

# North Vancouver School District School Calendar Steering Group

## December 9, 2013 – Meeting Summary Notes

**Facilitator** Dorli Duffy

### **Steering Group Members**

In Attendance:

Trustee Christie Sacre  
Karen Nordquist – NVPAC  
Kathy Owens – NVPAC  
Deb Wanner – NoVA - Elem  
Brenda Bell – NoVA - Elem  
Maureen Stanger – NoVA - Sec  
Greg Hockley – NoVA – Sec  
David Overgaard – NoVA - Sec  
Joyce Griffiths – CUPE  
Carol Nordby – CUPE  
Mark Jefferson – District Staff – Assistant Superintendent  
Pius Ryan – 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  
Jana Ghimire – SLC Student  
Dan Storms – NVTA  
Carolyn Pena – NVTA

Absent:

Trustee Cyndi Gerlach  
Kelly La Roue – NoVA - Elem

### **1.0 Objectives**

On December 9, 2013, the North Vancouver School District School Calendar Steering Group (SCSG) held their second meeting in the 2013/14 school year at the NVSD Education Services Centre. The meeting objectives were to:

- Provide an overview of existing literature and research regarding balanced school calendars.
- Confirm plans to review collaboration time
- Provide an update regarding secondary year end plans
- Consider additional feedback regarding the 2014/15 calendar
- Clarify next steps including additional information needs and subsequent meetings

This document provides a brief summary of discussions held during the meeting. A copy of the PowerPoint presentation from the December 9<sup>th</sup> meeting is posted on the North Vancouver School District's website [\[link\]](#)

## **2.0 Overview of literature and research regarding balanced school calendars**

NVPAC representative Karen Nordquist provided an overview of her review of current literature and research regarding balanced school calendars. The following local documents were amongst those referenced [\[linked documents\]](#):

[Richmond School District No. 38 – February 2010 – Balanced Calendar Report](#)  
[Kanaka Creek's SD 42 Balanced Calendar](#)

Steering Group discussed:

Advantages of balanced calendars included reduced stress levels and burnout (improved wellness), as well as benefits to high-risk (vulnerable) students. Disadvantages included the challenges for families and teachers with students in different schools, and the loss of traditional breaks having an impact on staff education, student employment and summer education. These studies are inconclusive regarding the impact on academic achievement or attendance.

The Steering Group offered their perspectives balanced calendars, expressing concerns including:

- Length of breaks
  - Blocks of time required for maintenance
- Timing of breaks
  - Coordination of inter-district sports
  - Community services seeking to serve families if schools balance their calendars in different ways
- Number of breaks
  - Increased number of breaks would be more difficult for students needing support to begin and end any school session (ie. Students with Special Needs)
- Experience with balanced school calendars
  - So far, there have only been balanced calendars in elementary schools – need to consider impacts on high schools as well

One participant reiterated that the Steering Group's role is to make this information regarding balanced school calendars available to the community and to let the community decide.

## **3.0 Collaboration Time Review**

Mark Jefferson provided copies of the NVSD Summary of 2013-14 Staff Collaboration Time Planned Topics [\[link\]](#). This document includes staff collaboration time planned topics submitted by elementary and secondary schools for the 7 staff collaboration dates in 2013/14. As noted during the October 21, 2013 School Calendar Steering

Group meeting, 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.

Steering Group members expressed a desire to ensure that staff collaboration time is useful for all staff. They reiterated a desire for collaboration time to be flexible in terms of serving the needs of teachers and SEAs to discuss different topics and issues. The group requested that the review of collaboration time include a review of:

- The success of communication efforts to improve general awareness and understanding of:
  - The meaning and purpose of collaboration time, and
  - Collaboration time topics and delivery processes.
  
- The success of engagement by all partners in:
  - Planning collaboration time.
  - Deciding on collaboration time topics, and
  - Delivering collaboration time plans.

Mark Jefferson noted that the Directors of Learning Services will begin a review of collaboration time in May of 2014. The findings of their review will be communicated to the Steering Group. In the meantime, Steering Group members are encouraged to continue to gather feedback from their constituencies regarding collaboration time initiatives this calendar year. Teachers, SEAs and staff are encouraged to communicate feedback to Principals and Vice Principals as well.

#### **4.0 Update on Secondary Schools Year-end**

Mark Jefferson provided a summary of changes to secondary school year end as a result of the new Ministry of Education criteria regarding minimum hours of instruction. He noted that Principals and Vice Principals are making plans to address related changes to the last weeks of school semester and year end. Secondary school administrators are working with staff, committees, department heads and parents to confirm how the time at the end of the year will be used. With the changes in Ministry of Education criteria, there is no difference in teacher responsibilities between the last week of school and any other week during the school year.

#### **5.0 Proposed 2014/15 School Calendar Matrix**

The draft calendar under discussion for the 2014/15 school year 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.

Mark Jefferson noted that the Pro-D days, implementation days and collaboration days on the draft 2014/15 calendar matrix are “notional” pending the setting of actual dates within individual schools.

Steering Group members supported the recommendation of this draft 2014/15 School Calendar matrix to the Board of Trustees for public consideration. NVTa and CUPE representatives acknowledged the need to communicate with their constituencies in advance of offering their full support, but were comfortable with making a recommendation to the Board, pending hearing back from their constituents. Both the NVTa and CUPE #389 indicated that they will meet separately with School District staff/representatives to discuss any specific collective agreement matters prior to the January 13<sup>th</sup> meeting.

Steering Group members agreed to email any constituent feedback regarding the draft 2014/15 Calendar to Mark Jefferson ([mjefferson@sd44.ca](mailto:mjefferson@sd44.ca)) by January 10, 2014. If there are substantive concerns, the Steering Group agreed to meet on January 13, 2014. If there are no substantive concerns, the draft calendar will be recommended to the Board of Trustees at the January 21, 2014 Public Board Meeting.

## **6.0 Summary of Next Steps**

- Finalize December 9, 2013 meeting summary - post on website and circulate to email contacts
- Steering Group members to communicate progress to constituencies
- Email constituent feedback regarding the Draft 2014/15 School Calendar to Mark Jefferson ([mjefferson@sd44.ca](mailto:mjefferson@sd44.ca)) by January 10, 2014
- Possible Steering Group meeting – January 13, 2014 (to be confirmed by January 10, 2014)
- Steering Group meeting – February 24, 2014

## **Next Meeting**

The objectives of the next School Calendar Steering Group meeting, will include:

- Consideration of additional feedback regarding the 2014/15 calendar
- Consideration of additional feedback regarding collaboration time
- 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.