

## **North Vancouver School District – School Calendar Steering Group**

### **December 11, 2012 – Meeting Summary Notes**

**Facilitator** Dorli Duffy

#### **Steering Group Members**

Attending:

Trustee Cyndi Gerlach, North Vancouver Board of Education  
Trustee Christie Sacré, North Vancouver Board of Education  
Dan Storms – North Vancouver Teachers' Association  
Carolyn Pena – North Vancouver Teachers' Association  
Les Murata – Canadian Union of Public Employees – Local 389  
Cathy McMahon – Canadian Union of Public Employees – Local 389  
Karen Nordquist – North Vancouver Parent Advisory Council  
Kathy Owens – North Vancouver Parent Advisory Council  
Melika Garbpour – North Vancouver District Student Leadership Council  
Jana Ghimire – North Vancouver District Student Leadership Council  
Kelly La Roue – North Vancouver Administrators' Association – Elementary  
Deb Wanner – North Vancouver Administrators' Association – Elementary  
Elizabeth (Liz) Bell – North Vancouver Administrators' Association – Secondary  
Greg Hockley – North Vancouver Administrators' Association – Secondary  
Mark Jefferson – District Staff – Assistant Superintendent  
Pius Ryan – District Staff – Assistant Superintendent  
Scott Stanley – District Staff – Director of Human Resources  
Michael Kee – District Staff – District Principal – Human Resources  
Rena Violato – District Staff – Payroll Manager  
Greg Milner – District Staff – District Administrator – Administrative Services

Absent:

#### **1.0 Objectives**

On December 11, 2012, the North Vancouver School District School Calendar Steering Group (SCSG) held their first meeting at the NVSD Education Centre. The meeting objectives were to:

- Provide a context for the School Calendar Steering Group
- Confirm School Calendar Steering Group roles, responsibilities, expected outcomes and process timeline
- Provide an overview of relevant legislation, history and considerations related to the school calendar
- Solicit Steering Group member perspectives and values regarding the school calendar, and
- Clarify next steps including additional information needs, homework and subsequent meetings.

This document provides a brief summary of discussions held during the meeting.

#### **2.0 Introductions**

The meeting began with introductions of Steering Group members. The Steering Group is comprised of a diverse group of parents, teachers, administrators, Trustees, and partner organization representatives. Mark Jefferson welcomed Steering Group members and offered an overview of the background and context for the SCSG. The facilitator reviewed the Steering Group roles and responsibilities, expected

outcomes and timelines. Mark then provided an overview of background materials included in the participant binders including:

1. Board of education Schedule from November 27, 2012
2. Ministry of Education
  - Information Bulletin
  - Ministry Regulation
  - “Instruction” defined
3. School Calendar Bylaw (Policy #904)
4. NVSB/NVTA Collective Agreement Considerations (Working Conditions)
5. NVSB/CUPE #389 Collective Agreement Considerations (Working Conditions).

A [copy of the presentation is posted](#) on the North Vancouver School District’s website.

### 3.0 Breakout Group Discussions

Steering Group members participated in one of two breakout groups to discuss the following questions:

**General Question:** What are your values, perspectives and considerations regarding the school calendar?

**Discussion Question #1** – What issues do we need to talk about regarding the school calendar?

**Discussion Question #2** – What is important to you about these issues?

The findings of their discussions in response to the above questions are summarized below by theme or topic. Questions or requests for information have been included as well.

Issues	Summary of Feedback
Benefits of current calendar structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Longer summers for family time, opportunities for student work, summer school classes</li><li>• Two weeks at Christmas and Spring Break</li><li>• Good for students, families, staff (mental and physical health)</li></ul>
Appetite for Change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Any changes from the present model should be incremental rather than large scale because of uncertainties</li><li>• Need for more information about implications of calendar changes for students, families and staff</li></ul>
“Best Practices” for teaching and learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ensure that students needs come first</li><li>• Need for research on best practices for achievement</li><li>• E.g., time of day, length of day, breaks, class length, etc.</li><li>• Consider research findings regarding what works best for “teen learners” in terms of scheduling? E.g., School day start time – high school students need more sleep</li><li>• Need for food/ nutrition breaks built into the schedule</li></ul>
Consistency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Desire for consistency across the district</li><li>• Need for consistency between schools (e.g., days off)</li><li>• Consider implications for working families and child care</li><li>• Families / Teachers/ Staff have children in different schools and different school districts – need to coordinate calendars, dates and times</li><li>• Stay at home parents want time with their children</li><li>• Align calendars for schools within families of schools</li><li>• Consideration of flexibility around length of day to accommodate</li></ul>

Issues	Summary of Feedback
	<p>different needs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Alignment with other school districts (historical connection with other jurisdictions) – for Recreation Centre programs and child care too</li> <li>• Concern that a lack of consistency across the school district could results in individual school communities with different calendars</li> <li>• Possible negative consequences for athletics programs, families with children in different schools, vacation time, business operations in school district, employment for youth, recreation commission, community camps and businesses, etc.</li> </ul>
Flexibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some schools currently have amended days (varied weeks)</li> <li>• Desire for consideration for distributing days off (e.g., can some PD days fall mid-week to give students a break?)</li> <li>• Option to have Wednesday off and teach Saturday?</li> </ul>
Collaboration time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collaboration time is important for teachers to share, learn and develop their craft.</li> <li>• Need to consider timing of collaboration – when it occurs (e.g., first thing in the morning or last part of the day)</li> <li>• Positives for students if scheduled in the morning, but also presents some child care issues</li> <li>• Need for supervision of students during collaboration time</li> <li>• Desire for clarification: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Collaboration time vs. instructional time</li> <li>○ Need to declare value of collaboration time</li> <li>○ What is collaboration time for?</li> <li>○ Define it</li> <li>○ Make collaboration time part of a culture</li> <li>○ Colleagues working together vs. people working individually</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Desire for collaboration time within schools and amongst schools (e.g., within families of schools)</li> <li>• Some secondary schools meet first thing in the morning (e.g., late start on Wednesday)</li> <li>• Differentiate between different collaboration times</li> <li>• Accommodating longer spring break has added minutes to the day but resulted in a loss of collaboration time</li> <li>• Desire for opportunities for Grade 7 &amp; 8 to work together; Also Pre-K and K</li> </ul>
Student concerns regarding potential calendar changes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Impacts on jobs, vacation time</li> <li>• School day starts too early (8:30 – 3 pm)</li> <li>• Length of classes (80 minutes) are too long; no breaks between classes, 1 hour lunch</li> </ul>
Family concerns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Concern about loss of opportunity for family time</li> <li>• Desire for consideration of climate in relation to holidays</li> <li>• Desire to recognize that there are families of different means in the district; some families spend holiday time together</li> </ul>
Impacts of long breaks on lower income families	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Concern about loss of learning associated with breaks and impacts on lower income families that don't have the opportunity to provide rich learning environments when school is not in session (Matthew Effect)</li> </ul>

<b>Issues</b>	<b>Summary of Feedback</b>
Child Care during non-traditional breaks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Concern about affordability of child care during non-traditional breaks</li> </ul>
Children with special needs (diverse learners)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Need/ desire to accommodate their needs</li> <li>• Impact of 2 week Spring Break</li> <li>• Potential lack of benefit of extra minutes added to a day</li> <li>• Days of the year matter more than minutes</li> <li>• Difficulty coming back after summer/ long breaks</li> <li>• Harder for families to get support during breaks because of extra care needed</li> <li>• Need for communication and partnerships with community agencies for support systems</li> </ul>
<b>Calendar Elements</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School Day</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Desire for efficient use of time</li> <li>• Productive time vs. extra time that may not be useful</li> <li>• Shorter day (e.g., lunch is too long)</li> <li>• Extending the school day is a concern</li> <li>• Classes are too long</li> <li>• Accommodate the rest of the world (work schedules, etc.)</li> <li>• Reasonable accommodation of time</li> <li>• Consideration of impacts on before and after school programs (teams, music, etc.)</li> </ul>
<b>Calendar Elements</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School Week</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Flexibility around distribution of days off (e.g., long weekends and or days off mid-week)</li> <li>• Flexibility of Pro-D days? (e.g., ½ day vs. full day off) – full day permits teachers to travel and attend events</li> <li>• Consider this in relation to ongoing collaboration time</li> </ul>
<b>Calendar Elements</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School Year</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Long breaks are better for maintenance</li> <li>• Students would like more review time</li> <li>• Respect holidays</li> <li>• Desire for consistency with the rest of the world</li> <li>• Weather/ climate/ light/ dark – need to consider these conditions</li> <li>• Impacts on jobs and other activities</li> <li>• Consider an additional break between March and June (at high school level)</li> </ul>
<b>Calendar Elements</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Holidays and breaks</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Distribute them evenly</li> <li>• Longer breaks (more evenly distributed) would allow students and staff to be well rested (as long as there is no homework)</li> <li>• Benefits to employee wellness</li> <li>• Consider a balance for families and also benefits to staff</li> <li>• Desire for consideration of shortening summer by a week or so and have reading breaks throughout year and/or 4 day weekends to provide breaks. Positive for students and staff, but impact on parents and childcare.</li> </ul>
<b>Impacts and implications of possible changes</b>	<p>Need to consider potential impacts and implications for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students</li> <li>• Families</li> <li>• Staff</li> <li>• Employee Wellness, Sickness, Rest</li> <li>• TOC time</li> <li>• Athletics programs</li> <li>• Funded Music/ Drama programs (scheduled for before and after school)</li> </ul>

Issues	Summary of Feedback
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Athletic seasons with other districts</li> <li>• Opportunities for continual entry</li> <li>• Child care and Child Care providers</li> <li>• Recreation Centres and other program providers</li> <li>• Summer school</li> <li>• Student employment opportunities</li> <li>• Family vacations</li> <li>• Parents and teachers with children in other School Districts (need for consistency)</li> <li>• Meeting Needs of all Students (full diversity of learners)</li> <li>• Distributed Learning</li> <li>• BC Education Plan and Personalized Learning</li> <li>• Alignment with post-secondary institutions</li> <li>• Exam time frames in secondary schools</li> <li>• Provincial Exam Schedules</li> </ul> <p><b>**List is subject to further additions**</b></p>
<b>Research Needs</b>	<p>Desire for research regarding:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Schools in Europe and elsewhere using the balanced calendar system</li> <li>• What are the optimum learning conditions for students? (e.g., length of class and for which subjects?)</li> <li>• Length of holidays – implications/ benefits and challenges</li> <li>• BC school experiences with balanced calendar (Douglas Park, Langley, etc.)</li> <li>• Impact of changes to calendar on family time (those without special needs) – opportunity for family time during summers</li> <li>• Impacts of changes in length of day to out of school program funded by parents such as music, dance, sports</li> <li>• Impacts of longer days or change in calendar on students jobs</li> <li>• Impacts on productivity, learning and retention</li> <li>• Building considerations (e.g., heat)</li> </ul>
<b>Process Concerns</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communication and Notification</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Desire to know about any changes ahead of time</li> <li>• No radical change for next year</li> </ul>
<b>Process Concerns</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communication with partners groups/ child care providers, and program providers (e.g., Recreation Commission)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Need for their involvement in and awareness of this process and potential outcomes</li> <li>• Need to sync with their planning</li> <li>• They should be present at Jan 24 meeting</li> <li>• General consultation with broader public is OK, but need focused consultation with care and program providers</li> <li>• Communication/ representation/ inclusion/ notification/ consultation</li> <li>• Need translation of communication materials</li> </ul>

## Summary of Next Steps and Homework

Meeting notes will be posted to the NVSD website and circulated to email contacts.

Homework for Steering Group members:

- 1) Review and circulate meeting notes from December 11, 2012 meeting
- 2) Send all information requests to Mark Jefferson [mjefferson@nvsd44.bc.ca](mailto:mjefferson@nvsd44.bc.ca)

### **Next Meeting**

The objectives of the January 8, 2013 School Calendar Steering Group meeting will include:

- To confirm the objectives and process for the January 24, 2013 meeting (e.g., similar to graduation dialogue)
- To finalize the discussion framework for the January 24 meeting
- To confirm key questions for January 24 meeting
- To clarify next steps including additional information needs, homework and subsequent meetings.

Steering Group members are reminded that you have been asked to serve as representatives of your schools, group or organization. Please strive to be inclusive of the array of perspectives within your constituency when circulating information and participating in Steering Group discussions.