change. The meeting(s) may be conducted by the PAC, the Principal or both together.
4. A copy of the proposal and any information submitted in advance of the meeting by the Board, the Principal, the Parent Advisory Council, the employees regularly assigned to the school through their unions or representatives, students or other interested persons shall be made available to all parents.

Vote by Parents

Parents of the school will be given an opportunity to vote on the proposal for an amended school calendar by secret ballot subsequent to the information meeting(s). The proposal and a ballot will be sent to parents by the Principal through the mail. The Principal shall include documentation concerning the proposal and/or advise parents where such documentation will be available for review. Parents will be advised on the ballot distributed as to the deadline for submission of ballots which shall not be earlier than seven (7) days in session nor later than ten (10) days in session from the date of the last meeting held.

The Principal will, in consultation with the Parent Advisory Council, take all reasonable measures to ensure that one custodial family is accorded one vote but the ballot should not identify the voter by name or how many parents voted. The Parent Advisory Council or, if there is no Parent Advisory Council, the Principal shall appoint parent scrutineers to be present when the vote is counted.

The proposed calendar amendment shall be considered strongly supported to the school community if:

- a) at least 85% of the distributed ballots are returned for counting
- b) at least 70% of the total number of ballots returned by the parents are in favour of the proposed change

The Principal will notify the Area Superintendent in writing concerning the votes cast by parents, including the rate of return of distributed ballots and the number of approvals and rejections.

Vote by Employees

Employees regularly assigned to the school shall include:

Principal and Vice Principals regularly assigned to the school
Teachers regularly assigned to the school
Non-teaching employees regularly assigned to the school

The Principal may schedule a meeting of employees regularly assigned to the school for the purpose of discussing the proposal, and will schedule a meeting if requested by the employees, through their unions or other representatives. If a meeting of Principal and Vice Principals is requested, it will be conducted by the Area Superintendent.

The employees regularly assigned to the school will be provided with a copy of the proposal. Any other information which has been provided to parents will be made available to employees, through their unions or other representatives, for review.

The vote of the employees assigned to the school, other than Principal and Vice Principals, will be conducted through their unions or other representatives, in the manner the employees and their unions or other representatives determine is appropriate. The vote of the Principal and Vice Principals will be conducted by the Area Superintendent.

Unions and other representatives representing employees regularly assigned to the school, following their determination of the wishes of the employees they represent, shall report the total number of approvals, rejections and abstentions by the employees whom they represent to the Area Superintendent within ten (10) days in session following notice under Section 3 (Notification).

Where an employee neither approves nor rejects a school calendar proposal, the employee shall be deemed to have abstained.

If a union, employee, or representative fails to report the approval, rejection or abstention of employees as required above within ten (10) days in session following notice under Section 3 (Notification), those employees shall be deemed to have abstained.

Board employees regularly assigned to the school will be considered to support the proposal if a majority of the votes reported to or conducted by the Area Superintendent in accordance with these guidelines are in favour of the proposal. Abstentions do not count as votes.

Final Notification of Results

The Area Superintendent will notify the Board, in writing, the Parent Advisory Council, the parents of students attending the school, the employees regularly assigned to the school, through their unions or other representatives, and students, whether the proposal for the local school calendar or amended school calendar has been approved by the parents of the school and the employees assigned to the school.

Approval by the Board

The Board will evaluate the proposal in light of the levels of support expressed in the voting processes by parents and employees and other input received during the consultation process and the following considerations.

The proposed change should:

- be educationally sound
- enhance teaching and learning
- be in the best interests of students
- complement the needs and services of the school district as an organizational system and avoid undue disruption
- complement the interests of the community and avoid undue disruption
- be fiscally defensible.

Upon approval, the Board will make the local school calendar or amended school calendar available through the office of the Secretary-Treasurer to the Principal, the Parent Advisory Council, the parents of the students enrolled in the school and the employees and their unions or other representatives.

The local school calendar or amended school calendar will take effect on a date stipulated by the Board, which will not be less than 28 calendar days after the required approval has been obtained.

Administrative Notes

Any proposal submitted to the Board for consideration must include supporting rationale which explains the intent of the proposal using the considerations described above.

Days in session means, in respect of any school, the days in a school year on which teachers and Principals and Vice Principals of the school are scheduled, in the school calendar applicable to the school, to be available for instructional, non-instructional and administrative activities.

[BC School Calendar Regulation 114/02](#)