

## **Calendar Consultation Frequently Asked Questions**

### **Background**

In September, Superintendent Stoddard presented a report to the Board of Trustees asking them to consider the significant research that highlights the positive impact of teacher collaboration on student achievement.

Since Elk Island Public Schools' top priority is promoting growth and success for all students, and given the compelling research, the Board of Trustees requested administration explore potential alternative calendar options that embed dedicated time for staff collaboration for the Board to consider.

The Board also requested a survey be developed to gather feedback from staff and parents/caregivers before the Board makes a decision about the 2025-26 and 2026-27 calendars. The survey and supporting information and resources will be available to and open for feedback from staff and parents/caregivers from October 10 to 21.

### **Why a change to the calendar?**

- Research evidence clearly indicates that ongoing, sustained teacher collaboration is one of the most influential factors accelerating student achievement. As such, the Board is exploring ways to embed structured and ongoing collaboration time into the Division calendar, and considering stakeholder feedback, before a decision is made.

### **What are the proposed alternative options?**

- Option 1 proposes a one-hour early dismissal every Wednesday, which aligns with a few of our current high school schedules, but would be a new practice for elementary and junior high schools.
- Option 2 suggests a two-hour early dismissal every second Friday, which would be a new approach for all schools. Fridays were considered as an option for families to extend a weekend. As well, students participating in extracurricular activities sometimes leave early on Fridays, so these early dismissals could reduce the amount of time students are away from school.
- In both options, the days chosen are placeholders right now and may change based on feedback.
- The status quo calendar is still an option for the Board to consider but a survey is not required.

### **How will my feedback be used?**

- All qualitative feedback—what respondents like, identified challenges and possible solutions to challenges—will be provided to the Board of Trustees to support them in their decision making regarding a Division calendar.

- If an alternative calendar is approved, the solutions proposed will be used to support a smooth transition to the new calendar.

**Will instructional hours change for students and teachers?**

- No. Both of these alternative calendar options maintain the same total instructional hours for students and for teachers throughout the year.
- The only difference is the minutes have been distributed differently throughout the week to allow for early-out dismissal days to be used for focused collaboration.

**What will be the expectations for collaboration?**

- If one of the alternative calendars is approved, senior administration will develop an administrative procedure to ensure common expectations across all schools in order to maximize collaboration time. These expectations will be developed with a principal committee and will allow for flexibility to meet the needs of differing school contexts.

**What will parents do for childcare?**

- If an alternative calendar is approved, the Division will work to address the challenges identified in the survey feedback.
- With respect to childcare, further conversations with community providers may be required to determine potential solutions.

**Will re-writes and student coaching still be provided as is already in place at some high schools?**

- Yes. The Division will work with secondary schools currently engaging in or wanting to engage in this practice to ensure it fits within the administrative procedure guidelines.