

ANCHORAGE SCHOOL DISTRICT  
ANCHORAGE, ALASKA

ASD MEMORANDUM #131 (2004-2005)

December 13, 2004

TO: SCHOOL BOARD

FROM: OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT

SUBJECT: APPROVAL OF SCHOOL CALENDAR 2005-2006

RECOMMENDATION:

It is the Administration's recommendation that the School Board approve and adopt the attached Districtwide calendar for the 2005-2006 school year.

PERTINENT FACTS:

During the summer and fall of 2004, a committee was called together to develop and recommend calendars for the 2005-2006, 2006-2007, and 2007-2008 school years. The committee was composed of Laurel Vorachek (Assessment & Evaluation); Rich Kronberg, (Anchorage Education Association); Val Woods (TOTEM); Steve Kalmes (Director of Transportation); Roger Fiedler (Communications); Juliana Armstrong (Anchorage Principals Association); Duane Moran (Anchorage Council of Education), Loretta Nabong (Student Representative to the School Board); Mary Garcia (PTA); Alison Stirling (Facilities); William Johnson (MECC); and Crystal Kennedy (School Board). Robb Boyer facilitated the committee.

The committee presented three calendar series, spanning a three-year time period (Series A, Series B, and Series C) to Jan Christensen, Assistant Superintendent for Instruction, along with a memo explaining the committee's process. For a variety of educational, facilities, and community reasons, the committee is only presenting the 2005-2006 calendar for approval at this time. The committee will continue to gather community and staff input on the proposed 2006-2007 and 2007-2008 calendars during the coming months and revisit those decisions in the spring of 2005.

The proposed calendar replicates the draft calendar, which has been posted on the ASD Website and previously approved by the School Board, with the following changes:

1. Moves Spring Break back one week to provide a buffer between the break and the high school testing week.
2. Provides for a May flexible inservice day, similar to the one approved by the Board for the 2004-2005 school year. On this day, sites will analyze data from the 2005-2006 school year in the morning and strategize plans for the following year based upon that analysis in the afternoon.

The calendar maintains the current start and ending pattern and does not alter the parent/teacher conference processes.

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. The committee worked very hard to examine all of those issues, attend to them, and present the best possible calendar. The committee cautioned that tweaking of days in any of the series 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., test make-up and parent conferences).

Alphabetized list of issues addressed by the committee:

- additional days of student contact prior to October testing
- best practice to increase AYP attainment
- bussing
- construction (facilities)
- contractual agreements
- earlier end date
- earlier start date
- extra-curricular activities
- graduation dates
- half-day usage
- inservice days (grade reporting)
- inservice days (parent involvement)
- inservice days (professional development)
- migrant education issues
- parent conferences
- parent student release concerns
- partial weeks
- past attendance trends (before vacations, etc. for student, staff, community)
- processing and posting of grades
- processing time of state tests

- professional development best practice
- quarterly 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
- summer and fall student employment
- testing make-up dates
- tourism (i.e., cruise line schedules)
- winter events (i.e., Arctic Winter Games, Fur Rendezvous, etc.)

### School Starting and Ending Dates

There was significant interest by last year's calendar committee in moving the school year starting and ending dates to an earlier time. The decision was made not to move the 2004-2005 calendar start/end date to an earlier time. It was suggested that it be part of the discussion for the 2005-2006, 2006-2007, and 2007-2008 calendars. That issue has been the primary focus of the committee. The committee felt that ending the quarters prior to winter break and spring break provided a better instructional experience for the students.

After investigating whether it was possible to recommend a change to the start/end date, it was determined there were construction/maintenance project issues that would not support an immediate move to an earlier start/end of school. Likewise, the availability of bus drivers remains an issue in an earlier start/end calendar. From past staff communications and input, there appears to be significant support from ASD employees for an earlier start/end date. Whether that support is present in the parents and community will be assessed through online surveys, budget presentations, and other input. At this time, it is being recommended to maintain the status quo for start and end dates for the 2005-2006 calendar.

### Parent/Teacher Conferences

There was strong concern by the committee that the current parent/teacher conference format was not cost effective (busing) or instructionally sound (large number of half days). Likewise, there was concern it was not user friendly for parents with a large number of children.

The proposed change in Series A and C for 2006-2007 and 2007-2008 creates a half day situation on Wednesday for students, has them home all day on Thursday, and leaves Friday for inservice (professional development) in the fall and inservice (compensation for evening parent conference hours) in the spring. This actually creates more potential hours for parent/teacher conferences on Wednesday and Thursday and reduces the number of half days in the calendar. The proposed change would also address testing make-up issues that cannot be fixed in the current structure. It is recommended that the specifics of those conferencing hours would be coordinated among the three divisions. There would need to be significant dialogue with employee bargaining groups prior to making a change in the parent conference format

The recommended 2005-2006 calendar retains the current parent/teacher conference format

### Spring Break

Decisions by DEED to move the High School Graduation Qualifying Exam (HSGQE) to the first week in April 2005 created a situation that directly connected spring break to the HSGQE testing week. The committee was extremely concerned about the impact of this calendaring on the participation rate of the test. Schools must show 95 percent participation on the tests in the different identified groups. Failure to make 95 percent participation in any of the groups labels that group as failing to make adequate yearly progress (AYP), regardless of the actual success rate of the group. There was significant concern that the number of students who took extended vacation time connected to the spring break (either voluntarily or involuntarily) would increase the number of groups not making AYP, solely because of failing to make the participation rate of 95 percent.

The committee examined the options available to them and concluded that moving the spring break from the fourth week in March to the third week would provide a buffer to the testing and have the least impact on other issues associated with spring break placement. That decision is included in the recommended 2005-2006 calendar. It is important to note that DEED has not yet officially confirmed that testing will remain in the first week of April.

### Flexible Snow-Day Inservice

Imbedded in the recommended 2005-2006 calendar is one emergency school closure day and a second flexible inservice day, which could be used as a snow day, if needed. With an increased demand for data analysis and planning by schools, increased mandatory and compliance trainings, and other professional

development needs for ASD staff, the committee is recommending the District establish the flexible inservice day in late May. If not utilized as a snow day during the school year, the school staffs would use the day to analyze their recent testing data and begin the planning necessary to address the issues presented through their student test scores. If the District were forced to use more than one day during the school year for emergency school closure purposes, the inservice day would be abandoned and students would attend school.

#### Attachment

Prepared by: Robb Boyer, Director of Staff Development

Approved by: Jan Christensen, Assistant Superintendent, Instruction



# Anchorage School District

## 2005-06 School Year Calendar

S M T W T F S

**July**

					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

**August**

	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

**September**

				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
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18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	

**October**

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30	( 31					

**November**

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6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30			

**December**

				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

**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  
10-13 Parent conference week, early release for students. Schools will announce schedules.

14 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

S M T W T F S

**January**

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

**February**

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12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28				

**March**

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19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

**April**

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16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30						

**May**

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7	8	9	10	11	12	13	
14	15	16	17	18	19	20	
21	22	23	24	25	26	27	
28	29	30	31				

**June**

				1	2	3
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11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	

- ( ) 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