



Memorandum to the Board of Education

Meeting in Public`

FROM: Peter Dubinsky, Superintendent
DATE: October 14, 2022
SUBJECT: 4-Day Week Update

For Information

Introduction

Per the direction of the Board of Education, district Staff were asked to gather information regarding the process for examining the possibility of a four-day per week school calendar (a “4-Day Week”).

Reference is made to the memorandum prepared for the Board dated September 16, 2022, discussed at the September 20, 2022 Board meeting.

Background/Information

Within School District 10, Burton Elementary School and Edgewood Elementary School currently operate on a 4-Day Week. BES transitioned to a 4-Day Week in the 2006-2007 school year, following a consultation process throughout the 2005-2006 school year, undertaken to consider the closure of BES due to declining enrollment. The consultation process resulted in a proposed pilot for BES, a K-4 school at the time, to operate an Outdoor Education program for intermediate grade students (5/6) from the Nakusp, Burton, Fauquier and Edgewood communities. For the proposed Outdoor Education pilot both the 4-Day Week and 5-Day Week models were considered, with transportation costs, efficiencies and longer instructional days factoring into the decision to move forward with a 4-day model.

Edgewood Elementary School transitioned to a 4-Day Week effective the 2009-2010 school year. District staff have not been able to determine the full extent of the consultation process undertaken before the move. . However, based on the Board minutes from that time and recent consultations with District staff who were employed with the District at that time, the Calendar Committee, Southern Zone staff and the Southern Zone PAC were crucial stakeholders that were consulted by the Board prior to making its decision.

Also, per the records from the around the time of the decisions to transition BES and subsequently EES to a 4-day calendar, the Board also considered the possibility of a 4-day week for all schools in the District. However, these records do not provide any specific details regarding any consultation that was done or the rationale for not transitioning the other schools.



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There are two districts in BC that currently have a 4-Day Week for all the schools within their district: School District No. 51 (Boundary) ("SD51") and School District No. 64 (Gulf Islands) ("SD61"). To summarize, the rationales these districts have provided for their decision to adopt a 4-Day Week:

- SD51 did so for budgetary reasons, as in 2001-2002 they were facing steep declining enrolment, and needed to cut costs to focus on and preserve programming. The district engaged in a full consultation process with all stakeholders to ensure that all voices were heard on the matter.
- SD64 had a common interest amongst their communities, families, staff and the district to condense their school to a 4-Day Week due to family preference, to aid recruitment and retention of staff, to reduce overall transit time to and from school due to their district having a considerable number of students who travel to longer transit times to schools including ferries, and to divert savings towards greater educational priorities. The district engaged in a full consultation process with all stakeholders to ensure that all voices were heard on the matter.

Ministry of Education and Child Care ("MECC") Requirements

The Ministry of Education and Child Care asks districts to ensure they have engaged in a fulsome consultation process with all key stakeholders if they are considering moving to a 4-Day Week. The District must ensure that the required instructional hours are met in a 4-Day Week schedule. The proposed schedule change would also have to be presented and passed thorough the district's Calendar Committee and then re-submitted to the Board for approval. The District's calendar must be made available to the public for input by the end of February each year and submitted to the MECC for approval no later than March 31 each year for the calendar adopted for the following school year.

A 4-Day Week Consultation Process

It would be appropriate, and it is expected by the MECC, that a Board of Education perform due consultation with all families, partner groups, students, the Indigenous Education Advisory Council, and the broader communities in which the District operates, prior to making a decision regarding a 4-Day Week.

For example, due consultation would include multiple meetings and surveys with all the above parties. For transparency during the consultation process, a comprehensive set of information would be ascertained and prepared by District Staff both for the Board's information as well as shared with the above parties during the consultation process to facilitate a meaningful dialogue and to obtain useful feedback and expressions of preference.



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Such information would include available data regarding the educational impacts of a 4-Day Week on students of all ages, cohorts of students, including elementary and secondary aged students, other groups, students with diverse needs, and Indigenous students. It would also include a comprehensive operational and financial analysis, an assessment of impacts on recruitment and retention, the availability of childcare on days off, the impacts on partner groups (ALTA, CUPE and ALELA) and their members, and other requested information that might arise during the process. Further, a thorough analysis of the impacts and feedback from SD51 and SD64 would be undertaken and shared.

Conclusion

Historical information from SD10, SD51 and SD64 have provided background information about the reasons each district implemented 4-day school calendar, as well as the general nature of the consultation processes each district followed. In each district, it is evident that fulsome consultations were performed, providing useful frameworks for future consultation processes.

Should the Board wish to proceed with a consultation process to help evaluate a 4-Day Week for the District and direct staff accordingly, the Board may want to consider the timing of such a process, factoring in current Board initiatives, such as the development of a new Strategic Plan, the beginning of operations at the new Nakusp Early Learning Child Care Centre, and onboarding the new Board of Education.