

ANCHORAGE SCHOOL DISTRICT
ANCHORAGE, ALASKA

ASD MEMORANDUM #27 (2005-2006)

September 12, 2005

TO: SCHOOL BOARD

FROM: OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT

SUBJECT: A PROPOSED CALENDAR CHANGE 2005-2006: SPRING
PARENT/TEACHER CONFERENCE WEEK

ASD Goal: *Establish and maintain a supportive and effective learning environment.*

RECOMMENDATION:

It is the Administration's recommendation that the School Board modify the 2005-2006 school year calendar by moving third quarter parent-teacher conference week from April 10-14 to April 17-21. Making this change will avoid conflicts with Passover observances.

PERTINENT FACTS:

In the spring of 2005, the Interfaith Council and members of Congregation Beth Shalom notified the Administration that third quarter parent-teacher conferences conflict with the first two nights of Passover. This significant Jewish holiday marks the deliverance of the Jews from slavery in Egypt and begins at sunset on April 12. Local practicing Jews prepare their homes and have family and community observances on the first two nights of Passover. With the existing calendar, teachers and families would be unable to attend evening conferences and practice their Jewish faith.

The current configuration of parent-teacher conferences for elementary students involves individual conferences scheduled by teachers and parents. Middle school and high school conferences are held in a group format, with opportunities for parents to meet with teachers from multiple subject areas. These conferences occur in the afternoon and in the evening.

During meetings with the administration, Rabbi Wenger of Congregation Beth Shalom expressed concern that practicing Jews on the Anchorage School District staff would be required to ask for a special accommodation in order to observe Passover. Educators speaking with Rabbi Wenger believe facilitating conferences is an important professional duty and one that should not conflict with their religious observance. Educators may arrange for a substitute teacher if they wish

to take personal leave when religious holidays fall on school days. However, substitutes cannot fill the role of teacher at conferences.

The Anchorage School District has an increasingly diverse student and staff population and we must be sensitive to the cultural and religious traditions of both. The Interfaith Council has provided a list of the most significant holy days observed by local faith communities. This list has been shared with all principals with a request to avoid scheduling evening meetings and events. To avoid future conflicts, I have requested that a member of the Interfaith Council serve on the calendar committee.

CC

Attachments

Prepared by: Carol Comeau, Superintendent

Approved by: Carol Comeau, Superintendent



2005-06 School Year Calendar

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July

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31						

August

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September

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AUGUST

30 Teachers' first day
31 State released professional development days

SEPTEMBER

1-2 State released professional development days
5 Labor Day holiday
6 Classes begin

OCTOBER

4-6 State assigned testing days
28 End of first quarter (42 days). State released grade reporting day

NOVEMBER

7-10 Parent conference week, early release for students. Schools will announce schedules.
11 State released professional development day
24-25 Thanksgiving holiday

DECEMBER

19-30 Winter Vacation

JANUARY

2 Winter Vacation (continued)
16 Martin Luther King, Jr. birthday-no school
23 End of second quarter (47 days). State released grade reporting day

FEBRUARY

20 Presidents Day

MARCH

17 End of third quarter (38 days). State released grade reporting day
20-24 Spring break

APRIL

4-6 State assigned testing dates
17-20 Parent conference week, early release for students. Schools will announce schedules.

21 State released professional development day

MAY

19 Flexible state released professional development day
29 Memorial Day holiday

JUNE

8 Classes end. End of fourth quarter (53 days)
9 Teachers' last day

- () Beginning, end of quarter
-
 Vacation day, holiday
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 State released in-service day(s)
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 Parent conference
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 Teachers beginning, ending days
-
 School beginning, ending days
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 Statewide testing

S M T W T F S

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