

# North Vancouver School District School Calendar Steering Group

## October 21, 2013 – Meeting Summary Notes

**Facilitator** Dorli Duffy

### **Steering Group Members**

In Attendance:

Trustee Cyndi Gerlach  
Trustee Christie Sacre  
Karen Nordquist – NVPAC  
Kathy Owens – NVPAC  
Deb Wanner – NoVA - Elem  
Kelly La Roue – NoVA - Elem  
Brenda Bell – NoVA - Elem  
Greg Hockley – NoVA - Sec  
Joyce Griffiths – CUPE  
Mark Jefferson – District Staff – Assistant Superintendent  
Xenia O'Brien – District Staff – Human Resources  
Michael Kee – District Staff – Human Resources  
Greg Milner – District Staff – Admin Services  
Rena Violato – District Staff – Payroll  
Dan Storms – NVTA  
Carolyn Pena – NVTA

Absent:

Carol Nordby – CUPE  
Jana Ghimire – SLC Student  
Abby Muscutt – SLC Student  
Pius Ryan – District Staff – Assistant Superintendent  
Maureen Stanger – NoVA - Sec

### **1.0 Objectives**

On October 21, 2013, the North Vancouver School District School Calendar Steering Group (SCSG) held their meeting at the NVSD Education Services Centre. The meeting objectives were to:

- Confirm School Calendar Steering Group roles, responsibilities, expected outcomes and process timeline
- Review 2013/14 School Calendar rationale and decision
- Review plans for 2013/14 staff collaboration time
- Consider secondary schools' plans and strategies for managing semester and year end timelines
- Set additional Steering Group meeting dates

- Clarify next steps including additional information needs, homework and subsequent meetings

This document provides a brief summary of discussions held during the meeting. A copy of the PowerPoint presentation from the October 21<sup>st</sup> meeting is posted on the North Vancouver School District's website [\[Link\]](#)

## **2.0 Introductions**

The meeting began with a confirmation of Steering Group roles and responsibilities, expected outcomes and timelines:

### **Steering Group Role:**

- Provide advice on the consultation process regarding school calendars for the next 3-4 years
- Consider legislation, past feedback and other relevant information regarding school calendars
- Identify perspectives, values and considerations associated with school calendars
- Review and consider consultation feedback
- Make recommendations to the NVSD Executive Committee and the Board of Education regarding the 2014/15, as well as 2015/16, 2016/17 and 2017/18), school calendars

### **Steering Group Responsibilities**

- Attend Steering Group meetings (Dates: December 2, 2013; January 20, 2014; February 24, 2014)
- Represent the membership of your organization or constituency
- Attend all meetings
- Keep your constituency informed of SCSG discussions
- Strive to be inclusive of the array of perspectives within your constituency when participating in Steering Group discussions.
- Support in carrying out duties as required

### **Steering Group Expected Outcomes**

- Recommendations brought forward in 2013/14 school year, for a school calendar for 2014/15 (for Board adoption in February 2014)
- Recommendations brought forward in 2014/15 school year, for a three-year calendar (2015/16, 2016/17, and 2017/18), would ensue in Fall 2014 (for Board adoption in February 2015)

### **Steering Group Communications**

- A meeting summary will be generated after each Steering Group meeting and posted on the School District website

- A Final Steering Group Summary will incorporate findings and recommendations for consideration by the NVSD Executive Committee and the Board of Education

### **Steering Group Timeline**

- October 21, 2013 – Steering Group Meeting. Additional meeting dates: December 2, 2013; January 20, 2014; February 24, 2014.
- 2013/14:
  - Monitor implementation of elementary staff collaboration time;
  - Track plans to manage year- end (including exam time) changes in secondary schools
- Review Yearly Calendar including “Days” for 2014/15
- Final School Calendar Steering Group Meeting (January 20, 2014 or February 24, 2014) to consider consultation information and confirm recommendations to NVSD Executive Committee and the Board of Education for 2014/15.

Assistant Superintendent Mark Jefferson reminded participants of the rationale behind the 2013/14 school calendar decision. He also reiterated the group’s agreement to hold the current calendar recommendation for 2014/15, pending any tweaks in response to feedback. The focus for the group this year will be to monitor the implementation of the 2013/14 calendar and consider any additional concerns or impacts identified during its implementation.

### **3.0 Review of Secondary and Elementary Staff Collaboration Time Plans**

Mark Jefferson provided an example of the staff collaboration time planned topics submitted by elementary and secondary schools for the 7 staff collaboration dates in 2013/14. Planned topics must address the 4 pillars of education, be aligned with school goals for that year, and be focused on school improvement initiatives and student learning. During the ensuing discussion, Steering Group members offered feedback from the first staff collaboration time sessions (held September 27) and outlined plans for assessing the effectiveness of these initiatives.

#### ***Feedback***

- Desire to hear both positive and negative feedback about staff collaboration time
  - What is working?
  - What is not working?
    - Suggestions or options to improve upon weaknesses
- Suggestion for reflective surveys to identify opportunities for improvement
  - Surveys within schools
  - Surveys within partner groups
  - Examples:
    - Attendance at collaboration sessions?
    - What was helpful?
    - What else would staff like to see?
  - Use this information to guide future collaboration plans
  - Need a consistent method of collecting feedback

- Engagement and buy-in of all staff requires participation by all partners through:
  - Planning of collaboration sessions (topics and structure).
  - Involvement in sessions
  - Running sessions
  - Ensuring that sessions are engaging (interactive, two-way, and collaborative) and not only offering a 1-way flow of information
  - Engagement in learning
  - Ensuring topics are relevant to all partners; if not, plan separate topics tailored to different groups
  
- Desire for staff opportunities to volunteer their expertise, interest, and willingness to deliver or help to structure collaboration sessions. Teachers at a number of schools have reported that there are currently no opportunities to alter the format/content of the collaboration meetings to allow teachers to collaborate. To many, it feels like another “staff meeting.”
  
- Teachers and parents would like to offer topics for consideration.
  
- Desire for opportunities to share collaboration plans
  - Between schools and Families of Schools
  - To learn from experiences at other schools (share the learning)
  - To share resources
  
- Need for clarity: “What is staff collaboration time?”
  - Some may see collaboration time as a mini-professional development opportunity
  
- Concern about the opportunity for front office staff to participate if they are responsible for attending to students who have been “left behind”
  
- Importance of raising awareness regarding how collaboration time is being used
  - Some schools are communicating plans for collaboration time in school newsletters
    - What is planned?
    - Why this type of collaboration?
    - Expected outcomes?
    - Plans for next month’s collaboration time
  - Some are posting minutes from collaboration time sessions
  
- Need a process to track collaboration time plans, activities and feedback in order to monitor collaboration time and to inform any amendments to collaboration time plans in 2014/15.
  
- There was discussion of the need to make-up any lost Non-Instructional Time (NIT) that occurs when a teacher’s scheduled NIT conflicts with collaboration time.

#### **4.0 Secondary Schools – Plans and strategies for managing Semester and Year-end Timelines**

The Steering Group discussed examples of strategies being considered to manage changes to secondary school semester and year-end timelines. In the 2013/14 calendar, the second-to-last last week of school is now full instructional time. This means that exams may be given during a day in which students are also attending other classes. Participants discussed challenges and opportunities associated with this change, including:

- Logistical and educational challenges in having classes in session at the same time as school-based and government-based examinations
- Time constraints to mark and report on grades within deadlines
- Teacher needs related to review and preparing students for exams
- Opportunities to support struggling students, and
- Opportunities to move programs back from earlier in the year (e.g., Safe Teen program, etc.)

The NVTA indicated that they were not in full agreement regarding the district's definition of delivery of the educational program and, more specifically, the actual learning activities necessary to count as the provision of instructional hours during the exam period.

#### **5.0 Review of 2014/15 School Calendar Matrix**

A draft calendar was discussed for the 2014/15 school year. This draft calendar replicates the 2013/14 calendar, but also includes a 4-day weekend associated with November 11, 2014. "Rolling over" the 2013/14 calendar for the 2014/15 school year will give the Steering Group the opportunity to more fully consider feedback associated with the implementation of staff collaboration time and year-end changes in the 2013/14 calendar.

#### **6.0 Summary of Next Steps**

- Finalize October 21, 2013 meeting summary - post on website and circulate to email contacts
- Steering Group members to communicate progress to constituencies
- Next Steering Group meeting – December 2, 2013
- Future meeting dates – January 20, 2014 and February 24, 2014

#### **Next Meeting**

The objectives of the next School Calendar Steering Group meeting, scheduled for December 2, 2013, will include:

- An overview of existing literature and research regarding balanced school calendars.
- Consideration of additional feedback regarding the 2013/14 calendar

- Clarifying 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.