

North Vancouver School District – School Calendar Steering Group

February 12, 2013 – Meeting Summary Notes

Facilitator Dorli Duffy

Steering Group Members

In Attendance:

Trustee Cyndi Gerlach
Trustee Christie Sacré
Dan Storms - NVTA
Robin Deleurme– NVTA
Karen Nordquist – NVPAC
Kathy Owens – NVPAC
Deb Wanner – NoVA-Elem
Kelly La Roue – NoVA- Elem
Liz Bell – NoVA-Sec
Greg Hockley – NoVA- Sec
Les Murata – CUPE
Joyce Griffiths – CUPE
Carol Nordby - CUPE
Mark Jefferson – District Staff – Assistant Superintendent
Pius Ryan – District Staff – Assistant Superintendent
Scott Stanley – District Staff – Human Resources
Xenia O’Brien – District Staff – Human Resources
Pat Bretner– District Staff – Payroll

Absent:

Greg Milner –District Staff
Melika Garpour-Student
Jana Ghimire-Student

1.0 Objectives

On February 12, 2013, the North Vancouver School District School Calendar Steering Group (SCSG) held their fourth meeting at the NVSD Education Services Centre. The meeting objectives were to:

- Review findings from January 24 representatives meeting
- Review calendar options and public survey questions and make recommendations to Board of Education for February 19, 2013 Board Meeting
- Clarify next steps including additional information needs, homework and subsequent meetings

Following a review of findings from the January 24, 2013 School Calendar Partner Representatives Meeting, Steering Group members worked as a large group to discuss collaboration time, calendar options, and questions for the public survey. This document provides a brief summary of discussions held during the meeting. A copy of the PowerPoint presentation from the meeting is posted on the North Vancouver School District's website [\[link\]](#)

2.0 Collaboration Time

Steering Group members expressed appreciation for the January 24 discussions about collaboration and acknowledged the improvement in participant understanding of the need and value of collaboration over the course of the evening.

Findings from the January 24 breakout group discussions as well as the School Calendar Survey administered at that meeting demonstrate very strong support for “calendar options that provide for staff collaboration time during the school day, while still meeting the Ministry of Education Instructional hours requirements.” Participants also expressed strong support for a 2 week Spring Break and 2 week Winter Break. However, less support was expressed for the idea of students and staff attending school and work during either/ both of a limited number of days in the last week of August or the beginning of July. This dichotomy in findings led to the first discussion for the February 12 Steering Group meeting: ***Where do we find the time for collaboration?***

Steering Group members reiterated their understanding that any calendar options must meet two sets of direction:

- Ministry of Education requirements for “hours of instruction” and
- Collective agreement provisions regarding the length of the “work day”

They also acknowledged the need to ensure that student needs are first and foremost in considering calendar options, and expressed a desire for assurance that collaboration time will be meaningful and used effectively to benefit students.

Clarification was offered that Professional Development days, Curriculum Implementation Days and Administrative Days do not constitute instructional time. In addition, instructional hours are different for elementary and secondary school. In secondary school, NVSD schools are currently above the minimum number of instructional hours, and therefore we “have a cushion”. In elementary school, however, there is no cushion.

Collaboration time is already built into the secondary calendar, but is only currently provided in four elementary schools. Steering Group members discussed the current practice of collaboration in the four elementary schools.

Some schools adjust their lunch and recess periods and use early dismissal in order to create time for professional collaboration. Adjustments to lunch and recess require annual approval by the individual school committees. Others have used late starts on

certain mornings. Some Steering Group members expressed concern about compressing elementary lunch and recess periods further when these breaks are important for student health and wellness. It was also acknowledged that extending the calendar year into July would have cost implications. This suggests that one challenge in finding collaboration time in elementary schools involves a trade-off between the length of recess and lunch vs. school time in July and August. Some participants expressed a reluctance to “take from kids to benefit kids” by stealing from elementary lunch and recess periods to create collaboration time. It was noted that there has already been a loss of 10 minutes from lunchtime at some schools to create the 2 week Spring Break.

Although Steering Group representatives unanimously expressed their desire and support for a 2 week Spring Break, it is important to note that any calendar adjustment to create a 2 week Spring Break for teachers at the elementary level will require the North Vancouver Teachers’ Association (NVTa) to agree to the School District extending the school day beyond the present language in the “Duration of the School Day” Article of the Collective Agreement.

Steering Group members acknowledged that a broader group of partner representatives and the broader public won’t have the same understanding of the value of professional collaboration time within the school day (e.g., so that all staff can attend, not just teachers, etc.).

It was suggested that we need to know how frequently elementary collaboration time would take place in order to know how much time we need to find in the calendar. As an exercise, the group discussed the notion of one hour per month of professional collaboration time in elementary schools. If school were to be in session for 8.5 months, this would require finding 1.5 days of instructional time. If school were to start on the day after Labour Day (September 3) as a full day of instruction, only an additional half day of time would need to be found.

Steering Group members also heard that the first and last days of school involve a significant work load for clerical staff, and that having students attend a full day of instruction would add to that load.

A concern was also raised regarding supervision of special needs students during professional collaboration time. That is, if all staff were to attend collaboration time, who would supervise these students?

3.0 Calendar Options

Steering Group members agreed to include Proposals A and B in the Public School Calendar Survey (February 20 – March 2, 2013). Proposal A will include the current practice of inclusion of professional collaboration time for secondary schools. Proposal B will include the addition of professional collaboration time for elementary schools as well.

4.0 Survey Questions

Steering Group members suggested that questions relevant to the 2013/14 school calendar be separated from those relevant to future calendars in the Public School Calendar Survey (February 20 – March 2, 2013).

5.0 Summary of Next Steps

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

Next Steps

- Finalize January 24 meeting summary - post on website
- Steering Group members to communicate progress to constituencies
- February 19, 2013 Board of Education Meeting
- Public Survey – February 20-March 2
- Steering Group reviews survey results and provides final recommendations to Board of Education
- March 6, 2013 – Steering Group meeting
- March 12, 2013 Board of Education – Board makes final decision re School Calendar for 2013-14

Next Meeting

The objectives of the March 6, 2013 Steering Group meeting will include:

- Review findings from Public School Calendar Survey (February 20 – March 2)
- Review calendar options and make recommendations to Board of Education for March 12 Board Meeting
- Clarify next steps including additional information needs 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.