

## Definitions

### 1. School Year

- 1.1 The Traditional School Year in Alberta is defined as a school year running from the end of August/beginning of September to the end of June operating five (5) days a week with breaks for Christmas and Easter. Provincial guidelines for the school year and day are specified in the *School Act* (Sections 56, 97) and the Guide to Education.
- 1.2 An Alternate School Year can be defined as a school calendar that is modified from five days a week and/or spanning from September through June; for example, calendars such as four days out of five, nine days out of ten, year round schooling, four term, five term, or a combination of the above. In general, an Alternate School Year substantially restructures the learning/vacation time pattern available in the traditional year.
- 1.3 Instructional Days are days when programs are in session and students are expected to be in school. This includes days scheduled for Provincial Achievement Tests, Provincial Diploma Exams and School Exams.
- 1.4 Non-Instructional Days are days during which school based staff are expected to be at school. These include designated Division and School-Based Professional Development Days, Parent-Teacher-Student Interview Days (or those taken in lieu of evening interviews) and Staff-Only days before school starts and ends for students.
- 1.4 Operational Days are all Instructional Days plus Non-Instructional Days.
- 1.5 Board Declared Holidays are days designated by the Board to be Holidays. For example, the day of Christmas Eve (December 24<sup>th</sup>) has traditionally been a Board Declared Holiday.
- 1.6 Statutory Holidays are designated through Provincial and/or Federal Law.
- 1.7 Alternate Days are the days that are designated in a school's approved Alternate School Year Calendar that are neither Instructional Days or Operational Days. Neither students nor the school staff is expected to be at school.

## Procedures:

1. A school year calendar shall be developed by Regional Services Administration in consultation with Principals.
2. A calendar for the next school year shall be presented to the Board for approval by mid-December of the current school year.

3. A school year calendar for community schools (excluding Vista Virtual School and the Alberta Distance Learning Centre) shall be based on the following criteria:
  - 3.1. Instructional time is defined by the Guide to Education. In the Division, the minimum instructional time contained within the school year calendar will be:
    - 3.1.1 960 program hours in elementary and junior high grades
    - 3.1.2 1000 hours in high school
  - 3.2 Provincially established dates for Standardized Assessments (Student Learning Assessments, Provincial Achievement Tests and Provincial Diploma Exams) must be contained within the school year calendar.
  - 3.3 Start dates for Staff:
    - 3.3.1 School office and administrative staff will be available for several days prior to start-up, as needed, to facilitate student registrations and other start-up administrative needs.
    - 3.3.2 Two (2) days shall be designated as Operational Days prior to the first day for students.
      - 3.3.2.1 One of these days is a Division opening day with professional development.
      - 3.3.2.2 The other is used as a school-based start-up day.
  - 3.4 Start dates for students:
    - 3.4.1 Whenever possible, the school year for students will start up on a Monday or Tuesday
    - 3.4.2 No more than five instructional school days shall be in August.
  - 3.5 End dates for students:
    - 3.5.1 Whenever possible, the school year for students will end on a Wednesday, Thursday or Friday
    - 3.5.2 Whenever possible, the last day for elementary students will be at least one day before the last operational day.
  - 3.6 End dates for staff:
    - 3.6.1 In years where the last student day results in a few days remaining before the last Friday in June, these last few days may be assigned as Operational Days.
    - 3.6.2 When the last day for students ends on the last Friday of June, it is not necessary to expect staff to return for additional Operational Days.
    - 3.6.3 School office and administrative staff remain for several days, as needed, after closing to finalize year-end submissions and reports.
  - 3.7 Within the school year:
    - 3.7.1 The standard Division calendar shall offer at least 92 days for instruction per semester.
    - 3.7.2 Designated days for Professional Development. In some years, the calendar will not provide enough operational days for every one of these designated professional learning dates. The first priority is to ensure the availability of enough days for Instructional programming. When 92 days of instruction per semester are available, the following Operational Days shall be designated as Professional Development Days and prioritized as follows:

- 3.7.2.1 1: Two (2) days in mid-winter for the North-Central Alberta Teachers Convention
- 3.7.2.2 2: One (1) School Based Professional Development Day: A date in October aligned with the release of standardized test results. The purpose of this day is for staff to collaboratively analyze the data from standardized provincial assessments and other sources for the purpose of refining School goals and identifying needs of specific students.
- 3.7.2.3 3: One (1) School Based Professional Development Day: A date in April to align with the Division and School Education Planning cycle for the purpose of collaboratively establishing the School Education Plan.
- 3.7.2.4 4: One (1) Teacher Professional Development Day – Self Directed: A date placed in the first semester, as recommended by the Professional Development Committee.
- 3.7.2.5 5: One (1) Teacher Professional Development Day – Self Directed: A date placed in the second semester, as recommended by the Professional Development Committee.
- 3.7.2.6 6: One (1) Division Professional Development Day: A date placed in the first semester, typically in November, for the purpose of providing professional learning associated with Division goals.
- 3.7.2.7 7. One (1) School Based Professional Development Day: Placed during the transition from First to Second Semesters, at the end of January, when the date does not cause students' first day of the second semester to begin on a Friday.
  - 3.7.2.7.1 When the above is not possible, this School Based PD Day can be placed in either the first or second semester as required to maintain a balance.
- 3.7.2.8 8: One (1) Division Professional Development Day: A date placed in the second semester, for the purpose of providing professional learning associated with Division goals.
- 3.7.3 The conditions regarding Parent-Teacher-Student Interviews are as follows:
  - 3.7.3.1 The school is encouraged to create opportunities for parents and teachers to meet to establish collaborative relationships and to set learning goals for students. The highest quality interaction is a face to face meeting. Schools are expected to work with their School Councils to create a schedule that best meets the needs of the community with the intent of completing a conversation before the end of the second week of October.
  - 3.7.3.2 The school is encouraged to create opportunities during the month of March for parents and teachers to meet with the intent of reviewing students' learning goals, reviewing accomplishments to date and setting plans for the remainder of the year. The highest quality interaction is a face to face meeting. Schools are expected to work with their School Councils to create a schedule that best meets the needs of the community with the intent of completing a conversation before the Spring Break.
- 3.7.4 A Christmas Break two (2) weeks in length shall be scheduled.

- 4 Introduction of Alternate School Year– The Board will support school communities wanting to adopt an Alternate School Year within the following guidelines:

- 4.1 When the adoption of an Alternate School Year has no impact on other schools in the Division.
  - 4.1.1 The proposal to adopt an Alternate School Year shall come from the School Council.
  - 4.1.2 The proposal for an Alternate School Year will be supported by at least 80% of parents, 80% of staff from the school community, and to gain the perspective of students on this decision, the School Principal shall consult with students of an age and grade as deemed appropriate by the School Principal.
- 4.2 When the adoption of an Alternate School Year is proposed by a school that has transportation schedules that are interconnected with other schools in the jurisdiction:
  - 4.2.1 The proposal to adopt an Alternate School Year shall come from the School Principal in collaboration with Board and Regional Services Administration.
- 4.3 All Alternate School Year proposals are contingent on the ability of the transportation system to effectively and efficiently manage transportation schedules for students in both the traditional year and Alternate year.
- 4.4 Alternate School Year proposals will include an Alternate School Year Calendar developed 'in principle' which aligns with the conditions of Alternate School Year Calendars described below in section 7, below.
- 4.5 Submission date for proposals to introduce an Alternate School Year in a school community is January 14<sup>th</sup>.
  - 4.5.1 Use [Form 6-5-A Introduction to an Alternate School Year](#).
- 4.6 The Board will ratify newly introduced Alternate School Year proposals.
- 4.7 Upon Board approval, schools must submit their Alternate School Year Calendar for review by Regional Services Administration by February 14<sup>th</sup>.
  - 4.7.1 Alternate Calendars must be authorized by the Board.
- 5 Renewal of Alternate School Years– School communities wishing to renew their Alternate School Year may do so annually and under the following conditions:
  - 5.1 Proposed Alternate School Year Calendars shall align with the conditions of Alternate School Year Calendars described below in section 7.
  - 5.2 Proposed Alternate School Year Calendars must be submitted for review by Regional Services Administration by February 14<sup>th</sup>.
    - 5.2.1 Use [Form 6-5-B Alternate School Year Conditions](#).
    - 5.2.2 Calendars will be submitted to the Board for authorization by the end of February and subsequently ready for publication by early March.
  - 5.3 Schools may be asked to provide evidence of the following:
    - 5.3.1 The Alternate School Year Calendar has not negatively impacted the attendance rates of staff or students.

5.3.2 The Alternate School Year Calendar has not negatively impacted student academic performance as measured by provincial achievement tests and other evaluation instruments.

6 Termination of Alternate School Years– School communities that wish to return to a regular school calendar:

6.1 Where the Alternate School Year has no impact on other schools in the Division:

6.1.1 The proposal to terminate an Alternate School Year shall come from the School Council.

6.1.2 The School Council proposal must provide evidence that the return to a regular school year is supported by at least 80% of parents, 80% of staff from the school community, and to gain the perspective of students on this decision, the School Principal shall consult with students of an age and grade as deemed appropriate by the School Principal.

6.2 Where the school has transportation schedules that are interconnected with other schools in the jurisdiction:

6.2.1 The proposal to terminate the Alternate School Year shall come from the School Principal in collaboration with Board and Regional Services Administration.

6.3 All proposals are contingent on the ability of the transportation system to effectively and efficiently manage transportation for students in both the traditional year and Alternate year.

6.4 Submission date for terminating the practice of having an Alternate School Year Calendar in a school community is **January 14<sup>th</sup>**.

6.4.1 Use [Form 6-5-C Termination of an Alternate School Year](#).

7 Alternate School Year conditions:

7.1 Alternate School Year Calendars must not exceed a maximum of 23 Alternate days.

7.2 Alternate School Year Calendars meet the criteria of Instructional Hours defined for all calendars defined in Section 4.1 above.

7.3 Alternate School Year Calendars contain all designated Non-Instructional, Board Declared Holidays and Statutory Holidays contained in the Division School Year Calendar.

7.4 Alternate School Year Calendars meet the same conditions as the start-date for students criteria described in Section 4.4 above. Alternate School Year Calendar start dates must align specifically to the Division calendar.

7.5 Alternate School Year Calendars define end-dates for students that ensure inclusion of provincial standardized tests (Provincial Achievement Tests and Provincial Diploma Exams).

7.6 Alternate School Year Calendars designate Alternate days to create four (4) day school weeks for students prior to being designated for other purposes.

7.7 Submission date for Alternate School Year Calendars is February 14<sup>th</sup>.

7.7.1 Use [Form 6-5-B Alternate School Year Conditions](#).

## Reference

[School Act](#) – Sections 56, 97

[Alberta Education](#) - Guide to Education

[Policy 25 School Year](#)

[Form 6-5-A Introduction to Alternate School Year](#)

[Form 6-5-B Alternate School Year Conditions](#)

[Form 6-5-C Termination of an Alternate School Year](#)