

ANCHORAGE SCHOOL DISTRICT
ANCHORAGE, ALASKA

ASD MEMORANDUM #37 (2008-2009)

August 25, 2008

TO: SCHOOL BOARD

FROM: OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT

SUBJECT: RECOMMENDATION FOR SCHOOL CALENDARS: 2009-2010,
2010-2011

ASD GOAL:

Establish and maintain a supportive and effective learning environment.

RECOMMENDATION:

It is the Administration's recommendation the School Board approve and adopt the attached district-wide calendars "Draft AA" for the 2009-2010 and 2010-2011 school years.

PERTINENT FACTS:

During the spring of 2008 a committee was established to make a recommendation on school calendars for the upcoming 2009-2010 and 2010-2011 school years and to review the 2008-2009 calendar that was approved by the board on February 21, 2007.

The committee was composed of the following individuals:

Ray Amsden (Facilities); Juliana Armstrong (Asst. Principal); MaryLou Boughton (Payroll); Pamela Chenier (Purchasing); Jose DelReal (Student Rep); Michelle Egan (Communications); Ed Graff (Principal/Elementary Executive Director); Isabel Groff (Student Nutrition/Totem Rep.); Steve Kalmes (Transportation); Corinne McVee (Grant Writer/ACE); Duane Moran (AV Services/ACE); Glen Nielsen (Elementary Education); Alden Thern (Benefits); Leslie Vandergaw (Mid Level Education); Laurel Vorachek (Assessment & Evaluation).

Robb Boyer (Director of Certificated Staffing and Recruitment) acted as a facilitator for the committee. Ginger Moser (H. R. Administrative Assistant) kept

minutes and notified the committee of upcoming events. Pam Butcher (Communications) provided the draft calendar support.

The members met as a full committee on two separate occasions and attendance is documented in MLP. Drafts of the proposed calendars were maintained for public review and comment on the district website from July 14 through August 7, 2008. A summary of the electronic comments is attached.

Calendar Issues

The committee attempted to maintain changes made by the district in the 2006-2007 calendar, which had gone through great public, employee, and Board scrutiny and had engendered widespread support. Specifically, the committee wanted to maintain a calendar that included:

- a minimum of 170 student contact days
- “snow-day”/emergency closure flexibility for the superintendent
- inservice days (10 allowed by state)
 - two for teacher set-up and take down (first/last day of calendar)
 - three for grade reporting and individual teacher planning (contract language)
 - two for evening parent conference work compensation
 - three for cross-district, cross division, and site-based professional development
- school start prior to Labor Day
- closure prior to Memorial Day
- quarters ending prior to Winter and Spring Break
- attention to potential religious conflicts

In addition, the committee was asked to look carefully at and discuss issues associated with:

- student contact days
- the “gap” between the end of the quarter grade reporting and the corresponding parent conference dates
- spring break placement
- new science testing dates
- confirm the accuracy of the 2008-09 calendar
- discuss any potential other changes to the calendar structure or specifics of 2009-2010 and 2010-2011

Student Contact Days

2009-2010 Calendar

First Semester

August -	9
September -	21
October -	20
November -	19
December -	<u>13</u>
	82

2010-2011 Calendar

First Semester

August -	10
September -	21
October -	19
November -	20
December -	<u>12</u>
	82

2009-2010 Calendar

Second Semester

January -	19
February -	19
March -	16
April -	22
May -	<u>14</u>
	90

2010-2011 Calendar

Second Semester

January -	20
February -	19
March -	16
April -	21
May -	<u>14</u>
	90

172 - Student Contact days (includes 2 snow days)

182 - Teacher work days (includes student contact days and inservice days)

Quarter Ending/Parent Teacher Conference Gap

The committee deliberated on the best way to cut the gap between the end of each quarter and the following parent teacher conference. Four things had to be considered when searching for a solution:

- The “processing” time needed by the middle and high school divisions to get their report cards ready for distribution.
- The location of spring break.
- April testing dates.
- April make-up testing dates.

In October of 2009-2010 and 2010-2011 the proposed calendars have seven school days between the end of the grade reporting period and the first day of conferences. In March the gap includes an additional week of “actual” time during the period of spring break. There was discussion that with the addition of the Zangle student management system grades may be able to be processed more quickly, but the committee did not want to suggest an earlier time during those calendar years given potential implementation issues. The recommended

calendars show the traditional two-day parent conference, one-day inservice format.

Spring Break

It was the committee's recommendation to maintain spring break during the second week in March. This allows for sufficient time to process grades, for parent teacher conferences and avoids both testing and makeup testing dates.

Science testing dates

The additional April science testing date is based on the best information we have at this time. Testing dates are subject to change by the Department of Education and Early Development.

2008-2009 Calendar

The calendar was reviewed and confirmed to be accurate in student contact days, teacher workdays and other areas.

2009-2010 through 2010-2011 Calendar Issues

- There was some interest in considering a move to a trimester system however it was decided to have those conversations in upcoming years. The committee was not supportive of making any change during the next two years.
- The committee also heard a presentation by the Fur Rendezvous Association. The group was interested in having the district provide a Friday vacation day for students to allow participation in Fur Rondy activities. The grade reporting inservice day falls within the Fur Rondy celebration on the 2009-2010 and 2010-2011 school calendars so the committee recommended a status quo approach on the issue.
- Semester imbalances (number of days) did not appear to be a significant issue, although the committee was able to keep the balance within eight days in both calendars. There was strong support on the committee to end the second quarter/first semester prior to winter break and the third quarter prior to spring break.

Summary Comments and Other Issues

- School year calendars are extremely complex. For every change that is made there is a corresponding impact upon some aspect of school or community life. Tweaking of days in any of the calendars must be done carefully to ensure that an unknown negative consequence has not been created. It is important to note that not all conflict issues can be avoided (i.e., end of quarter/parent-teacher conference proximity). Below are just some of the issues that must be considered when creating a school calendar:
 - Additional days of student contact prior to October testing
 - Best practice to increase AYP attainment
 - Busing
 - Construction (Facility)
 - Contractual Agreements
 - Early End Date
 - Early Start Date
 - Extra-Curricular Activities
 - Graduation Dates
 - Half-day usage
 - Inservice Days (Grade Reporting)
 - Inservice Days (Parent Involvement/Teacher Compensation)
 - Inservice Days (Professional Development)
 - Migrant education issues
 - Parent Conferences
 - Parent student release concerns
 - Partial weeks
 - Past attendance trends (before vacations, etc.)
 - Processing and posting of grades
 - Processing time of state tests
 - Professional Development “Best Practice”
 - Semester “number of days” balance
 - Quarters ending before vacations
 - Religious holidays
 - Seasonal concerns (i.e., darkness, weather, etc.)
 - Spring Break and separation from testing
 - State and National Calendaring date impacts
 - State Fair impact
 - State Dictated Testing Dates
 - Student contact days
 - Contractual agreements relative to paid holidays (all impacted bargaining groups)
 - Summer and Fall student employment

- Testing Make-up Dates
- Tourism (i.e., Cruise line schedules)
- Winter Sports (i.e., Arctic Winter Games, Fur Rendezvous, etc.)
- Both calendars offer a buffer between spring break and the testing week.
- It is important to ensure that the community understands the following points as these recommendations are discussed:
 - Testing dates are set by DEED.
 - The calendars will be posted on the website with a notation that they are subject to change, due to actions of the Board (i.e., changed testing dates by the state) or for other corrections.
 - The recommended calendar changes and new calendar adoptions are being made in the interest of meeting student instructional and academic performance needs.

Attachments: 2009-2010 Draft AA School Calendar
 2010-2011 Draft AA School Calendar
 Electronic Comments from Public and Staff

Prepared by: Robb Boyer, Ph.D. Director, Certificated Staffing and
 Recruitment, Calendar Committee Facilitator

Approved by: Eric Tollefsen, Executive Director, Human Resources



2009-10 School Year Calendar*

S M T W T F S

July

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AUGUST
13 Teachers' first day
14,17,18 State released professional development days
19 Classes begin

SEPTEMBER
7 Labor Day holiday

OCTOBER
6-8 State assigned testing days
16 End of first quarter. State released grade reporting day.
28-29 Parent conference days. School schedules and student-release times vary. Check with your school for specific schedule.
30 State released professional development day.

NOVEMBER
26-27 Thanksgiving holiday

DECEMBER
18 End of second quarter. State released grade reporting day.
21-31 Winter break

JANUARY
1 Winter break (continued)
18 Martin Luther King, Jr. birthday - no school

FEBRUARY
15 Presidents Day

MARCH
5 End of third quarter. State released grade reporting day.
8-12 Spring Break
24-25 Parent conference days. School schedules and student-release times vary. Check with your school for specific schedule.
26 State released professional development day.

APRIL
1, 6-8 State assigned testing days.

MAY
20 Classes end. End of fourth quarter.
21 Teachers' last day.
31 Memorial Day holiday

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

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* subject to change



2010-11 School Year Calendar*

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July

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December

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AUGUST

- 12 Teachers' first day
- 13,16 State released professional development days
- 17
- 18 Classes begin

SEPTEMBER

- 6 Labor Day holiday

OCTOBER

- 5-7 State assigned testing days
- 15 End of first quarter. State released grade reporting day.
- 27-28 Parent conference days. School schedules and student-release times vary. Check with your school for specific schedule.
- 29 State released professional development day.

NOVEMBER

- 25-26 Thanksgiving holiday

DECEMBER

- 17 End of second quarter. State released grade reporting day.
- 20-31 Winter break

JANUARY

- 17 Martin Luther King, Jr. birthday - no school

FEBRUARY

- 14 Presidents Day

MARCH

- 4 End of third quarter. State released grade reporting day.
- 7-11 Spring Break
- 16-17 Parent conference days. School schedules and student-release times vary. Check with your school for specific schedule.
- 18 State released professional development day.
- 31 State assigned testing day.

APRIL

- 5-7 State assigned testing days.

MAY

- 19 Classes end. End of fourth quarter.
- 20 Teachers' last day.
- 30 Memorial Day holiday

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

S M T W T F S

January

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May

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June

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* subject to change

Calendar Comments from Website – July/August 2008

Name:Bill Steele
Phone Number:753-4129
Email Address:steelefamily@gci.net

Sent on :Tuesday, August 05, 2008
Sent at :7:00:26 AM

Suggestion:Do away with the early start for schools and go back to the first week day after Labor Day. The almost to mid August start adversely impacts the Alaska State Fair, family activities such as hunting and even family visits out of state since the majority of the lower 48 start school in Sept. This move to accomodate the teachers did nothing to improve the school year for the students in 07-08, at least as far as my two were concerned.

Name:Jonathan Sacks
Phone Number:
Email Address:akhunter3@yahoo.com

Sent on :Monday, August 04, 2008
Sent at :3:05:08 PM

Suggestion:I would like to recommend a repositioning of the start/end days for the school year. The current dates start school so early that many students miss the first week or two of school in order to participate in hunting/fishing/gathering outings with their family.

As a recent graduate of Bartlett, I was plagued with this problem ever since the dates were changed to a mid-August time frame. I would propose moving the start day to immediately follow Labor day. The end-dates could also be moved out in order to allow for the required minimum days of school. This would make for a school year of the 1st week of Sep.- 1st week of June.

I sincerely hope the school district takes into consideration the subsistence lifestyle of many of it's students as it creates future school year calenders

Name:Nicholas Cline
Phone Number:
Email Address:Own33dd@gmail.com

Sent on :Monday, August 04, 2008
Sent at :2:38:45 PM

Suggestion:I feel that by constantly making the school year start earlier and earlier is very harsh on true Alaskan hunting and fishing families. With school starting so soon my families ability to harvest needed food is becoming harder and harder... especially when the seasons can be late.

I would advise you to go back to school ending around June 1 and starting near labor day again.

Thanks-
Nick

Name:Laura Wrenn
Phone Number:688-6233
Email Address:wrenn@mtaonline.net

Sent on :Friday, August 01, 2008
Sent at :11:30:06 AM

Suggestion:I suggest that the 10 - 11 calendar's schedule for spring conferences be adopted for the 09 -10 calendar as well.

The 09-10 calendar has spring conferences at time that makes coherent instruction difficult. Typically, students take extra time off for spring break so the week after break is often disrupted. If the following week is conferences, then middle schools have another week of disruptions, as we need to use the days prior to conferences to finish preparations for student led conferences. Following conferences week with one week of instruction and then SBAs leaves us with another disrupted week. Typically, math and language arts teachers use some instruction time to review test taking strategies and revisit the structure of the SBA tests. With the 09-10 calendar as it is, essentially 4 weeks of school will be difficult for teachers to structure instruction due to frequent interruptions from routine.

Name:Scott Shumway
Phone Number:
Email Address:shumway_scott@asdk12.org

Sent on :Wednesday, July 30, 2008
Sent at :2:05:57 PM

Suggestion:These early start calendars are terrible. The school year should not begin until after Labor Day. Our classes are half empty for the first two weeks of school. We end up teaching everything over again. This calendar messes up all the spring events due to the early release. These calendars are not good for families or educators.

Name:Carol Woods
Phone Number:677-7468
Email Address:woods_carol@asdk12.org

Sent on :Wednesday, July 30, 2008
Sent at :7:32:30 AM

Suggestion:Start the year the following week. The end of school would then be only a couple of days before Memorial Day weekend and there would still be an entire week before testing.

The earlier we start, the more students don't bother showing up the first weeks. I know of 2 families that say they'll continue their regular schedule of fishing, fair going, and camping until after labor day.

Name:Danielle Clay
Phone Number:
Email Address:Clay_Danielle@asdk12.org

Sent on :Tuesday, July 29, 2008
Sent at :2:26:52 PM

Suggestion:Regarding HSGQE Testing dates in April 2010 and April 2011 - Testing should be Tues.-Fri. of the 2nd week in April, not 3 days one week and one day the week prior. From a teaching/proctoring perspective, it is easier on staff, students and parents if testing is consistent and goes straight through during one week only. Otherwise, it disrupts two weeks of school instruction and the building environment as opposed to one week.

Name:Ilona Farr
Phone Number:9075624045
Email Address:afmc4045@yahoo.com

Sent on :Monday, July 28, 2008
Sent at :7:47:10 PM

Suggestion:We need to start school later! I liked the old schedule as this new schedule eliminates most of my summer activities. My children are in sports so all but 7 or 8 weekends of the year are taken up with sports. This has eliminated good quality family time. The new calender eliminates harvest time for me so I have had to give up gardening and my fruit trees now hang with wasted fruit. I rarely get out berry picking any more because of the new schedule, have been forced to give up my fishing which I have always done in August, have had to give up helping at the State Fair and entering our produce, baked goods, and animals in the fair.I have always done a trip to Denali in Sept and now with the early school start and all weekend races have had to give that up too! My children no longer have the two weeks at Christmas to complete school projects as everything is due before the holliday giving us no time to do all the holiday preparation that we use to do during December. And now I have two weeks when the children complain of nothing to do after 2 weeks of total sleep deprivation and stress for all of us! Spring break is way too early and getting out in May is horrible because August is the best month for doing activities in Alaska.I have lived here all of my life and envy my sister who home schools because she gets to enjoy August and has a family life.I am a physician and seriously have thought about pulling my "A" students out of the school district and home schooling them as I abhor this new schedule. I tried it for 2 years and find I am hating it more with each year.We need to have our summers back as the winters her are long enough as it is without eliminating the best month of the year for family time.When I went to high school at East we started XC running in Sept and finished in Oct.My favorite memories as a child were the family fun we had in August.Now my children are being deprived of those fun times by being up at an ungodly hour on saturday, stuck on a bus or school for hours for a short 15 minute run and stuck for hours on a bus back or in class all the time or at practice!.This totally destroys any family time as you can't spend time with your child to or from the races and leaves no time for weekend activities. We have a real problem with lack of physical activity causing obesity and diabetes in our society and I don't want to pull my children out of sports but I may be forced to for my own wellbeing and for that of the family because of this deplorable and despicable new schedule!All 29 of my family members dislike it as do most of my patients.I hope it will be changed back as it is totally unacceptable the way it is now!!!!

Name:Wanda Ehmann
Phone Number:
Email Address:ehmann_wanda@asdk12.org

Sent on :Monday, July 28, 2008
Sent at :1:57:36 PM

Suggestion:Both calendars are excellent. I say vote yes on them.

Name:Anne Wilkas
Phone Number:
Email Address:wilkasandjones@alaska.net

Sent on :Monday, July 28, 2008
Sent at :10:12:31 AM

Suggestion:Starting school after labor day and finishing after memorial day is preferable.

Name:Heather Baker
Phone Number:344-3630
Email Address:baker_heather@asdk12.org

Sent on :Saturday, July 26, 2008
Sent at :11:10:35 PM

Suggestion:I just have a concern about the school year starting earlier and earlier. On the school calendar for the 2010-2011 school year, students start school on August 18th. Is August 18 the earliest students will start back or will the school year continue to start earlier in each succeeding year? The reason I ask is because the summers are always too short. It seems even shorter this year.



Sent on :Friday, July 25, 2008
Sent at :3:27:30 PM

Suggestion:Days when school is in not in session can be very difficult for full-time working parents. To alleviate this problem somewhat, perhaps move the professional development days to the week before school starts or the week after school ends. That is the way it was done in my previous school district and it worked well for the teachers since they were more relaxed the week after school was out.

I also quesiton the need for 2 days off for grade reporting in March. October and March are especially difficult with so many inservice days due to parent-teacher conferences plus Spring break.

Parent-teacher conferences could be done in the late afternoon/early evenings so that school isn't closed early on those days. These schedule changes would be so much more convenient for a lot of parents, and would allow for more days of classroom instruction which would help test scores.

Name:Tess Nott
Phone Number:2299903
Email Address:tess_nott@asdk12.org

Sent on :Friday, July 25, 2008
Sent at :9:53:01 AM

Suggestion:RE: Calendar 09-10 and 10-11 Drafts

Starting the school year earlier and ending it later impacts fall fishing, hunting and berry picking. As an employee my preference continues to be the traditional school start after Labor Day. I am concerned about the impact of late enrollment on school staffing. I hope the district is monitoring enrollment levels to avoid cutting teaching positions at schools until October 1 to ensure there are enough teaching positions to serve the true student enrollment.

I strongly feel spring break should occur in April, after parent teacher conferences and testing. The break in early March is stressful for staff because there are so many school related things to do. It does not feel like a break and certainly does not feel like spring. A break after conferences and testing is truly needed. It would be lovely to have the break when we are beginning to have some weather which is warmer.

Parent teacher conferences should be the week after grades are given. Having conferences 2 and one-half weeks after grades reduces the power of conferences for student improvement planning.

Work and inservice days just before breaks should be avoided. Staff are so busy trying to leave for break they do not use the time effectively. Time for collaboration and training is critical. We should calendar non-student contact days to maximize our efforts to reach school and district goals.

Name:Diane DalBello
Phone Number:
Email Address:dandddalbello@yahoo.com

Sent on :Thursday, July 24, 2008
Sent at :6:00:50 PM

Suggestion:I understand the want of some folks to get out of school sooner to enjoy sunshine that we may or may not get earlier in the spring. But as one who grew up in Alaska and is Alaska native I feel the way of life that we learned at young ages to live off the land was not taking into consideration when the school calendar was changed to enter school earlier. I also am employed by the district so my expected date to return has changed also. My family now cannot go hunting or pick berries to supplement our resources. I am a single mom of two and become angry every time I see we have to report back before hunting season or the berries are ripe. I feel that in future calendars this should be taken into consideration. If I decide to just go ahead and pick or hunt my daughters miss school and I have to get leave time approved which I haven't asked because it is the beginning of school and I work kindergarten so there is so much to do before our little darlings start their first day.

Name:Debora Davis
Phone Number:
Email Address:davisddat@aol.com

Sent on :Thursday, July 24, 2008
Sent at :12:06:15 PM

Suggestion:Third quarter conferences occur too long after the end of the quarter. I'd like to see them held earlier.

Name:Heather Baker
Phone Number:
Email Address:baker_heather@asdk12.org

Sent on :Wednesday, July 23, 2008
Sent at :6:57:44 PM

Suggestion:I am just questioning the parent/teacher conferences following spring break in the 2010-2011 calendar. Some families will take two week vacations during this break. Having the conferences the week following the spring break week could mean less parents showing up for conferences. In past years, there has been a buffer week or an extra week between the break and the conferences.

Name:Lisa Pullen
Phone Number:907 742-1300
Email Address:Pullen_Lisa@asdk12.org

Sent on :Sunday, July 20, 2008
Sent at :12:39:35 PM

Suggestion:Move the fall start date back one week. In doing this, ASD, would appear to honor the subsistence lifestyle of many native peoples who work in and attend public schools. ie fishing, berry and mushroom picking and moose hunting.
Adjust the end of year calendar by moving the last day of school one week later in May.

Name:Dodi
Phone Number:
Email Address:ajgum@gci.net

Sent on :Sunday, July 20, 2008
Sent at :11:16:24 AM

Suggestion>Please look again at the date set aside for "statewide testing."

2010 - April 2 is Good Friday

This is an issue. It's already incredibly disappointing that we're not even allowed to observe Good Friday, and the student release day was taken away... but to have testing on Good Friday?!?! If attendance is taken into account for schools to make AYP, you may want to change that date!

That being said, the district needs to implement Good Friday as a student release day again.
Thank you.

Name:Roger Nettlow
Phone Number:350-0884
Email Address:nettlow_roger@asdk12.org

Sent on :Saturday, July 19, 2008
Sent at :11:29:37 AM

Suggestion:I would prefer the school year begin the last week of August to the first week in September. The day after Labor Day would be even better. Fishing is better during this period than the end of May.

Name:Michael Foster
Phone Number:907-696-6200
Email Address:mlf@mlfaalaska.com

Sent on :Friday, July 18, 2008
Sent at :11:43:25 PM

Suggestion:Please be honest with the people that you serve. Starting school two weeks early makes NO difference in test scores.

For some reason you feel the need to start school before Labor Day to finish before winter break. However, most high school students would probably prefer taking finals in January when they are less busy with family holiday schedules and can concentrate on finals more.

Texas Schools, which have generally high test scores, can no longer start early BY LAW because of tourist issues. In Alaska tourism is bigger than Texas, but we effect our State Fair and the major part of tourism season to start school early for "testing".

Starting school in August is effecting a family's ability to hunt and collect fish so preventing them to take advantage of subsistance rights with their childeren or risk attendance issues.

Thank you for letting me comment, but I know it will have no effect.

Name:Barbara Bennett
Phone Number:907-345-9375
Email Address:Bennett_Barbara@asdk12.org

Sent on :Friday, July 18, 2008
Sent at :11:32:41 AM

Suggestion:Have you given any thought to having a week break after the first quarter? I have family in another state who went to this schedule last year.

First quarter then a week break

2nd quarter then Christmas break

Third quarter then a week (spring) break Fourth quarter and out for summer prior to Memorial weekend.

This would only increase our start time by one week. It seems to me that all of us educators would love a break even after the first quarter.

Name:Lisa Howlett
Phone Number:907-345-0632
Email Address:howlett_lisa@asdk12.org

Sent on :Thursday, July 17, 2008
Sent at :7:39:05 PM

Suggestion:09-10 calendar should start 2 weeks later and end 2 weeks later

10-11 it is better to have one week prep after spring break for parent/teacher conferences also, school should start 2 weeks later and end 2 weeks later

Name:Alix McKee
Phone Number:742-6700
Email Address:mckee_alix@asdk12.org

Sent on :Thursday, July 17, 2008
Sent at :3:21:00 PM

Suggestion:Re: 2010-11 Spring Parent Teacher Conferences move from 3/16-18 to 3/23-25

This would allow consistency from year to year leaving a week after Spring Break and then a week of parent conferences. This allows schools to send home notices and invitations about conferences and parents to plan work schedules ahead to make conference attendance most likely. It also leaves a week after conferences, but before testing to conduct test review and preparation.

Name:Jimmie Petrash
Phone Number:336-3861
Email Address:petrash_jim@asdk12.org

Sent on :Thursday, July 17, 2008
Sent at :1:42:37 PM

Suggestion:Dear Kathy,

The calendars looks nice, but every year I (and MANY fellow teachers) complain about the poor timing of the 2nd Semester parent conferences. Usually, the schedule has these gatherings after the 3rd quarter - a time for MAJOR student slowdown and the start of the "nonchalant" attitude of many kids as the summer nears. Why could we instead have parent conferences after the second quarter (January) so that we could keep closer tabs on kids earlier in the school year. Even with conferences after the 1st quarter, students need another "jolt" to reality to get their acts together (and to re-awaken parents to problems not corrected from the November meetings). I feel the meetings in March or April (in past years) have not been well attended ("Ah, school is almost over." "She's going to fail anyway."), less productive, and even more draining on the student's who are at-risk ("You said your grades were improving!!!" "I did not know my grades were so bad." "I can't pass for the year now, so I'm quitting!")

I really hope this is re-evaluated! If you need more input from a teacher's perspective, please let me know.

Jimmie Petrash, Hanshew Middle School 336-3861

Name:Cheryl Richardson
Phone Number:622-6227
Email Address:Richardsson_Cheryl@asdk12.org

Sent on :Thursday, July 17, 2008
Sent at :10:32:30 AM

Suggestion:Why start so early in August? Why not wait a week and have the school year finish just prior to Memorial Day? I think the early August start will affect many family's vacation options. August is a popular month for family reunions. Many summer sports schedules will not have finished prior to the start of school.

I am assuming that Christmas is factor in the schedule, as Catholic I do want winter break, but could the calendar not be adjusted so the break starts a day or two prior to Christmas say Wednesday the 23rd is the last day.

I would prefer a year round school with all students on the same schedule; but as long as we are following a traditional calendar lets keep vacation as close as possible to Memorial Day through Labor Day.

Thanks for allowing input

Name:Susan Kruse
Phone Number:907-346-2203
Email Address:kruse_susan@asdk12.org

Sent on :Thursday, July 17, 2008
Sent at :9:53:28 AM

Suggestion:I do not see a start date for kindergarten classes. They usually start 4 days later after prescreening assessments. Thanks,
Susan Kruse

Name:Kathryn Smith
Phone Number:344-5884 (home)
Email Address:smith_kathryn@asdk12.org

Sent on :Thursday, July 17, 2008
Sent at :9:19:55 AM

Suggestion:I am a classroom teacher. At our school we conduct student led conferences which means there is no regular classroom teaching for the three days of conferences. I found that when spring conferences were moved to March a lot of concentrated teaching time was lost. Spring break followed by preparation for testing, followed by conferences followed by testing was almost a full month of instruction lost this year. In the 2010-11 Draft the conferences are the week after Spring Break, I predict a lot of family vacations that span 2 weeks. I much preferred the conferences in the old timeline (late April).

Thanks for your consideration,
Kathryn

Name:J.T. Lindholm
Phone Number:9076942102
Email Address:lindholm_jt@asdk12.org

Sent on :Thursday, July 17, 2008
Sent at :8:54:36 AM

Suggestion:Since we have an entire week before Memorial Day weekend, how about adding a week vacation into the calendar and moving the end date of school to the day before Memorial Day weekend? This could have some tremendous effects on the school year - students concentrating on school for more of the calendar year. The week could occur as one extra week of vacation or be spread throughout the year to offer more long weekends (one day every other month). And we are still finished with the school year before Memorial Day weekend!

Name:Bev Kirk
Phone Number:227-2142
Email Address:Kirk_Bev@asdk12.org

Sent on :Wednesday, July 16, 2008
Sent at :10:05:23 PM

Suggestion:I realize that a lot of thought and discussion have gone into the idea of moving the beginning of school back to mid-August. However, it still inconveniences a lot of people to have school begin before moose season. Moose and caribou provide many months of food for many families. Our principal has already responded to my email by stating that he is concerned about our request for time off so early in the school year, and that he is not sure he can get satisfactory subs for us. My buddy and I really need some moosemeat in our freezers. This should be a very valid consideration in Alaska!

Name:Kristina Peterson
Phone Number:742-5850
Email Address:peterson_KRISTINA@ASDK12.ORG

Sent on :Wednesday, July 16, 2008
Sent at :8:00:39 PM

Suggestion:My only comment is that we do what we can to make Parent Teacher conferences follow the end of the quarter as closely as possible. It's been difficult in recent years to discuss quarterly grades with parents when we were so far into the next.

Has anyone ever considered changing Parent Teacher conferences to the first and second quarter (I realize that runs into Xmas break.)? I personally think that meeting at the first quarter allows us to determine areas of need/a plan for making improvement. Meeting at the second quarter would allow another opportunity to determine if we were successful and make changes. Meeting after the third quarter is so late that it's focus often seems to be on the next school year rather than working for success in the current one. Just an idea!!

Name:Loi Lutes

Phone Number:
Email Address:lutes_loi@asdk12.org

Sent on :Wednesday, July 16, 2008
Sent at :7:10:27 PM

Suggestion:My suggestion for 09/10 is to move conferences to the week we return from Spring Break or at least be consistent from year to year. I prefer to have conferences as soon as possible after the quarter ends. I can see where the problem would be with regards to when grades would be due for teachers and the logistics of getting report cards printed. But if the district would like students mentally fresh for testing I think having conferences right after Spring Break provides the better scenerio for test preparation.

Name:Janna Kampen
Phone Number:907-243-7618
Email Address:kampen_janna@asdk12.org

Sent on :Wednesday, July 16, 2008
Sent at :6:45:50 PM

Suggestion:How come one year conferences are right after spring break and the next year we wait an additional week. It seems better to do it as soon as possible so parent help with any changes that need to be made can be instituted before too far into fourth quarter.

I really like how we end the quarters at Christmas and spring break. It is much better to have the conferences in Oct. instead of waiting until November.

Thanks to all who work so hard with so much information!

Name:Cindi Franklin
Phone Number:243-7670
Email Address:Franklin_Cynthia@asdk12.org

Sent on :Wednesday, July 16, 2008
Sent at :4:52:26 PM

Suggestion:Start later in August and end later in May. Families use this month for summer travel, family reunions etc... and on these two calendars most of August is lost if school begins on the 12th or 13th.

Name:Jeanne smith
Phone Number:276 5083
Email Address:jjjosmith@gci.net

Sent on :Wednesday, July 16, 2008
Sent at :1:33:07 PM

Suggestion:I would like to see the Winter vacation start a closer to Dec 25th, and extend longer after Dec 25th. Also, I'd like to see the start of school pushed forward to later in August. In the Spring, I'd prefer to see the parent-teacher conferences Before the Spring Break.

thanks for requesting some input on this process.

Jeanne Smith

Name:Julie Hargraves
Phone Number:694-9080
Email Address:hargraves_julie@asdk12.org

Sent on :Wednesday, July 16, 2008
Sent at :1:17:36 PM

Suggestion:For both the 09/10 and 10/11 calendars, the Friday test date for the SBAs should be changed. No SBA tests should be given on Mondays nor Fridays. The best scenario would be 2 weeks in a row of the Tuesdays and Wednesdays, Thurs. and Fri could be make-up days. This year with 4 testing days in a row was not as productive as it could be with only 2 sequential days for 2 subsequent weeks. Three days in a row is still too exhausting to get the best results. Also for the 10/11 calendar, the second conference days scheduled are a week early, too close to the spring vacation. Thanks for asking for feedback.
Julie Hargraves

Name:Elena Sandys
Phone Number:
Email Address:elenas@gci.net

Sent on :Wednesday, July 16, 2008
Sent at :1:11:27 PM

Suggestion:2009-20010 Looks Great!

2010-2011 I think it would be better to have a week inbetween spring break and P/T conferences. Currently P/T conferences are set for the 16-17. How about the 23-24?

From: LaRue_Arthur
Sent: Wednesday, July 16, 2008 12:35 PM
To: Griffith_Kathy
Subject: Re: Draft calendars available for review

I really like the three weeks between Spring Break and testing!

Art La Rue
Begich

Name:Dorena Montgomery
Phone Number:
Email Address:Montgomery_Dorena@asdk12.org

Sent on :Wednesday, July 16, 2008
Sent at :12:26:45 PM

Suggestion:Testing on Firday April 2, and then starting again on the following Tuesday with trying to have a normal day Monday will make testing even MORE disruptive to the regular classroom routine! We will not be able to do anything in a lesson on Moday that needs

continuation, because it will be a week before we see students again. It would be easier to wrap up a lesson on Friday, and test the whole week, Monday through Friday, especially with the classroom displacement that occurs in high schools. It would also make it easier for students to remember what is happening when.

From: Annelise San Martin [<mailto:kayakkid56@hotmail.com>]
Sent: Tuesday, July 15, 2008 5:31 PM
To: Webmaster
Subject: RE: [ASD - Announce] Draft school year calendars available for comment

Since Sr. Pictures are a big expense our family would like to plan ahead -especially if we plan to get them done this summer. When are they due and what are the restrictions for what they can put in the yearbook.

Subject: Suggestion Box

Name:Kathy Huntington
Phone Number:696-1427
Email Address:fnkabl@uaf.edu

Sent on :Tuesday, July 15, 2008
Sent at :1:37:57 PM

Suggestion:I would prefer the old calendar of starting beginning of September and ending beginning of June. With the way our summers go, this schedule is more consistent with summer type weather and activities and also more consistent with other schedules through out the country.

thanks
Kathy

Name:Craig and Ruth Ann Bledsoe
Phone Number:(907) 694-4730
Email Address:craig_bledsoe@ak-prepared.com

Sent on :Tuesday, July 15, 2008
Sent at :2:46:10 PM

Suggestion:The early start of the school year (and the early ending) have completely disrupted traditional summer vacation activities, especially subsistence hunting & fishing and student participation in the State Fair. This was a poor decision that should be undone now that reality has sunk in. The school district is pandering to the authorities who have mandated unnecessary student evaluation testing which also takes away from valuable student-teacher learning time. I recommend the following steps:

● Return to the normal Labor Day to Memorial Day academic school year.

● Establish a trimester system wherein the first trimester ends with final exams at Christmas Break, the second trimester ends at Spring Break, and the third trimester ends at the completion of the

school year. (This was the system under which I attended both high school and college, and it worked extremely well.)

● Communicate with ASD's parents and families that the current fad of government-mandated student progress testing is disruptive and counterproductive, and that the District is going to deemphasize such testing in favor of traditional academic schoolwork evaluated by the teacher in the usual format of student performance including classwork, homework, intermediate quizzes, and final examinations. Accordingly no emphasis is going to be placed on externally mandated exams other than the absolute minimum time and effort required by law.

Thank you for your consideration of these suggestions.

Name:Kirsten Ballard
Phone Number:9076321006
Email Address:extremejor@yahoo.com

Sent on :Tuesday, July 15, 2008
Sent at :12:59:03 PM

Suggestion:School Calendar Comment-
How about coordinating more closely with the Kenai School District's calendar, esp. for spring break? Many of us have split families, w/one or more kids living in Kenai (or Fairbanks). Coordinating Spring break & the inservice days would give us all a better opportunity to take trips together w/o the kids missing school.
Thanks,
Kirsten

Name:Shannon Ferris
Phone Number:907-243-2141
Email Address:ferris_shannon@asdk12.org

Sent on :Monday, July 14, 2008
Sent at :10:23:11 PM

Suggestion:Starting so early in August really effects our "Alaskan" summer activities: Commercial fishing seasons, State Fair activities: raising livestock and growing fruits and vegetables, and sporting seasons. August is when Alaska has the best weather. I can't believe that I would have to come back to work on August 12, or 13th.

Also, I teach kindergarten, and the earlier start date means that I have four year olds starting school. Four year olds and very young five years olds are at a serious disadvantage with the demands of the kindergarten curriculum. I have really seen a big change over the past two years with younger students starting school. They are babies and really need to stay home one more year. The early release also puts us at a disadvantage with cooler spring activities being forced: butterflies and plant life cycles are two. The buds on the trees and the grass isn't even green when school is out). Alaskan schools really need to pay attention to the seasons, and the commerical demands of its state.

Hi Robb,

Hope your enjoying the sunshine. I just wanted to let you know that Laurel Vorachek came by to let you know that Rhonda made a mistake and the science testing days are on Thursday not Friday. I wasn't sure if this was something that needed to be dealt with immediately or if it can wait till after vacation. Let me know if I need to take action.

Ginger Moser

Name:Tom Soper
Phone Number:907-745-2568
Email Address:soper_thomas@asdk12.org

Sent on :Thursday, August 07, 2008
Sent at :9:54:46 AM

Suggestion:1) These proposed calendars are very upsetting to me. I do not like to see the "creep" of the start of school moving towards the first of August. Yes, I realize that means we begin summer vacation earlier, but frankly the ground has not completely thrown off winter's grip and dried in May, and much mud still abounds. I am sure you are aware of road "load" restrictions the state places in effect from break-up through thaw. It makes it hard to do any construction at that point, yet school is in session in August/ September when we are at the end of the building season.

2) I would like to see ASD lobby to get the standardized testing moved a month later, to the first week of May. Will we ask this of our candidates in this election year?

3) The school year should end much sooner after the standardized test dates; this past year it was obvious that the kids stopped making significant efforts after those tests.

4) I wish your comment period included part of the school year; it appears that this was timed to avoid input from teachers, as the proposed calendars were issued while teachers are on vacation, and the comment period ends before the vacation ends.

5) We all know there are districts outside that have gone to a 4 day school week (longer days) to save fuel. Are we looking at that?

6) Since we have to heat the buildings in the winter anyway, has ASD looked at changing the school week to Monday through Saturday, meaning we could start school in early to mid September and still dismiss in mid-May, and enlarge the 2 winter vacations to boot.

7) I hope you will extend the comment time for your proposed calendars for another couple of weeks so you can get more input from your teachers.

Thanks for reading this note.

Tom Soper

Name:Brian Mason
Phone Number:350-2840
Email Address:mason_brian@asdk12.org

Sent on :Wednesday, August 06, 2008
Sent at :1:51:35 PM

Suggestion:I am concerned about the ever earlier start dates that have been the trend in ASD over the past few years. As an educator and a

community member, it has become apparent to me that starting in mid-August is having a detrimental effect on those individuals and families that engage in subsistence and commercial fishing and hunting activities. Hunting seasons in Alaska generally start in mid to late August. Although Anchorage is an urban area, a very large number of families in the area still rely on fish and game resources as a significant portion of their food supply. Additionally, the practice of harvesting fish and game is a very important cultural tradition for many of the families served by the Anchorage School District. In my history in the ASD as both a student and now as a teacher I have witnessed an increased importance placed on cultural awareness and sensitivity. While valuable, I can't help but notice that we as an organization are neglecting a vital cultural practice that has its roots right here in Alaska. By moving the start date earlier and earlier we are in effect asking students, their families, and even teachers to choose between education and food, culture, and family.

Over the past two years I have noticed significant numbers of students absent over the first few weeks of school, as they were out with their parents hunting and fishing. Not only is this hard on the students educationally, it also presents a safety concern in my science classroom. Most safety procedures are covered in depth over the first two weeks of school, but when multiple students are gone for significant portions of time they miss the lessons on lab safety protocol. Furthermore, these students also miss foundational lessons that build the knowledge base for the rest of the academic year. Again, it is very unfortunate that we have placed families in the position of having to choose between academic and family culture concerns. As a parent I most certainly support those who choose to enroll their children late or pull them out of school, but as an educator I see the harm done.

My understanding is that the shift to an earlier start date was intended to provide two more instructional weeks before the state mandated tests and to allow the first semester to end before the winter break. While I understand the value of those goals, I have to wonder if there has been a statistical increase in scores due to this short increase in time before the tests and whether that value overrides the importance of the cultural practices of a great many of our students and staff. There is no perfect solution, but I ask that the superintendent and school board consider the concerns of the community in this regard. A return to a post-Labor Day school calendar would have little if any detrimental effect educationally while benefiting many who depend on fall in Alaska for their food, culture, and family traditions.

Thank you for your consideration,
Brian Mason
Chugiak High School

Name:Megan Larson
Phone Number:
Email Address:larson_megan@asdk12.org

Sent on :Wednesday, August 06, 2008
Sent at :12:18:03 PM

Suggestion:Looks good to me! Great work.

Name:Sandra Lambert

Phone Number:696-0204 / 742-3450
Email Address:Lambert_Sandra@asdk12.org

Sent on :Wednesday, July 16, 2008
Sent at :2:48:50 PM

Suggestion:1. On the 10-11 Calendar, March 4 and 18 are both marked as grade reporting days. Surely this is a misprint?

2. Also on the 10-11 calendar: Though I suppose it is the State that sets the testing dates in April, I am really surprised to see high stakes testing scheduled on April Fool's Day.

Name:Bonnie Kragt
Phone Number:
Email Address:Kragt_Bonnie@asdk12.org

Sent on :Wednesday, July 16, 2008
Sent at :2:31:03 PM

Suggestion:I would love to see us go back to having parent/teacher conferences the week after the end of the quarter, rather than two weeks later. This is not a serious concern, I just have never heard an explanation as to why the schedule got shifted in the first place.
Thanks

Name:Lisa Clark
Phone Number:907-440-2983
Email Address:lisa.clark@enstarnaturalgas.com

Sent on :Wednesday, July 16, 2008
Sent at :8:18:34 AM

Suggestion:I would like to see the school session start up after Labor day as it used to be. Our summers in Alaska are short enough with out having to send our children back to school in August, one of the nicest months of summer. What was the reasoning for this change in the first place?

Name:Dora KRenzelok
Phone Number:622-1587
Email Address:dkrenzel@mtaonline.net

Sent on :Thursday, July 31, 2008
Sent at :10:53:30 AM

Suggestion:how come you don't list the day of registration on your calendar? It is an important date! I had to call to find out the exactly dates.

Name:Amy Laufer
Phone Number:3456776
Email Address:laufer_amy@asdk12.org

Sent on :Wednesday, July 16, 2008
Sent at :10:32:59 PM

Suggestion:I am wondering why conferences are scheduled a week earlier on the 2010-11 calendar. If the quarter ends on March 4, and the next week is Spring Break, then there are only 2 school days to prepare for conferences which are scheduled to begin on March 16. This is hardly enough time.

Also, given that the new Standards Based Reporting System is scheduled to be implemented the year after next (2009-10), has anyone begun discussion on whether elementary schools could go to a trimester system? (I realize this is more than just a calendar issue, but I think it may be a good time to begin this discussion.)

Lastly, can you please list the first day of Kindergarten on these calendars?

Thank you,
Amy Laufer
Kindergarten Teacher
Kasuun Elementary

Name: Scooter (Alleen) Bentson
Phone Number: 907696-0080
Email Address: bentson_scooter@asdk12.org

Sent on : Wednesday, July 16, 2008
Sent at : 12:27:43 PM

Suggestion: Are we making a shift in when spring conferences will be held? 2010-11 moves conferences up a week compared to 08-09 and 09-10. If this change is the new pattern, OK. Otherwise I'd prefer to have a week back to school after spring break before heading into conferences and keep the schedule we've been on.

Name: Colleen Gross
Phone Number: 243-5492
Email Address: cabg@gci.net

Sent on : Tuesday, July 15, 2008
Sent at : 10:18:39 PM

Suggestion: About the proposed calendars:

Do all our inservices have to be on Fridays? I teach preschool special ed and that is my only paperwork/prep day. Friday inservices actually end up creating MORE work for me, not helping in any way. I know most of the inservices get combined with holidays, but it seems like at least the October one could be moved to a Monday. How about alternating one of the conferences to a Mon/Tue/Wed schedule or Tue/Wed/Thur, like the testing dates do?

Also, why can't the Spring Break be put at the same time as Easter? It would be nice to be able to travel to family at that time, especially if it included the Monday after Easter, as well. The schools I went to in California arranged their Spring Break like that, which allowed families more holidays together.

Thank you!
Colleen Gross
preschool special ed teacher

Kasuun Elementary

Name:Kristina Katchatag
Phone Number:907-677-8672
Email Address:krisy02k@yahoo.com

Sent on :Tuesday, July 15, 2008
Sent at :8:14:39 PM

Suggestion:Why is parent / teacher conference 2 weeks after the quarter is over ?

Name:Karen McCoy
Phone Number:622-2408
Email Address:mccoy_karen@asdk12.org

Sent on :Tuesday, July 15, 2008
Sent at :2:27:43 PM

Suggestion:I have a question. When I look at the calendars, it appears that each year we are reporting earlier but getting out at the same time. If that trend continues we will be having registration in late July. Is the State of Alaska requiring more school days each year? We alaskans need our summers to get through the winters:) Thank you.

Name:Carla Tweet
Phone Number:907 884 1229
Email Address:carlatweet@gmail.com

Sent on :Tuesday, July 15, 2008
Sent at :1:43:50 PM

Suggestion:Why are there two state released grade reporting days in March?

I also vote to change the first day of classes AFTER labor day like it has been for decades. This new school year has not worked out for us or others who rely heavily on game meat. That, and it just seems wrong!

Calendar Questions and Responses -

Hi Brian,

We implemented a new event calendar this year on the Web site that allows you to export either individual events or by all events in a date range in a format that can then be imported into Outlook. We have a few different calendars that merge into our master calendar and that's the one that's linked up from the district home page in the Take Note section. It does include the currently approved academic year calendar as well as other ASD events.

If you just want the academic year calendar I suggest you go to the event calendar home page to choose just that one:
<http://events.asdk12.org/>. Select "Academic Year Calendar" and then click the "Go to Calendar" button.

Once you have the calendar you want loaded, look for the "Export Calendar" button to download by date range. If you want just single events, click on the event's link and you will see an "Export Event" button on the window that comes up.

Once the future calendars have been approved by the school board I'll add the dates to the event calendar described above.

Kathy Griffith
907-742-4193 or griffith_kathy@asdk12.org Web Content Specialist,
Communications Anchorage School District Educating all students for
success in life www.asdk12.org

> -----Original Message-----

> From: Boyer_Robb
> Sent: Tuesday, July 15, 2008 2:41 PM
> To: 'yukonh20@gmail.com'; Webmaster
> Subject: RE: Calendar comments

>
> Brian -

>
> That is really a technical question for the webmaster so I
> will let her respond, relative to our current tech abilities
> on already approved calendars.

>
> Thanks,

>
> Robb Boyer

> -----Original Message-----

> From: yukonh20@gmail.com [<mailto:yukonh20@gmail.com>]
> Sent: Tuesday, July 15, 2008 12:46 PM
> To: Boyer_Robb; Webmaster
> Subject: Calendar comments

>
> Name: Brian Howes
> Phone Number: 907-333-0960
> Email Address: yukonh20@gmail.com

>
> Sent on : Tuesday, July 15, 2008
> Sent at : 12:45:30 PM

>
> Suggestion: Is there a way that you output the calendar into
> an Outlook type of format? I would like to add the
> information to my calendar without resorting to manual input.
> I miss too many activities.

>
> Thank you, Brian

Thanks for replying but I was looking for start and end dates for High School summer school for the Summer of 2009. Dad and Daughter are planning a trip to Europe and she needs to attend summer school for credit.

Thank you,
Tammi Hackley

-----Original Message-----

From: Boyer_Robb <Boyer_Robb@asdk12.org>
To: 'tamhack@aol.com' <tamhack@aol.com>; Webmaster <Webmaster@asdk12.org>
Sent: Wed, 16 Jul 2008 8:16 am
Subject: RE: Calendar comments

Tammi -

The 08-09 calendar is already approved and the ending date for students is May 21, 2009. The starting date for the 09-10 school year is what is scheduled to go to the Board and has not been approved would have the 09-10 year start for students on August 19th. Teachers have a different ending and starting date.

Does that help?

Robb Boyer
Director of Staffing and Recruitment

-----Original Message-----

From: tamhack@aol.com [mailto:tamhack@aol.com]
Sent: Tuesday, July 15, 2008 4:20 PM
To: Boyer_Robb; Webmaster
Subject: Calendar comments

Name: Tammi Hackley
Phone Number: 907-622-4225
Email Address: tamhack@aol.com

Sent on : Tuesday, July 15, 2008
Sent at : 4:19:57 PM

Suggestion: Do you have start dates and end dates for the summer of 2009?
Thank you,
Tammi
