

ANCHORAGE SCHOOL DISTRICT  
ANCHORAGE, ALASKA

ASD MEMORANDUM #269 (2004-2005)

May 9, 2005

TO: SCHOOL BOARD

FROM: OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT

SUBJECT: SCHOOL CALENDAR 2006-2008

RECOMMENDATION:

It is the administration's recommendation that the School Board adopt the attached Districtwide calendar "Series C" for the 2006-2007 and 2007-2008 school years. These calendars call for an earlier start and earlier end to the school year. The recommended calendar changes are made in the best interest of the student's instructional and academic performance needs.

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 Superintendent's Office presented a 2005-2006 calendar for approval and the Board adopted it in December of 2004. Training and Professional Development, Assessment and Evaluation, and Public Affairs were directed to continue to gather community and staff input on the proposed 2006-2007 and 2007-2008 calendars and to revisit those decisions in the spring of 2005.

The District conducted the following public outreach efforts to gather as much information about the impact of the proposed calendar series, as possible:

- Staff Online Survey through MyLearningPlan (MLP) (786 responses)
- Community Online Survey through ASD Website (Zoomerang) (696 responses)
- Mail out Survey to all Parents of ASD Students (5,577 responses)
- Public Input Evenings at Gruening Middle School, Dimond High School, and Wendler Middle School
- Superintendent dialogue with:
  - Chamber of Commerce
  - Anchorage Travel and Visitors Bureau
  - Campfire
  - University of Alaska
  - Student Government

The District also engaged in conversation with the following internal entities to determine the impacts identified by Anchorage School District departments and individuals:

- Transportation
- Payroll
- Facilities
- Maintenance
- Operations
- Facilities
- Training and Professional Development
- Assessment & Evaluation
- Instructional Divisions
- Superintendent dialogue with:
  - ACE, AEA, APA, Custodial 71, Food Services, Teamster 959, TOTEM

The data collecting effort around this decision was comprehensive and thorough, as can be seen in the charts and comment attachments.

### Survey Quantifiable Summary Data

The three different survey tools resulted with similar patterns, but some differences.

Online Staff Survey (MLP) Highlights (Attachment Chart #1):

- 786 staff members (of the 7,000+ account users) submitted survey responses
- MLP only allows the submission of one response per account
- 56 percent of the respondents were in favor of the earlier start (Series C)
- 24 percent indicated a preference for the status quo start (Series A)

#### Online Community Survey (Zoomerang) Highlights (Attachment Chart #1)

- 696 community members submitted survey responses
- Individuals could submit more than one response and some respondents may have also been staff members
- 62 percent of the respondents indicated they had children currently in school
- 58 percent of the respondents were in favor of the earlier start (Series C)
- 35 percent indicated a preference for the status quo start (Series A)

#### Mail out Community Survey (TPD/A&E/PR) Highlights (Attachment Chart #3)

- 5,577 community members submitted survey responses, either through a mail return or by submission, at one of the evening informational meetings
- Individuals could possibly submit more than one response and some respondents may have also been staff members
- The gap between Series A and Series C was much closer in the mail out results with 53percent favoring the earlier start and 40percent indicating a preference for the status quo

#### Total of all 3 Surveys (Attachment Chart #5)

- 54 percent favored Series C (earlier start)
- 38 percent favored Series A (status quo)
- 8 percent indicated they wanted a combination, didn't care for any of the proposed schedules, or were still undecided

#### Total of all 3 Surveys (Attachment Chart #6)

- When asked what was the most important issue when considering a school calendar, 39percent of the respondents indicated that student achievement should be the driving factor in the decision
- 26 percent of the respondents indicated having quarters end prior to vacation and having an earlier start/earlier end were of the second and third highest importance (13 percent each)

## Survey Comment Summary

Anecdotal comments were collected as a text field question in both online surveys and the TPD staff collated comments that were written in on the mail out surveys. In addition email comments sent to the Superintendent and Board were collected and collated for your review. That input can be seen under the appendix entitled Comments.

## Outreach Summary

- Fairly uniformly conversations with both external and internal groups indicated a “we can do it, just let us know as soon as possible” attitude.
- Two bargaining groups suggested postponing a change until 2007-08.
- There was an acknowledgment that the summer of 2006 would be the most difficult, since it would have a late end and an earlier start (if Series C was adopted).
- APA advocated for a change as soon as possible.
- Payroll indicated staffing and potential fiscal costs associated with a change to Series C.
- Many departments indicated a “half-dozen-of-one-or-the-other” attitude. For instance, an earlier start will impact the ability to hire bus drivers at the start of the year, but may allow us to hold onto drivers longer in the school year.
- Student employment issues (i.e., state fair) may be impacted. However, it may be a negative and a positive, since students in an earlier start can get a jump on the job market. However, they may have to quit their position earlier, and in the case of the Fair, miss the employment opportunity altogether.

## Summary Comments and Other Issues

- Both series place spring break to provide a buffer between the break and the high school testing week.
- Both series provide 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 current school year in during the morning and strategize plans for the following year based upon that analysis in the afternoon.
- 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 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).

- With the adoption of Series C there will need to be significant work done with AEA and Instructional Divisions to create a two-day parent conference period (as proposed) in an effort to decrease the number of half days. Such a move has both positive instructional and parent impacts associated with it.
- It is important to ensure the community understands the following points as this recommendation is discussed.
  - Testing dates are set by DEED.
  - The 2005-06 calendar is already adopted.
  - The only way to get the quarters to end prior to the vacations is through an earlier start.
  - The summer between the change (June 2006 through August 2006) will be a short one.

CC/JC/EH/RB

Attachments    Appendix Series A  
                      Appendix Series C  
                      Chart #1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6 (Data Analysis of Survey Responses)  
                      Comments

Prepared by:    Enid Hunter, Executive Director, Curriculum/Staff Development  
                      Robb Boyer, Director, Staff Development

Approved by:    Jan Christensen, Assistant Superintendent, Instruction



# Anchorage School District

## 2006-07 School Year Calendar

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### July

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### August

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### September

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### AUGUST

29 Teachers' first day  
30-31 State released professional development days

### SEPTEMBER

1 State released professional development days  
4 Labor Day holiday  
5 Classes begin

### OCTOBER

3-5 State assigned testing days  
27 End of first quarter (42 days). State released grade reporting day

### NOVEMBER

6-9 Parent conference week, early release for students. Schools will announce schedules.

10 State released professional development day  
23-24 Thanksgiving holiday

### DECEMBER

25-29 Winter Vacation

### JANUARY

1-5 Winter Vacation (continued)  
15 Martin Luther King, Jr. birthday-no school  
22 End of second quarter (48 days). State released grade reporting day

### FEBRUARY

19 Presidents Day

### MARCH

16 End of third quarter (38 days). State released grade reporting day  
19-23 Spring break

### APRIL

3-5 State assigned testing dates  
16-19 Parent conference week, early release for students. Schools will announce schedules.

20 State released professional development day

### MAY

18 Flexible state released professional development day  
28 Memorial Day holiday

### JUNE

6 Classes end. End of fourth quarter (52 days)  
7 Teachers' last day

- ( ) 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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# Anchorage School District

## 2007-08 School Year Calendar

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**July**

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**AUGUST**  
 28 Teachers' first day  
 29-31 State released professional development days

**SEPTEMBER**  
 3 Labor Day holiday  
 4 Classes begin

**OCTOBER**  
 2-4 State assigned testing days

**NOVEMBER**  
 2 End of first quarter (47 days). State released grade reporting day  
 12-15 Parent conference week, early release for students. Schools will announce schedules.  
 16 State released professional development day  
 22-23 Thanksgiving holiday

**DECEMBER**  
 24-31 Winter Vacation

**JANUARY**  
 1-4 Winter Vacation (continued)  
 14 Martin Luther King, Jr. birthday- no school  
 21 End of second quarter (43 days). State released grade reporting day

**FEBRUARY**  
 18 Presidents Day

**MARCH**  
 14 End of third quarter (38 days). State released grade reporting day  
 17-21 Spring break

**APRIL**  
 1-3 State assigned testing dates  
 7-10 Parent conference week, early release for students. Schools will announce schedules.  
 11 State released professional development day

**MAY**  
 16 Flexible state released professional development day  
 26 Memorial Day holiday

**JUNE**  
 4 Classes end. End of fourth quarter (52 days)  
 5 Teachers' last day

- ( ) 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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# Anchorage School District

## 2006-07 School Year Calendar

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### July

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### AUGUST

- 17 Teachers' first day
- 18,21 State released professional development days
- 22 Classes begin

### SEPTEMBER

- 4 Labor Day holiday

### OCTOBER

- 3-5 State assigned testing days
- 20 End of first quarter (45 days). State released grade reporting day.
- 30 State released professional development day.

### NOVEMBER

- 8 Parent conference day. Early release for students.
- 9 Parent conference day. No school for students.
- 10 State released professional development day
- 23-24 Thanksgiving holiday

### DECEMBER

- 22 End of second quarter (42 days) State released grade reporting day
- 22-29 Winter Vacation

### JANUARY

- 1-5 Winter Vacation (continued)
- 15 Martin Luther King, Jr. birthday-no school

### FEBRUARY

- 19 Presidents Day

### MARCH

- 16 End of third quarter (48 days). State released grade reporting day
- 19-23 Spring break

### APRIL

- 3-5 State assigned testing dates
- 18 Parent conference week, early release for students.
- 19 Parent conference day. No school for students.
- 20 State released professional development day

### MAY

- 25 Classes end. End of fourth quarter (45 days)
- 28 Memorial Day holiday
- 29 Flexible state released professional development day
- 30 Teachers' last day

- ( ) 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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# Anchorage School District

## 2007-08 School Year Calendar

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**July**

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**August**

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**September**

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**AUGUST**  
 16 Teachers' first day  
 17,20 State released professional development days  
 21 Classes begin

**SEPTEMBER**  
 3 Labor Day holiday

**OCTOBER**  
 2-4 State assigned testing days  
 19 End of first quarter (45 days). State released grade reporting day.  
 29 State released professional development day

**NOVEMBER**  
 7 Parent conference day. Early release for students.  
 8 Parent conference day. No school for students.  
 9 State released professional development day  
 22-23 Thanksgiving holiday

**DECEMBER**  
 21 End of second quarter (42 days). State released grade reporting day  
 24-31 Winter Vacation

**JANUARY**  
 1-4 Winter Vacation (continued)  
 14 Martin Luther King, Jr. birthday-no school

**FEBRUARY**  
 18 Presidents Day

**MARCH**  
 14 End of third quarter (48 days). State released grade reporting day  
 17-21 Spring break

**APRIL**  
 1-3 State assigned testing dates  
 16 Parent conference week, early release for students.  
 17 Parent conference day. No school for students.  
 18 State released professional development day

**MAY**  
 23 Classes end.  
 26 Memorial Day holiday  
 27 End of fourth quarter (45 days). Flexible state released professional development day  
 28 Teachers' last day

- ( ) 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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**January**

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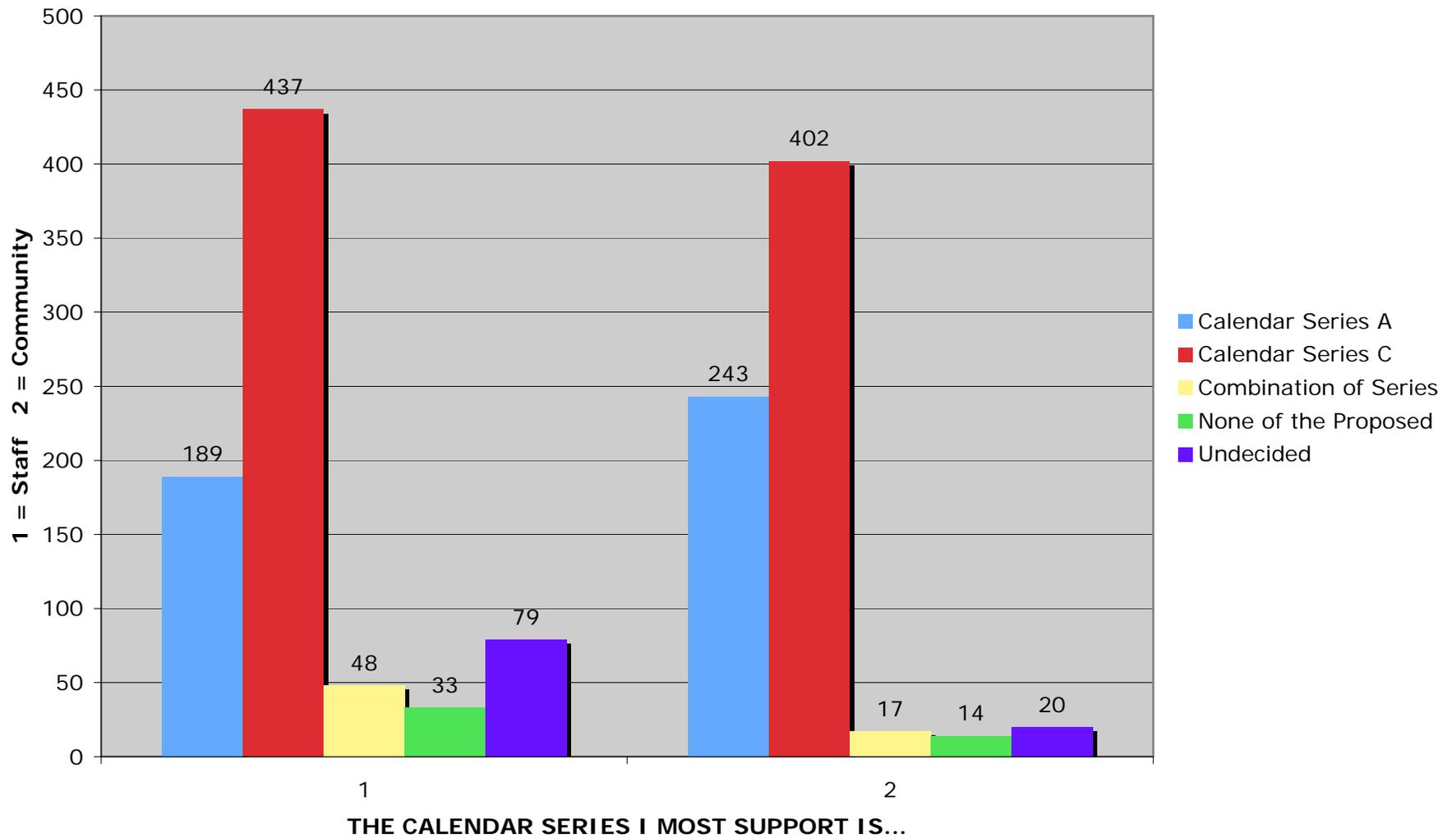
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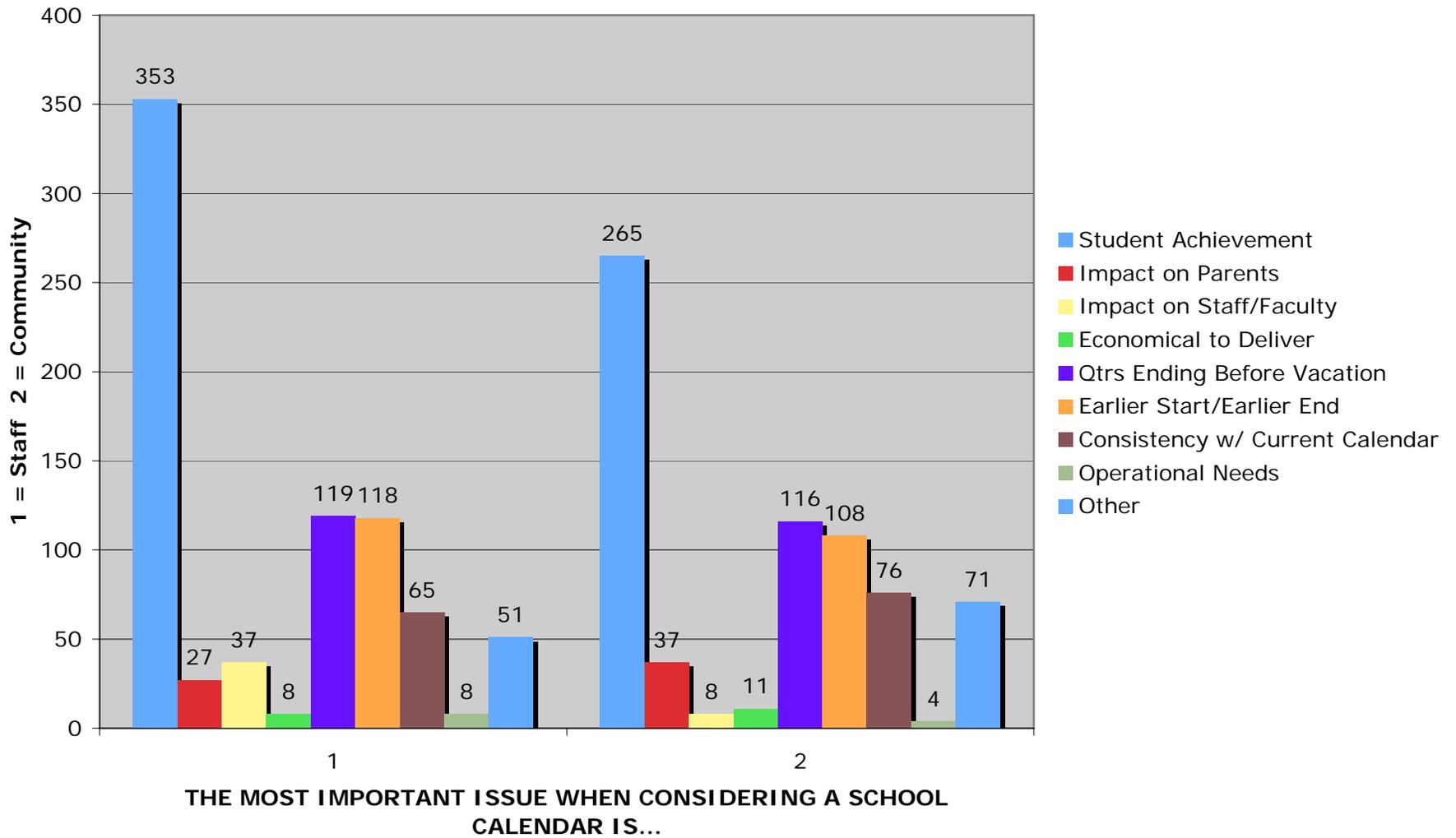
**June**

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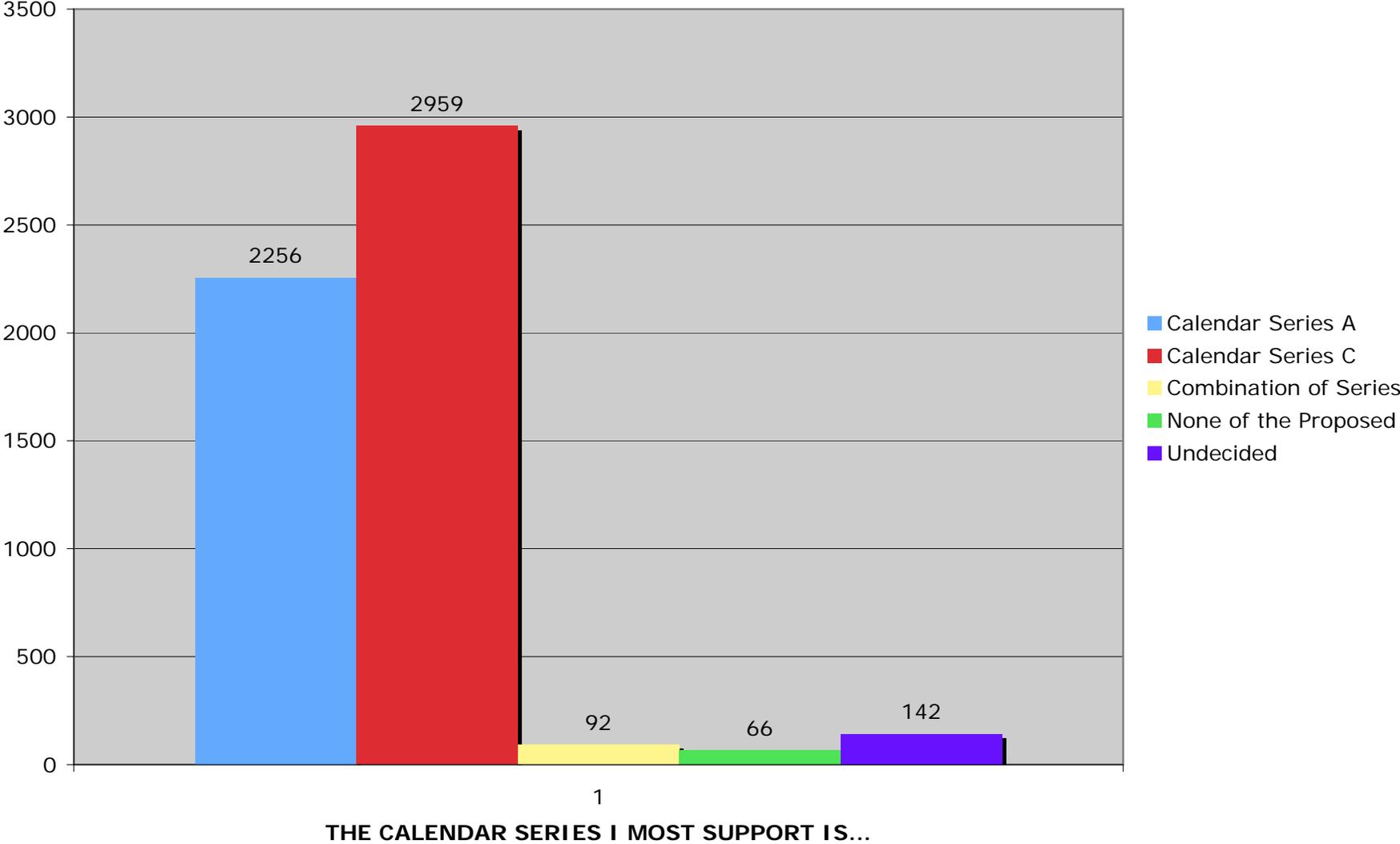
**Chart #1 - Staff & Community Survey Input**  
 (collected via MyLearningPlan (MLP) and ASD Website (Zoomerang))



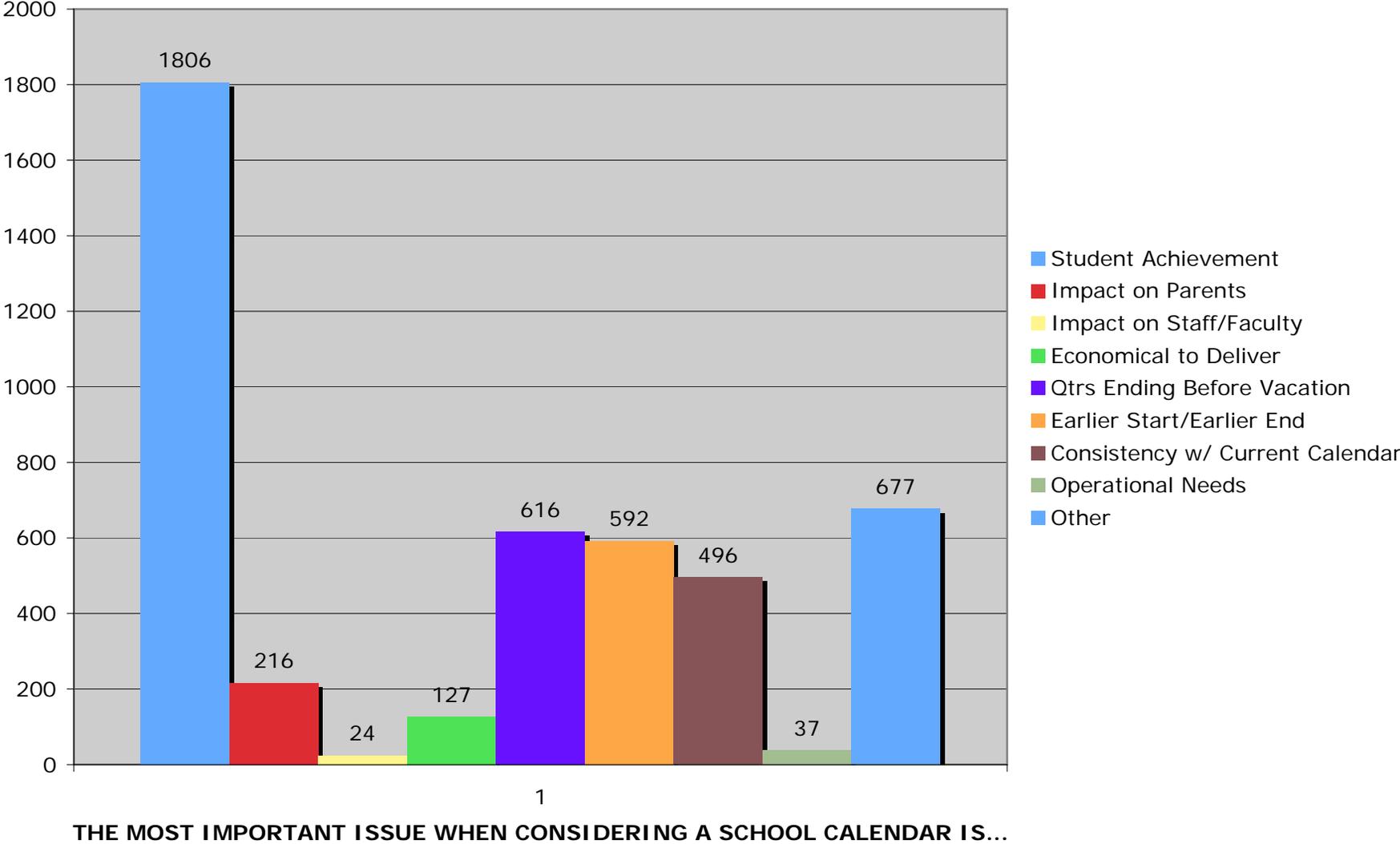
**Chart #2 - Staff & Community Survey Input  
(collected via MyLearningPlan (MLP) and ASD Website (Zoomerang))**



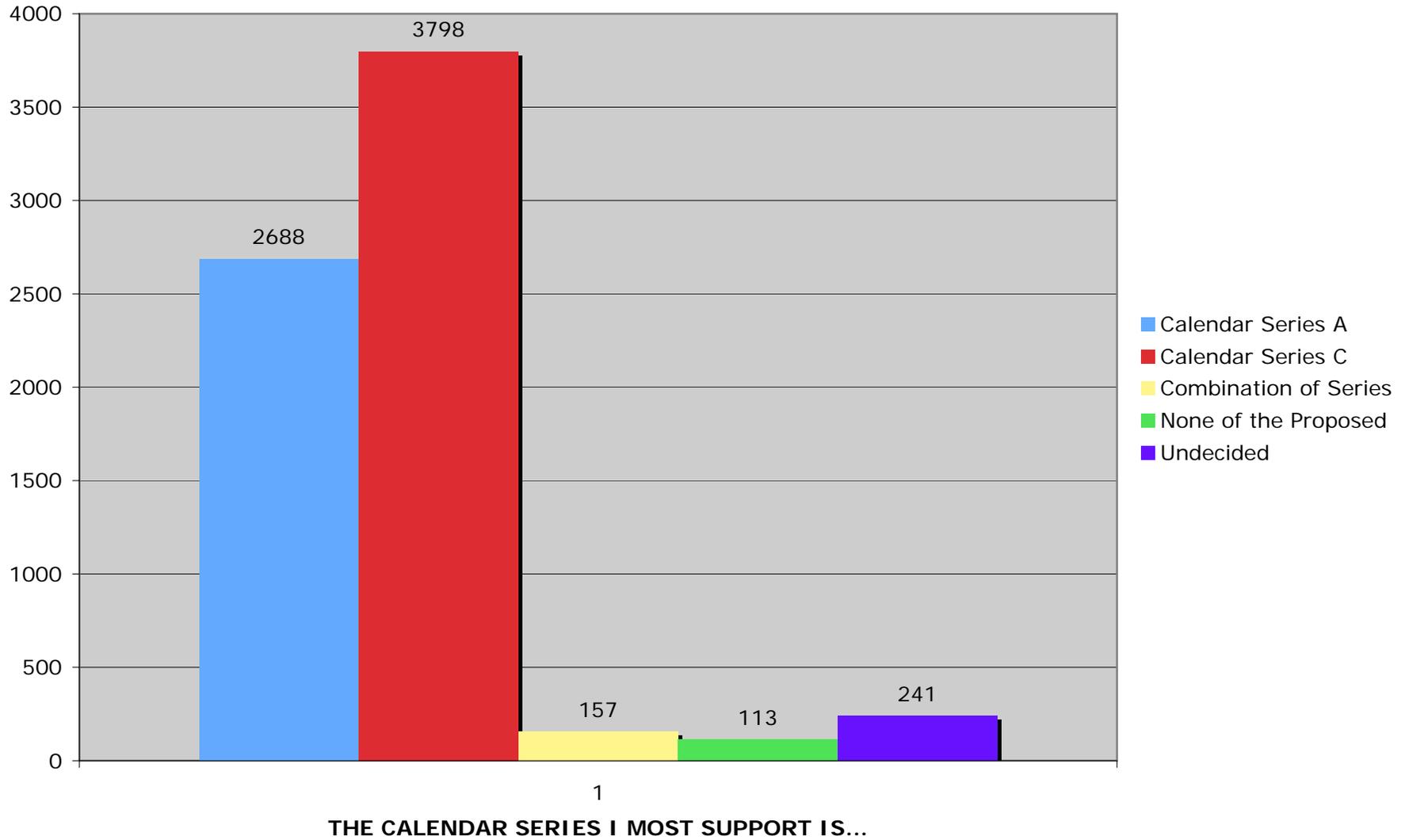
**Chart #3 - Community Survey Input (Mailout/Hard Copy)**



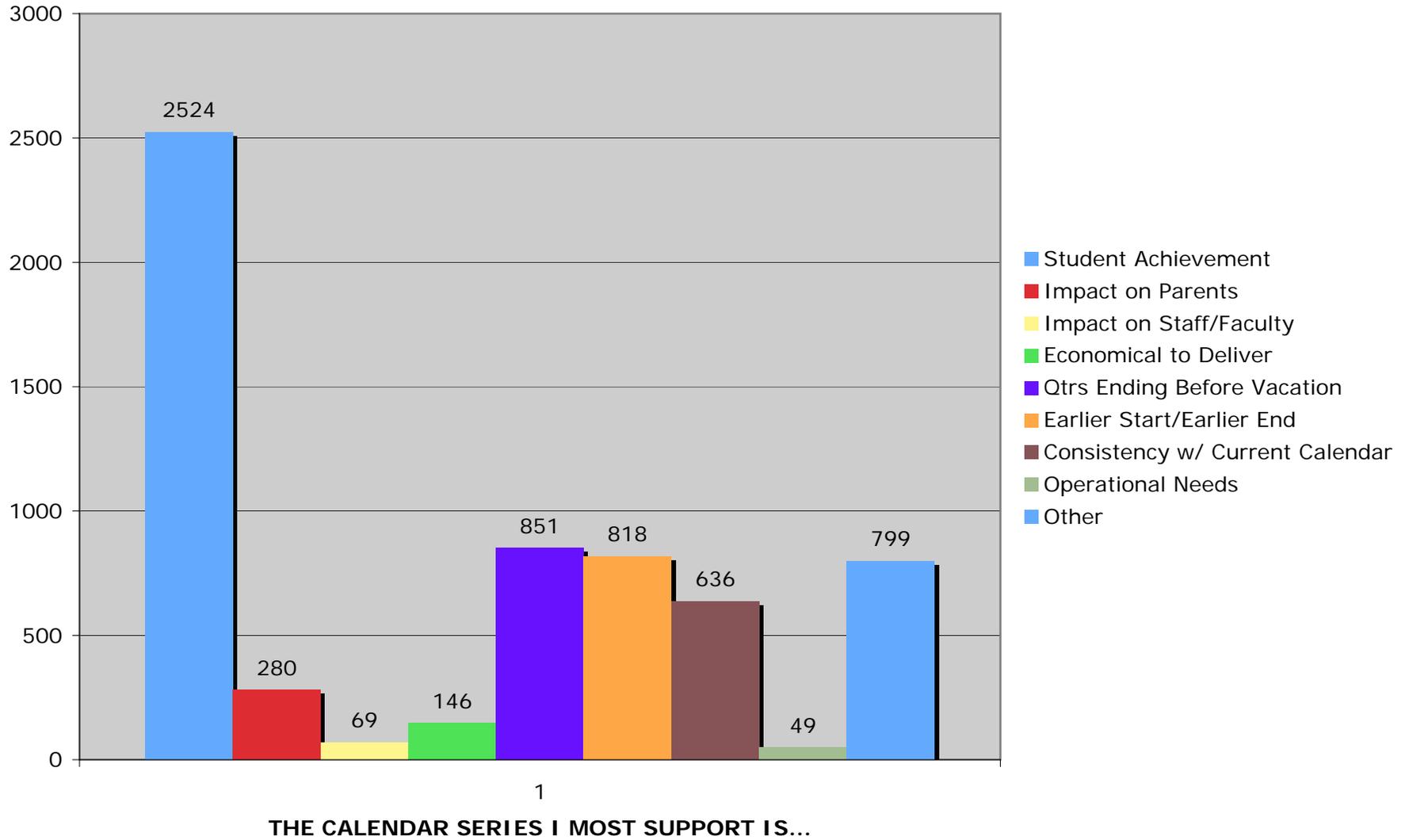
**Chart #4 - Community Survey Input (Mailout/Hard Copy)**



**Chart #5 - Community/Staff Survey Responses - Total of All 3 Survey Tools**



**Chart #6 - Community/Staff Survey Responses - Total of All 3 Survey Tools**



**COMMUNITY ANECDOTAL COMMENTS COLLECTED FROM  
ANCHORAGE SCHOOL DISTRICT HARD  
COPY SURVEY**

We'd like a start 8/22/06 and end 6/6/07.

What about the State Fair? Will there be a day off?

Annual Family Vacation always includes August through Labor Day Weekend.

Earlier start/end works with Alaska's weather.

Why not start August 28th and get out June 1st?

Why not do it next year and not wait!

Why does this calendar start 2 full weeks earlier, but only end 1 ½ weeks earlier?

None-Important is quality of teaching--not the calendar.

One factor to consider parents still may need to pull kids out of school a day or 2 early at Christmas vacation because of flight availability. If semester ends then with finals given then, parents are in a bind. I don't pull my kids out without much thought, but air travel is a fact of life.

Spend as much of the summer out of school, as possible since we're in Alaska, with so little light.

It would help to provide more pros and cons and information/feedback from teachers and staff on why they want to change. Educate me a bit more with a mailing like this.

So our children don't fall further behind, year-round calendar...

Quarters ending prior to vacations--just as colleges arrange their quarters.

We go away for fall hunting season.

Overall impact on family; i.e. summer plans coordinated with other family, camps, etc. that are outside.

More school days, not less!

Would have liked to vote for 2nd & 3rd important factors.

Impact on student achievement--which impacts--specially a winter break.

Short summer, kids in sports (soccer) ends August 11--no time for vacation.

Don't mess with summer and you will retain the trust of the people.

AP exams given in May....an earlier start allows for teachers to have adequate time to prepare for these National tests. This will allow Anchorage to better match lower 48 "calendars" and thus match up with National Testing dates better.

Year round school with 3 vacation months throughout the year.

Alaska only has 3 months of summer! Don't cut off the last piece of it.

Very low productivity in June!

Can P-T conferences be confined to evenings? Leave days for instruction? Impact on student instruction. Term break at winter vacation makes sense. Less disruption to continuity. (Conflict with State Fair in August, though) Students opportunities to learn are vastly disrupted by P-T conferences, holidays, and testing itself.

To start: How about 1st wk 3 days, 2nd week 4 days, 3rd week 5 days.

Attention spans...kids need to start in August because kids are bored this month. They need to end school in May because they lose interest in school due to spring fever.

As long as the spring break is the same as Fairbanks. We prefer Anchorage have the same as Fairbanks because of family trips to Fairbanks.

Alaska kids get spring fever. They need to finish in May. Sports start August anyways.

I think it's important to make the most of the short Alaskan summer. Late August is nicer than late May.

Bonus input: Has anyone balked yet at the idea that the changeover summer would be 2 weeks shorter? (summer income loss that can't be recouped for some, etc.

Semester #1 needs to end with Christmas vacation. It is so stupid to have kids come back for 1 or 1½ weeks to finish the semester. Whichever calendar accomplishes this is the one I'm for.

I believe quarters ending prior to vacations encompasses the first 3 choices.

Shorten winter and spring breaks.

Time to acquire school supplies needed (prepare in August)

Impact on student achievement obvious choice, should not have been included when only allowed to select one.

Shortest school schedule i.e. eliminate unnecessary in-service days. Start after Labor Day end before Memorial Day.

Summer ends after Labor Day! Here in Alaska many people still have visitors or on vacation till end of August. I do not think 2 weeks would make much difference in test scores.

Too much idle time for students spells trouble. We need our kids in school longer, thus I like the combo of the two calendars.

I feel we should consider Anchorage climate, light, etc. By May the kids are all wound up from all the daylight and go to school tired. I feel we should wind up the school year well before summer solstice and start again in rainy August.  
Thanks

Bad question...you cannot consider only one!

Why not start August 29th? I prefer an early start and release, but August 22 is too early.

Do schools that start school under calendar C score on average higher (on mandated testing) than those schools that operate under calendar A? Would be valuable information to provide to parents and others.

Calendar Series E....E has early start date, Thanksgiving week off (like spring break) and ends the end of May.

I would support a year around schedule with larger breaks between quarters.

Same calendar schedule as Universities. Follow UAA schedule and most villages in the state.

When school ends in June, students have already mentally checked out. Ending around Memorial Day will keep students focused.

Summer isn't over until Labor Day. My students will NOT begin school so early in August. Basing dates on mandated testing--why not change those dates? Is ludicrous. Not only will my students not begin school so early--they will NOT be present for mandated tests.

I think having semester end before winter break is a terrific idea...much less strain on kids desperately doing homework over break.

Start August 30 end June 1.

Although end of the 06/07 school year should be 23rd of May 2007..not the 25th. Exactly 2 weeks adjustment of the beginning and ending of the school year. Thanks.

Changing calendars will not prevent teachers from sending projects/homework over Christmas break. For summer activities/camping etc. starting earlier cuts into an already too short summer. Getting out in May does not help as it's still too cold usually for camping and too early for gardening.

Absolutely, especially for high school students who can sit for finals prior to Christmas break.

USA has shortest year of all industrial nations and falls behind in achievement.....extend school year.

It would matter more for quality education if parents and state took back the education of our youth and taught to youth needs US fed \$ mandates. Teach

kids according to their needs and what we adults know they will need. I don't support federal testing or state dependency.

Families--traditional berry picking, etc.

I think students and parents are more "settled" after Labor Day--plus I don't think starting a few days earlier will make a difference to test results.

Let's be real. School after Memorial Day and before Labor Day is a waste of resources and time. (I have 3 kids) Start after Labor Day and end before Memorial Day.

How about year round school to get better use out of facilities and smaller classes.

This would be of particular benefit to the students in AP classes. As it stands now, they have a month of "waster" time after raking the AP tests. Is there any chance that they would consider starting the Fair earlier?

Why don't you prepare a year round calendar with breaks between quarters. This I feel is more beneficial to the students and I feel would help test scores. Also, it provides a more consistent learning environment for the students.

Enough with all the useless testing days???? Teach them something!

More nice weather during summer break....usually May has nicer weather than end of August.

Start the August 29. No Spring Break and end early.

Not necessarily on their test achievement.

Quit trying to make this state's education "look" better. EDUCATE our children instead. Don't teach to this test! Teach these children for Life.

Why not start back one week instead of two? Such as August 28th....More consistent with private schools and summer programs. That affects working parents. Too hard to check one most important...

Don't really care.

Community opinion!

More correlation with school year in the lower 48!

Cost!

One choice not sufficient enough/too many variable to consider.

If school starts two weeks earlier, that would conflict with the State Fair. Not good for the State Fair.

You should seriously consider one week off at Christmas and 1 week off in the end of January. Many people leave this time of year....less days absent per child I bet if you did this.

Impact on other team events, organizational events, etc. That one planned around the ASD schedule a year ahead.

Consider changing/proposing to change dates of testing conflicts with Spring Break.

Fishing seasons; fair; kids will be missing school for these events anyway....so start after Labor Day!

August Rainy..May/June-Sunny mostly.

Start as it gets dark end as it gets light. May is a wasted month as it is....so going into June is CRAZY.

Impact on family summer plans! Summer schools, camps, travel.

Seasons-Our summers are so short, we need to be able to enjoy it all-June through August.

Concern about when report cards go home and conflict with Xmas vacation. Respondent is a teacher and mother of High School student!

Difficult for students to concentrate by late May/early June due to nice weather.

Christmas vacation should be 3 weeks.

Impact on hunting, fishing, gathering and camping.

Quarters ending prior to vacations would be nice. Everything is so interconnected. There is no predominant issue..it is a balancing act.

Like A....this calendar is close to the original dates. Impact on parents-including parents who attend college...they start last week of August, which could in turn mess with their schedules too! We all as parents and students are accustomed to this schedule why mess it up? Been the same way for years - leave it that way. Sunny weather makes less attention(they would rather be out playing).

Conflict with enrollment of student in out-of-state college and camp programs.

We believe the accurate results of student achievement are not heavily shown through mandated national tests.

Received on March 9th-Eagle River meeting was March 8th.

May is too early for summer vacation to start. The weather doesn't even get warm until June.

Combination of above.

Start High School at 8:30 or 9:00 am please.

Start August 29 and end June 1. I would like to see far fewer in-service/other days off from school. November-January kids are hardly in school.

My own kids concerns with new calendar...Interferes with State Fair...Shorter summer 2006...Have you given thought to year round school with 6 weeks in winter off and 6 weeks for summer?

Alaska weather?

We should look into year round school for this as well as Alaskans being able to take vacations in winter without missing school or holidays at home.

Cost to implement-benefit of saving \$.

Where is option B?

I propose year round school.

Year round - see Canada optional by parents.

Summer is so sort here in Ak...need family time in the summer.

Why not a survey about the ridiculously early time Senior High Students have to start.

Consistency i.e. this year too many in-service days in November. I am also an advocate of earlier start times for elementary students and later start time for High School.

What would be ideal is to go with the "C" Calendar...only extend the "End" date of June 1st and allow two weeks for Spring Break.

Enjoying summer to its fullest as summer is too short.

Earliest start date I would support is August 30.

We need a bus system in Mt. View to pick up kids.

Keep the summer break in the summer.

Hunting...family time.

Start date August 30.

If we really cared about student achievement we wouldn't have teenagers in their desks at school at 7:30 a.m.

This also works better with sports programs in the spring...The longer sunlight hours...sleep time for all ages...excellent alternative.

Earlier start day ok if it will help kids learn and retain and help teachers teach. Thanks for seeking input.

Many camp programs rely on college students to lead/counsel programs. Will they be available when our students need camp care? (with change in school calendars.

First semester ends before Christmas break. Good thing.

August is rainy--kids cannot focus on school work in June when weather is so nice. Those school days after Memorial Day are wasted instructional time. The Alaska State Fair should not dictate our school calendar.

My kids prefer starting after Labor Day. If there were less days off during the year, they could get out earlier.

My son needs Xmas break to work on long term projects. Changing the date means losing study time.

How about something in between A and C.

Why can't our school year be longer as other states are? If you want to improve achievement and retention have teachers teach more than 180 days.

Kids don't go to bed as they still would like to enjoy the long days.

I think we should have less in-service days (usually at least 6 a year and pick up our days needed there and combine the teacher conference days to start after Labor Day and finish before Memorial Day. This would provide consistency.

I don't believe the revised schedule will have a marked impact on student achievement.

Go for the change - August start! (YES)

Think about starting on the school year Monday or even Friday because many summer camps go week to week. Starting on Tuesday means parents have to stay home on Monday.

On calendar C move Oct 30 in-service to Feb 20, so the parents have a four day weekend at Fur Ronde.

Wednesday before Thanksgiving should be a holiday since 1/3 to 1/2 of the students are gone. Add the day to the start of the school year.

I wish you could consider a radically different approach to teacher conferences.  
Softball/Baseball merge into America Legion  
Moved from Arkansas - Moved here we used to end semester to end at winter break. Friends get stressed about the new break.  
Same thing on teacher's contract  
UAA/APU schedule?

Impact on student achievement  
Maintaining consistency with current calendar  
Change test dates (set them back)

Earlier start/earlier end  
State Fair

Why not compromise and start the last week of August and end the 1<sup>st</sup> week in June? 2006=8/28 - 06/01/07. Why is this not an option?

Maintaining consistency with current calendar Don't want to miss the State Fair.

I have examined the two calendar series (A,C) (Yes)  
I prefer the calendar that begins after Labor Day  
The most important issue when considering a school calendar is:

LEAVE IT ALONE!

No single issue can be rated as "most important!!!!

The longer the school year the better. Let's go for year around school!

Most economical to deliver

How about eliminating some of the in service days and starting after Labor Day and ending before Memorial Day??

Balance of vacations, achievements, and holidays. Schedule C is far superior. Current schedule has a long 4<sup>th</sup> Qtr. With few breaks.

Winter (snowfall). Kids that stay in Alaska should get summer vacation without snow. It is still yucky in May and it is still nice in September. Give the kids a good vacation.

Start late-end early (compress the school year.

Thank you for doing a wonderful job! (Jan Davis)

I'd like August 29, start with June 1 end! \*

Impact on parents/families I strongly support a year-around school calendar. The summer break is way too long other breaks are too short.

"Earlier Spring to late fall. "

I'd like to see less in-service type days, so we all can have a longer summer. I grew up in this district and we used to always start after Labor Day and rarely ran into June!

Eliminate some in-service days.

Absurd promise.... I can think of Lots Fun?  
Traditional Summer? Family Time?  
Controlling the Manic Trend to overachievement?  
August is warmer then May?

The needs of the Family as a Whole

Families not just the parent!  
Vacation needs for family

Starting school before Labor Day will definitely increase student absences.

Impact in student test achievement – should not be considered a factor; wasn't testing moved to earlier in year so results are available for teachers to use before school was out? To maintain this while starting school in August would require moving tests date up as well. I don't think test dates are a good defense because of this. (in the earlier start date.)

[Note: I think we need to reconsider the idea that starting earlier should be necessary. Our learning shouldn't be cut so close that those two weeks makes a difference. If more time is needed it should come from the following ways:  
eliminating unnecessary school activities  
rescheduling in-service days to not be so invasive into the learning schedule  
not spending all of December focused on holiday activities]  
I think the school calendar should reflect the changing of the seasons. Summer break should stretch over as much of summer as possible. Starting in August would cut into summer and is therefore undesirable. Summer is so special in Alaska!

Start earlier: 3-wk Christmas; 2-wk Spring Break; End Same.

This interferes with hunting season & Ethan would miss school.  
Also, when my daughter travels to Europe, her funds school is still in sessions

School year originally based on farming; I am proponent of year round I quarreling breaks!

My son plays sports. They begins in early August so we are here anyway!

Our Alaskan summers are beautiful! Starting August 22 means teachers reporting the week of August 14<sup>th</sup> ! Let's enjoy August and early September before the long dark winter sets in!

Less in service days! Start late (9/5/06) / End Early! (5/25/07)

But I think the semester should end before winter break

The effect of the long days and good weather in May/ June verses the students ability to concentrate towards the end of the year.

Cut down on the number of "in-service" Days would allow late start and out early or more days of actual education for our children!!

What quarters? Those weren't shown on calendar?

Tried to circle while driving

I prefer after Labor Days/Subsistent/Vacations and Alaska State Fair/ My child always prefer after Labor Days

How about asking our High School kids on these inputs since they also have to deal with this when the time comes.

Prefer the calendar that begins before Labor Day  
Quarters ending prior to vacations

Why can't you move it by only 1 week (start August 29)?

Your proposed change will not affect overall student achievement, just test scores.

Children don't want to be in school in June. They're up late and don't do school work. Late May and early June waste of learning time. No achievement or progress is being made during these last few weeks.

Not enough advance notice to be making proposed change. It would negatively impact father-son contact time in custody sharing situation. Delay until 2008/2009 please.

How? Maybe we should change testing

In turn impacting well being of student

In turn impacts students and their families

How is this when the # of days is the same

This would change if calendar

It is a combination of issues and it would not be beneficial to make a change because of one issue.

The students get more consistency starting after Labor Day; when they start before it is disruptive they have vacation as right away

Summer is so short in Alaska don't make them sit in a classroom any sooner than they have to.

CHILD CARE OPTIONS AVAILABLE - WILL LOCAL CAMPS CHANGE TIMES OF OPERATION, TOO?-

-Calendar begins after Labor Day really either works

Please build another elementary school on the south side. Near Goldenview MS?

My daughter goes out of state to visit her father. He is a teacher - the new calendar would interfere with their visiting time as his release dates are in mid June.

There are too many In Service Days that could be cut back.

Maybe 3 weeks @ Holiday Break 2 days on each side?

I think either way will work, and we will be able to adjust our schedules as needed.

A& C? \*\* What happened to Option B?

It doesn't matter to us. We will be happy which ever way you choose.

I home school through FPCS and operate on this calendar anyway. (VB)

It would be nice to have a longer school year!!

\*\* By the time June arrives summer is on the downslide.

Get rid of 'in-service" days and "half days" that should put quarters ending before vacation.

Prefer calendar after Labor Day because of the Fair in Palmer.

What day do we start school in 2005? Just curious!!

Family -kids won't pay attention to school anyway in Alaska in August!!!! So it won't do much good to start them so early!!

Proposed calendar series the one we have now is fine. Thanks.

Student achievement longer is not always better!!

Will be camping and doing other summer activities

Student achievement - not test scores

Propose Sept 1<sup>st</sup> - May 31<sup>st</sup> or eliminate some of the many days school is closed, opposed to running the school year in to June.

Since there was only one (1) "snow day" this school year why go to June?

No one will be ready to focus on school yet if it starts in August when it is hot and we still feel like it's summer.

Can they test dates be adjusted to allow maximum student preparation with the current schedule?

Who sets the test dates?

Alaska's weather

It truly impacts more than one of the above.

Calendar "B" August 29<sup>th</sup> to May 31<sup>st</sup>

Start August 28/end May 31

Attend School all year 12 months.

Start 9/4/ and end on 5/31

Have teachers take 4 "In-Service" days prior to the kids showing up.

I prefer the calendar that begins after Labor Day or with extra week for Spring Break - Start early & end later.

I have family back east bests time to go is August. Keep school start date after Labor Day. Student do not need to be working on school projects during vacation.

**Education:** Should be child centered, these issues are all related to the "Adult Needs"

Campfire Before/After school program availability.

Start August 29, end May 30

No Spring Break!

Shorten Xmas break!

Kids have too much time off. Seems like every week they have a day off.

Advancing end info may will result in conflicts w/ Final Exams/paper etc.  
And Spring Sports Championships or elimination of all  
Spring Sports because they cannot be started earlier.

Start on August 29<sup>th</sup> and end on May 31<sup>st</sup>.

August 22<sup>nd</sup> is **too** early June 6<sup>th</sup> is **too** late!!

Doesn't impact student achievement, consistency is #1.

We have a limited summer cutting into August - would disrupt - fishing, hunting for the family- Please allow us family time. Then maybe we would see less problem with children

Impact on student achievement

Most economical to deliver

I vote for a quarterly schedule like the universities

I strongly object to the proposed change your issue list is not helpful for the decision process. This is about meeting **testing** needs not needs of children's **learning**

As my student will not be affected by the change, I have no opinion.

Let's keep the schools open year around and allow parents to choose breaks.

We favor year around school.

Impact on student education. To heck with test "achievement."

Not 2 weeks early

Prior to Labor Day would be ok, but not so far into August as proposed. -

-Also, not necessary to finish so early in May. -

Coordination with activities "outside" of Alaska in summer that enrich student experiences

Change for 2005/2006 good too!

Kids should not be required to attend sports camps over Christmas holidays!!!! All basketball players are now REQUIRED to attend one tournament week before Christmas and one in Florida week after-huge in convenience to families!!!!

Late August is the only time our entire family can get together. We want to keep it that way.

Like it was a couple years ago.

Would like to see calendar (B)

If school starts in 3<sup>rd</sup> week of August, registration happens 1-2 weeks earlier and this really impacts family holiday schedules.

Student education is the most important for determining a school calendar.

Impact on student achievement -Overall achievement should not be affected by a date change.

After summer and State Fair.

I prefer starting after Labor Day so the classes can "hit the ground running." Seems the teachers spend the last week packing rather than learning so why not have the Memorial Day holiday interruption at the end.

Yes but not as early as the 22<sup>nd</sup> of August.

Begin August 30 end June 1.

1<sup>st</sup> wk 3 days

2<sup>nd</sup> wk 4 days

3<sup>rd</sup> wk 5 days

Breaks kids in to new schedules at a good pace.

4 or less day last week also good.

What evidence supports the new calendar has any impact on achievement.

Calendar change should not be made just to allow more coaching time for standardized tests.

Prefer - year round school like Nevada!

Impact on students' period.

Some parents start their kids late-take them out early for vacations, etc. I think it will be very difficult to get quality education time if starting before Labor Day as most folks are unwilling to give up also weeks of summer in Alaska.

With an August 22 start, students will stagger enter dates until after Labor Day anyway and Elementary Teacher will have great difficulty setting the tone and routine as each student enters.

Year round school would be better so families could travel on off peak seasons.

Work schedules - its more consistent in /colleges

Lose Spring Break

Hunting/Fishing seasons that families participate in. State Fair in Palmer will be impacted negatively by early start!

Proposed Calendar C is perfect!

May is so beautiful; it's a shame to keep the kids inside. August is the rainiest month; they don't want to be outside anyway.

Last day August to last day may make July, August time off for ease of day care, camps.

Impact on student achievement?  
Consistent standard to plan around.

Reinstitute an in-service near Columbus Day. The kids need a break after a month. Consider an early start and both a winter & spring break. The schools in Washington State do this now.

We would prefer the earlier start time with a longer break between semesters to allow for travel outside of Alaska and greater retention of material with shorter summer break.

NCLB will not be in effect forever-remember it's a political reality for now, not for always. Be true to your mission and be not led by testing dates. Be focused instead on educating our youth for lifelong success not the transitory test scores! Go Carol Comeau!

I prefer the calendar that begins after Labor Day (OK)  
I prefer the calendar that begins after Labor Day (NEVER) OK  
Start on August 30 or 29 end on June 1 or May 31  
Start/End with partial week easier for student transition.

I prefer the calendar that begins after Labor Day.  
Sports practices are 5 days a week in the summer; it is easier for them to get that routine going for almost a month or more before adding school work in. My children's grades always drop a little during sports and come back up between seasons.

It would be helpful if the state, municipality, ASD & UAA all coordinated their schedules (Especially holidays)

Impact on student achievement- This should always be #1.

In May, it's still a bit cold, that last week of August is big deal for students and families at Alaska Fair every summer. Please don't take that away.

Students having a full summer break - I think children need to play and be children also - do not support longer school year.

Impact on student achievement. How about 2 weeks off @ Spring Break and using the early start date and late end date?

I prefer the calendar that begins after Labor Day. Effect of light vs. dark on students sleep patterns and behavior @ school.

### Age /Eligibility Factor

Longer school year start August out June.

Alaska families **NEED** their summer months!!!

I don't agree with so much emphasis on testing dates. Learning is the #1 issue.

We live in Alaska w/limited daylight hours in winter. Why cut their summer short? Dismissing week/w ½ early doesn't matter much. Also certain summer programs for working parents. Consideration.

August is fishing season for Salmon - if we miss the start of school due to calendar beginning in the middle of August it could create getting behind and never catching up.

Stay with the same schedule we have now!

The most important issue when considering a school calendar is checks only one. No way too much to consider! Stop disrupting schedules - earlier would interfere with children activities out of school also!

Compromise and start 8/28. 8/22 just seems too early. My gut reaction is that I resent having the school calendar driven by state determined testing dates.

Please - when is ASD going to implement a 2-week Spring Break? So many families already take 2 weeks and that is a disruption to student achievement! (Teachers also take 2 weeks)

Taking advantage of warm summer and long weekends around holidays for vacations. Family time more important than mandated Exams.

I prefer August 29 start date.

Students in Alaska stay up late because of light. Check out in May.

As a teacher and parent, I think students "checkout" at Memorial Day and are ready in mid August to return.

Ms. Comeau, We like your leadership w/ Anchorage School District. Great job w/handling tough problems, press questions and law suites.  
Thank You!

End of summer is the best time for family outdoor activities.

If it isn't broken, don't fix it.

Seems to me it would be more important to look and changing the Jr. High and High School days to better fit the sleep needs and Brain Development of Adolescents.

How about start early, end late and have a long winter break.

One that starts in August ends in May.

Moose hunting season and berry picking one less impacted.

Subsistence gathering for Native Americans.

Leave it alone or go year round

School year needs to be longer. 11- week summer vacation is extremely counter productive.

I believe they will do better academically be able to focus on school rather than outside. They are bored in August.

Pls. respond to my concerns as listed below! Marianne Girten 248-2844

Where's the "gain" of school let out earlier? Simply change the test dates!

This survey section starts the answers here to the positions desired by the survey. In no way can these results be gleamed to be fair, representative and/or to lead to a workable solution - what a waste of money!!

In order to make an informed decision more information is required.

I just couldn't stand starting that early. Summer is so short.

We go hunting the end of August. Also June 9<sup>th</sup> it's better weather to start camping in the summer.

Economy of Alaska and the fact that many families are involved in summer businesses.

How about increasing to total number of school days in the year. Your students don't need all summer off!

They just get in trouble anyway because they are not helping to bring in the harvest .....Duh!  
Our education system is about 100years in the past here. I know your teachers want their break.

Why didn't you just write?

Calendar A or C?

Why start school right before a holiday -

Change the hours 8:30 am start time

Spring Sports i.e.:

Soccer

Softball

Baseball

Track & Field

Cannot start earlier due snow!

Already have very short season!

Impact on whole family's

-Summer vacations, work, hunting, and fishing. Berry Picking Fair - etc

I find living in Alaska. Summers are special family times. I find the current calendar is just great. Do not fix what is not broken.

Attitude of children will be affected and affect achievement. Let them enjoy their summer and the fair. You can move test dates. They shouldn't "block" study for achievement tests!!!

Strongly prefer the calendar that begins before Labor Day.

I would also prefer a school year, which starts in August and continues into the following the following month of June. This would lengthen the school year, and opportunities for academic advancement.

Do not dictate a calendar to raise test scores. Good parenting will raise scores.

Calendar has nothing to do w/achievement.

Stop making teenage go to school so early.

High School sports are already in progress i.e. football - XC running during the month of August.

Being in step with the rest of the nation.

State Fair/after school care programs.

HUNTING SEASON

You don't take away 2 weeks of the **only summer** we get!!!

Alaska weather in summer and current calendar matches other family calendars.

NONE. I think it is Great!!

Impact on student achievement won't make a different

Mid-August is vacation and hunting season for many.

Quarters ending prior to vacations - I like this!

How will affect spring sports! It is a short season already!?

I prefer the calendar that begins after Labor Day definitely! We have our extended family reunion end of August!

Maintaining consistency with current calendar

Earlier start/earlier end; sticks out the most. The is the way I was raised. Early to bed; early to rise.

Practical balance between family vacation time and educational.

Kids are ready to go to school (anticipation) and are ready to get our as soon and spring hits.

Start and end dates to be more consistent with the lower 48 states. We send our son down to see family and friends in Montana. Calendar C is consistent with Montana school calendar. This calendar would make it easier to spend time with friends and family that are out of school the same time.

Would actually prefer year round school like they do in communities in the lower 48. After summer vacation my kids are brain dead and spend 1<sup>st</sup> Q reviewing from the previous year (unreadable) of moving forward

Why not start on a Monday! Kids have too many days off. More class time less time off!!

Why can't calendar C start August 29 and end June 1?

I think its crucial school ends at the beg. Of June. (This year the end of school on June 9 is too late.)

Why don't you concentrate on fixing your bloated administrative system rather than fixing something that is not broken.

**CHANGE TESTING DATES!**

I really prefer the start dates to be 9/1 and end on 5/31. Working parents have to pay a much higher rate for day care when it is only a few days during the month. A monthly rate works better.

A combination of pretty much everything listed.

Start one week before Labor Day instead of 2 wks.

This worked great in the Valdez school system. H.S. vacations were worry free!!

Spring/Summer Sports. Should end early June

Either one is fine (this is an obvious choice that should have been provided as an option for a response)

Because of our unique seasonal calendar I have long felt our children need

The earlier calendar supports a subsistence lifestyle.

Advance notice prior to implementation.

Start one week earlier.

Daylight for those who take the bus.

Some summer camps aren't over until last week of August.

I am concerned about how this change will affect the local economy. An event like the State Fair will be affected by a change such as this.

I'd like to see year around school that would benefit the children more.

Parent's employment. Start of school day should be 8:00am to give parent reasonable time to work.

Alaska State Fair

I think it's wonderful

More than one applies. Short summers; snow is still on the ground in May. Although August is fall here then we have 2 months of a real summer.

For many years my children went to school in Alaska on a pre-Labor Day start date schedule. It was completely satisfactory, especially finals before Xmas break!

Winter break time to finish quarter-end reports and projects.

Which calendar dates don't?

Vacation last two weeks of August! "Every Year"

Start August 30 End May 31 or June 1.

PS I am appalled that the majority of ASD efforts are geared toward low achievers.

Impact on staff/faculty also, so that school starts when fall activities (football, XC-running, drama, student government) start. I don't like to see summer vacation end early for some students/teachers (those involved in activities), but continue for others. Schedule C is more **FAIR**.

The effect on daycare cost. Is CAMPFIRE DAYCARE having additional costs because you have included another month? (August)

I think it would be a great idea. (to change the calendar) August is usually a rainy month and May, usually better weather. A longer summer for parents and kids to enjoy outdoor activities.

I do not believe your start and end dates, has anything of great impact on student achievement, Teacher qualifications has great impact on student achievement as well as parental involvement; not school start and end dates.

Most economical to deliver; I want this also, Quarters ending prior to vacations. I like the idea of kids being out of school doing August when the weather is at its best.

Why can't we change mandated testing dates?

Proposed calendar P (parents):

Use proposed Calendar C as a base; Put all in-service days at the start of school year. Based on the 7 in-service days this school year,

Plan P could let school start after Labor Day and finish before Memorial Day.

Plan P offers the added advantage of salvaging the month of November for actual education.

Start High School later than 7:30am.

Delays of Family Vacation Time!!!

It would be more difficult for the Anchorage community to attend the Alaska State Fair. School in full session to coincide with extra curricular activities i.e. sports - maybe beneficial to more students participation due to students need for parental scheduling transportation. student attendance to Athletics Events.

More students will miss the first week of school if held before Labor Day during family fishing and hunting time.

Start 9/5 - End 5/25 No Spring Break and less In-Service days

By the way, the impact on how the quarters is not even addressed. Surveys based just on begin and dates are not informative enough to base changes.

Start Early End Late

Whatever the ASD deems fit- I'll float with you anytime in whatever calendar makes the system run smoothly.

I grew up in the bush and highly support this calendar; my kids will miss school on subsistence trips with no change.

I would like to see Hanshew start at 7:00am – then could drive my daughter to bus stop and stay warm before work.

I rather see an increase in the school year by starting earlier and getting out on the same date.

I prefer August 15, May 18

What about starting week of August 28<sup>th</sup> and ending the last week of May? August 22 is too early.....

I prefer the calendar that begins before Labor Day. Not if this means teachers go back the week before that. I support week of August 8<sup>th</sup>. (one week earlier than usual) I agree that impact on student achievement should be the most important indicator. However, without parent support or buy in many students won't return until after Labor Day anyway.

Because of our unique seasonal calendar I have long felt our children need to start earlier, after long summer days, and get out earlier after a very long, dark winter. May us almost a wasted month because the kids are bouncing off the walls from our long winters- mostly spent in doors. Thank you

Overall achievement should not be affected by a date change.

After summer and State Fair.

I prefer starting after Labor Day so that classes can “hit the ground running”! Seems the teachers spend the last week packing rather than learning so why not have the Memorial Day holiday interruption at the end?

Yes but not so early as the 22<sup>nd</sup> of August, begin August 30 end June 1

Summer is so short in Alaska don't make them sit in a classroom any sooner than they have to.

I have family back east best time to go is August. Keep school start date after Labor Day. Students do not need to be working school projects during vacation.

### Education

Should be child centered, these issues are all related to the "Adult Needs"

Campfire before/after school program availability

Start August 29, end May 30.

Impact on parents

Start and End dates.

No Spring Break!

Shorten Xmas break!

Kids have to much time off. Seems like every week they have a day off.

Start on August 29<sup>th</sup> and end on may 31<sup>st</sup>. August 22<sup>nd</sup> is too early, June 6<sup>th</sup> is too late!!

Does not impact student achievement, consistency is #1.

People who work in-service industry (tourism) are very busy in late August still; you would be having many children as latch-key we started to early. We have a limited summer cutting into August would disrupt-fishing, hunting for the family. Please allow us family time. Then maybe we would see fewer problems with children.

I vote for a quarterly schedule like the universities.

As my student will not be affected by the change, I have no opinion.

Let's keep the schools open year around and allow parents to choose breaks.

We favor year around school.

Education. To heck with trust "achievement."

Not 2 weeks early; prior to Labor Day would be ok, but not so far into August as proposed.

Also, not necessary to finish so early in may.

Coordination with activities "outside" of Alaska in summer that enrich student experiences.

Change for 2005/2006 good too!!

Kids should not be required to attend sports camps over Christmas holidays!!! All basketball players are now **REQUIRED** to attend one tournament week before Christmas and one in Florida week after-Huge inconvenience to families!!!

Late August is the only time our entire family can get together. We want to keep it that way.

Like it was a couple a years ago.

Would like to see calendar (B)

If school starts in 3<sup>rd</sup> week of August, registration happen 1-2 weeks earlier and this really impacts family holiday schedules.

Student education is the most important for determining a school calendar.

I strongly object to the proposed change your issue list is not helpful for the decision process. This is about meeting testing needs not needs if children's learning.

School year too short! Kids forget too much for 3 months holidays. August 22<sup>nd</sup> - June 6<sup>th</sup>. When do rest of USA start? Are they ready for achievement tests? Try shorter Xmas breaks, less in-service days to get work taught? Finish 1<sup>st</sup> semester before winter break? Try being

ready to **teach** first week of school. Be all organized by then!! Teachers start earlier? Get meetings done by then? Start Reg. earlier - Class size decides before Xmas?

Really either works

Please build another elementary school on the south side near Goldenview MS?

Eliminate some in-service days.

1 Family - This effects the student's achievement.

Start before Labor Day, end before Christmas.

Late start. Fishing season ends late.

Dear Carol and Board!!!

YEAR ROUND SCHOOLS ARE NEEDED!!!

(Test taking, etc.) Also...lived in Fairbanks, & loved starting in August!!

But I would rather have August 22nd -- June 6<sup>th</sup>!!!! EDUCATION

Time honored past practice. Perhaps we should change the mandated test dates to reflect our unique culture and lifestyle. See you the 9<sup>th</sup> @ Dimond.

Fewer days off for students - less in-service days. Children need to be in school more.

Consider year-round school calendar.

Yes, I prefer the calendar that begins before Labor Day, Quarters ending prior to vacations.

Why can't you move it by only 1 week (start August 29)? Your proposed change will not affect overall student achievement, just test scores.

Children don't want to be in school in June. They're up late and don't do school work. Late May and early June waste of learning time. No achievement or progress is busy made during the last few weeks.

Not enough advance notice to be making proposed change. It would negatively impact Father-son contact time in custody sharing situation. Delay until 1008/2009 please.

Please don't cheat the students and parents out of 2 weeks of summer vacation. Consider phasing in over 2 years.

Impact on student achievement.  
Quarters ending prior to vacations - this is most important.

I think if you change the calendar we will see more seasonal affective disorder among our children. Please don't change current calendar.

Eliminate Spring Break week and unnecessary vacation days like Presidents Day so kids can finish earlier (by Memorial Day)

Impact in student achievement - amount of testing time preparation is important.

There should be no other options!!

Very importance to end 1<sup>st</sup> semester prior to Christmas vacation.

This is the most important and surely expected given listed as the 1<sup>st</sup> choice, but I don't have enough data/stats on the achievement of students as relates to quarters ending prior to a school vacation, the date it seems there is no clearly defined association which would decline my decision to have a start after Labor Day as opposed to Mid late August due to it's normally still very nice outdoors and may make it more difficult for some kids to come as

possibility of not having a good start which could continue to spire - where as with a good start easier to maintain even if the last 2 weeks are nice and they are wanting to get out; they will also want to maintain what they have worked so hard to achieve through the school year.

Impact on student achievement - How? Maybe we should be test.

Impact on parents - in turn impacting well being of student.

Impact on staff/faculty - in turn impacts students and their families.

More economical to deliver - how in this when the # of days is the same.

This would be if calendar

It is a combination of issues and it would not be beneficial to make a change because of one issue. The students get more consistency starting after Labor Day; when they start before it is disruptive they have vacation as right away.

Note: Children are eager to go to school in the fall as spring comes and it is nicer and nicer outside their interest in school drops significantly.

I think if the school year starts earlier--many students will either show up late and/or take a longer Labor Day weekend; thus defeating the purpose for an earlier start.

## COMMUNITY ANECDOTAL COMMENTS COLLECTED FROM ZOOMERANG ON-LINE SURVEY

Please provide any additional comments regarding the Calendar Series you would like shared with Superintendent and School Board. A summary of the survey and complete listing of comments will provided to the Superintendent and School Board.

1

What happened to Series B?

2

As a parent of 3 elementary school age children, I find it that the later the start, the harder it is on the students. Last year when the weather in Alaska was so great, the concentration level of the students was none. Our school is a wonderful school, with fantastic teacher, but by the end, they were ready for it to be over. It is too long to go into June. The summer is so short as it is. With an earlier start, the kids have had a long break and are ready to start. Starting after Labor Day is too late.

3

Late August is a good time to take vacations since most of the country has already begun school.

4

Early in and early out would be better.

5

I strongly endorse the Series C schedule. The semester end before winter break and the 3rd quarter end before spring break makes a lot of sense.

6

I think the series C calendar would better serve Native students and students who travel to and from rural areas of the State.

7

It just makes more sense to have the students start earlier in August and get out before Memorial Day. This is FINALLY a smart way to do school in Alaska!

8

Due to the Alaska State Fair, I like the idea of the kids starting later in the year.

9

SUMMERS ARE VERY SHORT HERE; THE C PLAN STARTS TWO WEEKS SOONER YET SCHOOL GETS OUT ONLY ONE WEEK SOONER. WE LOSE A WEEK. YUCK.

10

we like the current system starting after labor day. Many other family activities occur in the late summer and I don't want to have to miss camping and silver salmon fishing with the kids. In addition, labor day is a good break in the weather and brings kids back into the school mind set. It also allows for an adequate mid winter break.

11

Summers are short enough. Do not make them shorter by starting school until September.

12

We live in Alaska. Family learning about an outdoor way of life is equal in importance to many of the things children learn in school. Moving the school year into August would diminish that kind of learning.

13

Along with earlier start & end. I also really like the end of quarters prior to vacations. Plus having 2 extra weeks of school before testing. REALLY LIKE THE earlier start/earlier end!

14

To stay consistent with our calendars is very important to those of us who plan our schedules around the calendar of the previous year. Please do not change this our dates.

15

I understand the unique needs to be considered; however, most of the schools Outside have long started before Labor Day for the student's welfare as well as having the children out of school during the hottest days of the year. (Less air conditioning thus computer costs) Also with the increasing light we gain in May, it becomes harder and harder for the students to sleep thereby making it harder for them to perform. I highly encourage the earlier start be even earlier say the middle of August. That way, the students could be able to attend or organize important cultural events and still get in the required school days. Michelle Greensfelder

16

The calendar used to start before Labor Day and many students did not attend because they were out of town on vacation or at the Fair. I remember when the school year shifted to starting after Labor Day, and I had a marked increase in the number of students who attended the first day of school. It is difficult for teachers and students to start and re-start the year with students arriving days late, and difficult for those late arrivals to catch up. It is a poor use of resources to try and find extra time to assess those who come late, to reteach routines and expectations, etc. The beginning of the year is a critical time when routines are established and student assessments are completed. This should NOT be disrupted by starting the school year before Labor Day.

17

I was the board representative to the calendar committee for a number of years, so worked on this question many times. From an educational perspective, I believe that ending first semester before the winter break is the best. However, my sons have been working for Princess Tours for the last 4 years so I have learned alot about the tourism industry in Anchorage. I was surprised at how many of ASD teachers and bus drivers work in this industry. There are significant shortages of staff the last month of the season as it is. Beginning school in August will negatively affect these employees summer jobs as well as create more squeeze in the tourism business. Being available earlier in June does not have as much impact on the early tourism season. Until the community and state move to a more year-round calendar (which will show much greater gains in student achievement) or pays staff for closer to a full-year salary, you will always be competing with the need for summer employment. I am still a firm believer that if we really want our students to do well, a single track, 9 weeks on, 3 weeks off schedule is the best. And, staff are sick less too. I still have all my materials from 10 years ago on this subject if anyone is interested. Peggy Robinson

18

I do not believe it serves much of a purpose to have the students out by memorial day week end. It is much wiser to give them the early september off when camping/fishing/hunting has had a chance to be done and the students will not miss vauable school time. May is still cold and not an outside time, where September offer better temperatures and the Alaska fair can be attended without taking time out from school. Not to mention School sports. July for football, volleyball,

track? Prime fishing time. That is important family adventures. When would softbal, soccer and long distance running be? In the snow?

19

This calendar is a much better match to schools and colleges/ universities nation wide. Series A and the calendar this year is very different from so many other schools in our state and nation. Series C will match so much better.

20

Calendar C (before Labor day start)is superior because it fits the timing of holidays observed nationally as well as distributes the days off more equitably thru out the year. How "in-service" days are placed in the calendar has been a particular weak point in asd's calendar design. For example, this year the students have gone all Sept and Oct without a day off, then in Nov they have a day off every week for a month! Nothing could be more disruptive and just plain poorly conceived. Secondly, I like that the parent conference schedule has been somewhat truncated in Plan C. Half days seem to be a real waste of time, especially at the high school level where the kids are released just after 10 am and maybe attend 2 classes and lunch (!). These nearly week long half day schedules also seem to occur close to a vacation time anyway, again disruptive to getting and keeping students in a learning mode. I think maybe some alternative to scheduling traditional PT conferences all at the same week, same point in the semester should be considered. I'm not sure why Series C has to start so early; why not begin a week later and then end May 31? Also, just a comment on this survey: When refering to the 2 Series, it would be helpful to specifiy them as "Before" or "After" Labor Day, and Quest 4 should allow for a ranked response, and a couple of choices are not mutually exclusive. Thanks.

21

The new calendar makes a lot of sense and are wonderful.

22

Summer is really in full swing in August. It would be a shame to send students back to school with the last nice days of summer in August. Let them enjoy it more before the snow flies.

23

An earlier start date would support fall sports since most of them start at the beginning of August. Also, earlier start dates would more closely line up with semester college start dates at least. For parents with kids in K-12 and college that would be easier for vacation planning.

24

I think for the teachers it would be better to have a workday before the last day of school for the students. This would help them out with having report cards done to send home with students on the last day.

25

As a graduate of the ASD, I have started school both before and after Labor Day. I feel now like I did when I was in high school, that it makes more sense to start when summer is over, after Labor Day. Once the students start, they get into a rhythm before their first inservice instead of going, then having time off, and then going again.

26

Student achievement is impacted by an early August start as many families are vacationing in August and are not available to start school. After Labor Day start is a better choice for students and families. I strongly support an after Labor Day school start date.

27

I really like my daughter starting school earlier so that it matches my UAA schedule a little better.

28

I would prefer the earlier starting date and getting out earlier. Once the warm weather appears it's hard to keep students attention.

29

We need to start in August and end in May. This is necessary because the students' attention spans dwindled around the first of May. We lose valuable learning time the last few weeks of school. August is a rainy, dreary month and students are ready to get back to school. I would encourage you to adopt Series C and move spring break to the first week in March or last week in February.

30

The proposed calendars with the first semester ending prior to the Christmas Break is an excellent idea. This allows students to complete more course work prior to testing in the spring and to finish a semester prior to having two weeks to forget what they need for the final.

31

Currently, I am a community member, but will have elementary age children in the future. Impact on students and staff will benefit by ending quarters prior to vacations. Earlier start/end are also an important consideration. It is disappointing that the public, parents, and teachers, were not aggressively informed of this process to maximize feedback.

32

I support series "a" for 2006-2007 and series "b" for 2007-2008 for family logistics reasons. Thank-you!

33

Eventhough earlier start times are needed, parent buy in to get kids here before Labor Day has not been supported in the past. Our summers seem too short as it is.

34

none

35

I am a student at East High School, and I have observed through my 11 years of education in the Anchorage School District that after the cold, dark, winter months the students and staff come out of their reclusive hyboration and strive to be outdoors. The students are more eager to leave, and the staff is less inspired to teach. By moving the schedule back two weeks, it allows for both parties to enter into the desired surroundings before much tension comes to effect. Thankyou for reading this statement. Eric Rodgers A Junior at East Anchorage High School

36

I see the series c plan a wiser choice for both the teachers and the students because of the fact that by having the quarters ending with the start of their break, this would alleviate having the students cramming for finals or tests over the vacation. Also, this would mean that they would be able to enjoy their break without any worries. Also this would benefit the teachers in helping them recharging their "batteries" for the coming quarters. It just seems wiser for both the stress levels of the student and faculty to have a break actually be a break and not an extended weekend in which to catch up on work or studying. I understand that the first year this happens everyone involved would have a "shortened" Summer. But they will get out earlier that year. I have also heard some teacher friends "concerns" that they felt that they were getting "ripped off" because their break was shortened. I believe that teachers are paid for the time they spend in the schools and their pay reflects this. If they choose to get paid over 9 months, they have this choice but if they choose to get paid over 12 months the checks are calculated so that over a year's time, they are paid the same. So in my view, the people complaining are just resisting change and we all know that change can be good and beneficial. Another thing to consider is that many families

have their vacations for the coming Summer already planned. By having this change of schedule for 2 years from now is a beautiful idea so notification of this change can be sent home to all parents of students who currently attend a school in this district.

37

Although my first reaction was to start before Labor Day so the kids get out of school earlier, starting in August takes away from the last summer season and would impact the Alaska State Fair. Thank you for considering my opinion.

38

I prefer that the students begin prior to the Labor Day weekend. The start of school is always chaotic and having that early holiday doesn't really take much time from the academic where. I feel that beginning after the holiday is much more disruptive. I also believe that going to school into June is not effective -- the kids are ready to be finished in May. I would also prefer that holidays fall on Fridays or are combined Thursday/Fridays and that they coincide with State or Federal holidays whenever possible.

39

Currently school calendars do not consider parents at all. For example, when days end at noon for student/teacher conferences, often after school care is not available until 3:30 PM. Most working parents begin at 8:00AM, school doesn't start until 8:45 AM. Older students can be at home for an hour or two. Elementary students must have care. The current schedule has far too many holidays, breaks, vacations, etc. Additionally, parents often feel like they are a bother to the school when voicing concerns. I received a recording when my daughter's school evacuated three hours after the event. I requested a call back from Carol Comeau's office and was treated rudely by a woman named Stella. There was no call back. From what I have observed, breaks are arranged around the teacher and administrator's holiday schedules. Parents are a necessary evil ensuring that educators get their summer breaks, holidays, good benefits, etc. For these reasons I vote against bonds and encourage others to do so. We have already purchased in excess of \$80 for a second grader's supplies and I've just received another request for more. My child says the supplies must be shared with the entire class. I am at a loss...what has happened to the system being about the children?

40

The most important thing is to start after Labor Day. I don't believe that children will perform any better on standardized tests with 2 more weeks of school behind them.

41

The Alaska summer is already too short. Please do not take away any days in August. The current calendar gives families an opportunity to take one last vacation over Labor Day. Or we can just enjoy the entire month of August, which is often very nice. I don't believe the calendar change would ultimately have a favorable impact on student achievement. I think there would be minimal, if any, change. Thank you. Julie Hasquet Woolston

42

Of course, I agree that student achievement should be foremost. If the schedule change is being proposed purely for increasing test scores, then I feel that you should consider a year-round approach. If not, then the current start date is fine. I do not think that the high school exit exam should be offered to sophomores. If they pass, what is the use/sense of the junior and senior years of high school? This test should not be offered to students until the second semester of their junior year. If the concern is that some students may not pass, then work specifically with those students by means of summer school and/or remedial classes in the evening or on Saturdays.

43

I prefer the Series C calendar, but I think it would be better if teachers were also done before the

Memorial Day holiday.

44

Calendar C allows quarters to finish before vacations. More time for students to relax during breaks.

45

Starting school Labor Day is a poor proposal. The reason is weak. Quit letting the Federal Government dictate rules the way we teach and treat our students. Deal with it, teach our children, move on.

46

This would make school less stressful for both students and teachers.

47

Why not keep the start of school the same and Change the End of school. Start school in Sept, but have the last day of school in May. To me that seems alot better. Alot of parents takes a vacation during the summer time through parts of august. And if they start school early in Aug and not in Sept then they have to cut their vacation time short. If the plan does go into affect to start school in aug . The schools will see less kids at the begining of school . Because of The Alaska State Fair. Keep the Start Date of School in Sept. But Change the End of School for May and not in June.

48

There are to many activities still going on like hunting and the State fair that are family events, and Silver fishing. Why don't you do away with spring break and end school a week earlier.

49

Summers are too short here in Alaska. Let the kids have some time off while it's still semi-warm and not cooped up in a classroom. Besides the State Fair to me is the traditional end of summer and when we start thinking time for school again.

50

Parent Teacher Conferences in April are too late. Maybe have only 1st & 2nd Quater PTCs and not 3rd. I think it is a good idea to start earlier for High School sport purposes (more participation because sports would only be starting a couple of weeks earlier) and for Anchorage weather :) The State Fair is a factor for a small minority and should not be the determining factor.

51

Students need to be in school 5 days a week. You need to reduce the number of inservice days especially at the end of the first quarter.

52

What about parents like me who have paid thousands of dollars to fine tune a custody agreement based upon the calendar we have been using? Who is willing to pay for my lawyer to draw up a new custody agreement based upon a new school calendar, and then what if it doesn't work and the school calendar is changed again?

53

1) The earlier start proposal moves the start and end dates by 2 weeks. Why not just one? 2)I have long thought that it would be better to start earlier in August and finish up in May, or at least earlier in June. With the onset of summer weather in mid-May, the students and faculty both start suffering from spring fever, and their productivity suffers significantly. The amount of actual learning that occurs the last two weeks of May is probably negligible. With August being one of our rainiest months (except, of course, for August of 2004!), it often seems that the kids might as well be in school, rather than trying to stay occupied inside at home. 3)For high school students,

many of the sports (tennis, football and XCRunning) start up the first or second week of August already. If students want to participate in these sports, their families are somewhat committed to limit travel plans to June and July, thus an earlier start date would not impact these families greatly.

54

I would also support starting in mid-August and ending in mid-May. Kids should be in school during the rainy August period and out of school when it is so nice in the last half of May! My children find it hard to sit in school when the weather is so nice.

55

I think finishing quarters prior to vacations will improve student achievement.

56

Modified year-long school calendar has been the best that we have experienced. Gives families more options to take trips (important "being there" experience for the student) and shortens the summer so that less time is spent reviewing the previous year. We would encourage a mid August start, 2 week break in October, December, and March and end mid June.

57

I object to Question 4 because it artificially simplifies a complex issue. I object to starting school earlier because so many summer programs and plans have integrated a post-Labor Day start for a long time. Alaska's summer is, for lack of a better term, sacred. But my real objection is that such a change should never be considered just so students will do better on standardized tests. We can't allow standardized testing to be the tail that wags the dog, but that seems increasingly to be happening.

58

There are many reasons to start earlier. First, students would have more time to prepare for benchmarks. Second, they would not have work (or lack thereof) over the holiday break, adding pressure to families who want to encourage a rest but also to encourage students to succeed. Secondly, by May, students--and probably their teachers--have "checked out." They are up until late in the evening, whether they go to bed or not, and they do not have the energy for morning classes. Third, if there were an early start and early end, students who want summer jobs would be better able to compete with all the college students who come from outside earlier than our kids get out. Best of all, what countless teachers have remarked is the "most important learning time of the year," or the fall semester before holidays begin, would last longer. I highly encourage you to adopt the earlier start.

59

I feel we need to maintain the same schedule as in the past. We are hardly coming out of spring weather by this time anyway, and our nicer summer weather stretches far into August and allows families to enjoy the state through 3 full months. Beginning in Mid August is just too hard. Also there has been talk of extending the school year because of all of the testing teachers are now required to do. I think this is wrong. Someone needs to think of a creative way to manage this instead of penalizing our kids and teachers by making their year longer because of state/fedr. requirements. Thank you

60

Students in secondary schools return after break to one week of school then comprehensive finals. If they finished the semester before the holidays, the return would be far more productive. This would also assist families in our area (military) who have to transfer their students at the end of December without finals.

61

Several years back ASD started before Labor Day. I really don't think that the State Fair excuse

should be viable in pushing the start date back to Sept. Should students ever have to move out of district, it would make it easier if we were on the Aug.-May. schedule and I like the extra time it gives to the high schoolers for tests and applications.

62

Would be nice to end the first semester prior to Christmas Break!

63

Try starting earlier in the fall it might have great results!

64

I really believe starting after Labor Day is consistent w/past calendars, allow for traditional routines to take place: summer jobs, vacations, and enjoying the summer. It is a natural break in the season, and it makes it not so difficult to transition back into the school year. If we start before Labor Day, it may cut vacations short, and affect traditional patterns that have been set for years according to past timelines in starting school.

65

In my opinion summer vacation is way too long: the US is unique in having an incredible 12 weeks off, and at an academical disadvantage therewith. Also, I think the many short breaks and in-service days take students out of their rhythm and are practically useless for trips and the like as it takes long to travel out of Alaska and it's too costly for a long weekend anyway. I propose fewer in-service type days off in between, or reduce Summer vacation by a week, and instead make Spring Break 2 weeks. That also takes the congestion pressure off on skiing and flights at that time. We could shorten the overly long summer vacation by a week to do this, if ASD prefers to keep the in-service days in the schedule for teacher's benefit. I'd favor working longer in June rather than starting earlier in August, because when starting in August, a long Labor Day weekend puts the breaks on again, right when kids are getting used to being in school again after the long summer.

66

I think that the semester should end at Christmas break. Gives the students a "real" vacation and also they will be more prepared fore exit exams and SAT tests if they start earlier!!!!

67

Our family strongly supports Calendar C!

68

I'm glad to see the changes made to the calendar, especially ending the semesters before vacations. I have two elementary aged children who have been "nuts" this November because of all the days off. Their teachers are having difficulty in class keeping the students focused. And why do we give the children Veterans Day off in the middle of a week and expect them to return to school the following day? What an incredible waste of time.

69

Please change the calendars! The current calendars don't make sense. Next move start times back!!!

70

I prefer the calendar which starts before labor day. I have always noticed that my children have a harder time getting to bed as the daylight increases. I think it would be advantageous for them to finish earlier (as days become significantly lighter) and to start earlier when the days are a little darker. Thank you for considering a change.

71

Spring Break could be deleted from the school calendar as well. Otherwise, I'm allin favor of

school starting earlier and ending earlier. We'll take our spring break at the end of the year AFTER school is out.

72

I am a student

73

Don't change when school starts and ends. It will mess the day to day activities of way to many people. Simply change the dates when the test are given to a later date. This will allow the student more prep time.

74

I don't see that two week would or even should make a difference on a test that students have needed to take years to prepare for. I also feel that students should learn how to plan the long term projects that are assigned during the second quarter so that they aren't cramming to finish them. I feel that the impact to families that participate in summer sports like soccer doesn't allow for any time to take family trips. I also feel that the impact to late August subsistence out ways the benefits to starting before Labor Day.

75

We prefer "Series C" because it saves us a week of day-care expense at the end of summer (i.e., just before Labor Day).

76

in schedule c, I would move spring break up so it occurred earlier in march. Also, I am very strongly in favor of having school end prior to memorial. The kids seem to lose all momentum after this holiday.

77

I recommend starting in between the two calendars offered; a compromise solution to see what will work best. Our family goes fishing on the Talkeetna River the third week in August since that is when the Silvers are in the River. I want to continue this family tradition.

78

August is the best month for family camping, fishing, etc. because the mosquitoes are less. Thinking 10 extra days will prepare students for testing is ridiculous. It takes years of good education to prepare children to succeed at tests. Anchorage School District should not be driven by the Tyranny of The Test. The Test is only one indicator of student achievement. School employees have to get summer jobs because they do not make enough money without.

79

My son has to be with his father during this time. It would mean that I have to go back to court over custody to make sure he is home for the start of the school year. I have already paid a lawyer to get where we are, now you expect me to pay again and go through the whole rollercoaster ride again. Leave it alone it has worked for years. I'm sure I'm not the only single parent that would have to change my custody agreement.

80

Due to our "short" summers, having all of August available is of better use to us rather than the last weeks of May. We met with an ASD representative. Based on the information she provided, the easiest solution with least impact on anyone would have been to just move the testing date back a week.

81

I like the calendars in Series C, but am wondering why teachers have to return to work after Memorial Day. It seems like they should not have to return.

82

I like the idea of the earlier start/end dates proposed in plan C. It makes more sense when looking at the seasons here in Alaska to start in mid- August and end at the end of May. I also where the testing falls in plan C- students would have completed most of 4th quarter before they are being tested (especially when we are looking for a "full year's worth of growth" for our students. The vacation and in-service dates also make more sense with plan C (quarters end before big breaks) and for those families that travel outside of the state for winter break, there is an "extra" date built in with the Inservice on the 22nd of Dec.

83

Earlier start/finish would positively impact student achievement because longer days & nice weather in May make it difficult to get sleep and stay focused. Also think ending quarters prior to vacations would help students. I've long thought that this would be a great idea and am glad to see it put out for consideration even though by the time its enacted, my youngest will be a senior and therefore not much of a factor for our family.

84

I like the quarter ending before Christmas and the kids getting out of school earlier in the summer for summer jobs - the flip side is that summer will seem shorter. Don't Mat-Su schools start earlier than we do?

85

I live in Georgia and due to the distance required for travel I only get to see my son during the summer for visitation. The longer the summer break the better.

86

Please stay with the tradition of starting after Labor day, it fits into schdules and it's what everyone is used to.

87

i think the new calendar would be a wonderful change. i think it would really free up families and students. every other school in the nation does it, and that makes it hard to coordinate vacations. the new calendar is the best one.

88

I would just like you to know I am participating in this survey as a future teacher. I hope to be working for the district next fall.

89

I think we should start this for the 2005-2006 school year.

90

You have missed the most important issue, that of seasonal activities and weather in your list above. We have a short summer and the last week in August may be the most important family get-away; go-camping; enjoy-the-beauty-of-our-state week in the entire year. This valuable time spent in the outdoors with family may be THE most important part of a child's education. Instead of having a longer period of time to prepare children for testing, why not just do it more efficiently and effectively and leave our summer vacations the way they have been. The old adage, "if it ain't broke, don't fix it," comes to mind here.

91

It will be wonderful for my children to end each quarter prior to a long break. In fact, if the winter break and spring break could be extended by a week - I don't mind the kids having to start or end a week earlier than is suggested in series C. My family has always find that these 2 breaks a too short for anything significant - like traveling out of state/overseas, both of which requires a change

in time zones. By the time December and March rolls around, we all feel that we need a break - Outside. However, it's very stressful with such short breaks.

92

The exceptionally short summer in Alaska makes it very difficult for family activities already. If school begins on August 22, this impacts summer vacations, the state fair, travel plans, hunting and fishing times, and other family activities. While helping our students have the highest possible achievement in school is crucial, to try to do this at the expense of summer family time is a high price.

93

Calendar start/ending times need to be updated and the Start Before Labor Day schedule is long over due mainly because it allows school to be out by Memorial Day--an important point in Alaska. Little learning takes place (at times) when the calendar doesn't coincide with long vacation times (winter/spring). In addition too many single-holiday no school days do not contribute to learning and that is why I checked the other button on the most important issue question as well as the need for teachers to have meaningful release days for learning new materials. A day or two here or there does not allow indepth learning by teachers and thus new curriculum does not get taught. Many factors go into producing a good final product--well-educated students--and a new calendar is a start, but not the total answer. It is a shame the new testing dates have dictated this new calendar, although I agree that new star/end times have been needed for a long time.

94

If the Fall semester ends prior to winter break it would make sense to have 3 weeks for winter break instead of 2 weeks. Many families like to travel outside for the holidays. Because it is so expensive many families take extra time and take their students out of school which is disruptive to everyone involved.

95

Starting school after Labor Day will improve student attendance during those crucial first days of school. Starting the winter break on the 25th of Dec. and ending on Jan. 5th will result in lower airfares for families. Having Spring Break later in March will allow students to test prior to a long break from school, helping them to be successful on a very high stakes test.

96

I like the idea of starting and ending earlier. It could be of benefit for testing purposes and it also gets older students out early enough to get a decent summer job. Families would benefit from being out of school during the best weather weeks of the summer - late May and early June. It is usually raining in August so students might as well be in school.

97

Work with the sun and weather in AK. It's hard to get the kids to bed in May and June!

98

I don't know why we would start school so early just to save a week in the fall. What about students who go hunting with family members? The Series C schedule is flat goofy.

99

series C would help student achievement

100

I think the educational system across the State of Alaska should be consistent throughout the State. Many villages and the Fairbanks School District start in the middle of August and end the middle of May, which also mirrors the local universities schedule. When I was in school, the hunting season was impacted but those students requested their school work ahead of time, and

was able to work both subsistence and educational needs in harmony. I prefer the school schedule to begin in August and end in May. Thank you for listening to my comments.

101

Many of our city's private schools start their school year before Labor Day do they have a large number of students who do not attend until after Labor Day? I would believe that their students are there when school starts. If our goal is to help our teachers teach and our students learn then it would suggest that as a community we do every thing possible to make those two things happen. That might even include year around school!

102

The reason I chose the earlier start/end date as important is b/c I believe that the students will stay motivated at the end of the year, which will impact the student's overall achievement.

103

Keeping students into June when our Summers are so short is hard on them. They want to go out and play in the warm sunshine, and learning in those last few days in June just doesn't happen.

104

You could actually short the school year by having them teach every day they are in attendance and cover more material. Having children in 7th & 9th grade, I've been very active in their schools. The last week of school is so unproductive it isn't worth their time to be in school anyway. Start late and end a week earlier would be my preference but pay teachers the extra week to close out their rooms.

105

The learning activities are significantly curtailed in June, as the students are already in vacation mode. I have spent many days in the classroom watching students gaze out the windows at the June sunshine. In the fall, it's raining in August and students are bored out of their skulls, ready for school to begin. I'd like to see this change as to promote increased attentive behaviors. HOWEVER...when will the school district consider year-round school? I don't believe a 3 month reprieve from learning is beneficial for anyone but the teachers.

106

Let's consider doing away with Spring Break.

107

We run a day camp during the summer months and depend on college students to help us. Very few would be available to attend any trainings the middle of May! Parents will end up having to pay more for camps if we cannot hire the college students as we do now!!!

108

Seasonal Jobs do not end until mid-september and are cut short when school starts in August

109

I am very much opposed to school starting as early as August 22. I would not be opposed to starting August 29th.

110

Summers are short in Alaska. It will be difficult to focus in a classroom situation while it is still summer in August. Also many students and teachers work in the tourist industry and in state/federal fish and wildlife summer jobs. These will be impacted by the early start date.

111

It is hard to hire high school kids for jobs, because they do not get out of school until late. We are forced to hire college kids.

112

It makes the most sense for quarters to end prior to vacations so students and teachers get an actual vacation from work.

113

Dear Ms. Comeau and Members of the School Board: I am eager to provide my thoughts on proposal to change to school year calendar. From the perspective of the students and their families, starting the school year in mid August when there are still many summer plans and vacations taking place is a bad idea. It will limit educational options as well as family vacations and visits to relatives. For example, my two school-age children attended a foreign language summer camp during the last two weeks of August in 2004. They returned home on August 29th. They would not have been able to attend this language camp if the school year had begun in mid August. Also, for years now, we have scheduled trips out of Alaska to visit family or to travel to interesting places in August when the weather in Alaska is usually quite rainy. It is important to make the best use possible of good summer weather especially when we live in Alaska where it is dark and wet so much of the year. The schedule that the Board should really consider is having the school year run from September to the end of May. School should not go into June. Everyone knows from experience that the last few days of school in June are a waste of time from an academic standpoint. The kids, the teachers and administrators are just putting in the required number of days to meet the legislative requirements. Nothing of substance academically ever happens. Students leave for vacation early. Classrooms are cleaned. Schools are tidied up. This is not a criticism, just a statement of fact. We should recognize it and plan for it. The far more important option for the board to seriously consider is adding an additional 15 or 20 minutes to the daily schedule for all grade levels so as to complete the school year within a September to May time frame. This should be coupled with a reasonable start time for high school (instead of 6:30 or 7:00 a.m.). The result will be a more focused and enhanced learning experience on a daily basis. At the same time, the school year will be completed within the September to May time frame. Students could start other summer programs or jobs that last three months. Teachers and administrators could also benefit from summer programs or jobs. In short, the academic program should be intensified within the nine months from Sept to May. It should not be spread out or shifted into summer either in August or June. The more intensive the learning schedule, the more intensive the achievement. I am happy to provide my name to these comments. I hope you will seriously ponder these thoughts. Sincerely, Teddi Accinelli, parent of IA student in middle school (907) 279-7917 P.S. -- I note with dismay that the choices given in the survey appear to be slanted towards a August starting date. For example, there is no choice whatsoever dealing with a schedule's impact on summer education plans or family vacation plans. This leads me to question whether this survey really represents a truly unbiased solicitation of opinion.

114

I have lived in other communities with an early start date, and our family much prefers the post-labor day start date. Especially here in Anchorage, it seems best to prolong that last little bit of summer. I noticed my children are less able to concentrate in August -- it is still summer and they are not "ready" to be in school. After Labor Day, they are ready to be in school and I have noticed up here they are more willing to hit the ground running.

115

I do not want to see the school year begin in mid August. I would not be opposed to it beginning the last week of August and ending after Memorial day. The ending date this year and next year in the 2nd week of June is too late!

116

Unable to locate any additional information in relation to question 4 above. Unable to make an informed decision.

117

I do not like losing summer vacation time in August - too short to take trips outside. Kids will not be enthusiastic/ready to return or staff.

118

I believe starting school in mid-August will result in the same problem with going to school after Memorial Day - kids will not attend and be attentive. I think it will even be worse starting school in mid-August. Summer is so short here. Anything that shortens it is a mistake. I think starting school in mid-August is a very big mistake.

119

School should begin after Labor Day, as it does now. I think student achievement will be lower if school begins in August.

120

Students should be prepared for standard exams as part of regular school year. Should not have to start school early to "cram" for exams. Shouldn't we be teaching students that learning is important year round.

121

The earlier start & end looks more appealing in relation to activities that begin for our short summer. By August you have restless children and bad weather. I don't see any greater number of in-service or development days impacting an earlier start. Looks like it would be beneficial around the mandatory testing dates also.

122

the calendar that starts after labor day is better because if the mid august calendar is chosen, i'll be taking my son out school supply shopping instead of a birthday dinner.

123

I believe having the quarter end a christmas holiday is beneficial to the students. Rather than returning after 2 wks off to finish the quarter.

124

Brings to mind that old saying, "If it ain't broke don't fix it". Thanks!

125

I like that in the Series C calendars, that the quarters are all about the same length, and that they end before major vacations. I think that both calendars impact the tourist season and subsistence hunting/fishing days, so these are non-issues. (The only way to not impact the tourist season or subsistence hunting/fishing days is to have a shorter school year, which is not practical.) Series C does impact the Palmer State Fair days. Could the State Fair change its days to earlier in August??? The greatest loss to me for Series C would be no longer starting school after Labor Day, the "traditional start day," but I could learn to get over this. I think weather wise Series C is a better schedule, as late May (hot) is usually better weather than late August (rainy).

126

As the Director of Education from the Anchorage Museum of History and Art, which sees tens of thousands of students each year to augment classroom instruction on history, art, Alaska Natives, and other special topics, we support the current calendar structure (Option A) in that it allows us to serve more students. The Museum has public tours geared towards tourists (and sometimes installations occurring) May 7 - Sept. 28, during which time we can't schedule school groups. This problem is not insurmountable by any means, but I am concerned that the end result would be that we serve less students in ASD because we wouldn't be able to serve them during times that assist teachers with classroom instruction. Numerous educators plan their teaching around visits to the Museum. As we move forward with expansion, taking science on as a discipline, and taking a proactive role in assisting educators and students with the upcoming statewide history

requirement wherever possible, the impact may increase. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at 343-6187. Again, this is not insurmountable, but calendar option C would not be our preference. Aaron Micallef

127

What is the impact on the High School Spring sports such as soccer?

128

i think that is a great idea and we the parents and school boards have the opportunity to meet the needs and every success every individual student needs to be successful life and be independent

129

Alaska should consider the year-round program. Las Vegas has an excellent system. Why is spring break in March, April seems much more suitable for "spring" vacation.

130

Agree testing schedule is an important factor for students. Instead of moving the whole school year, why not just move Spring Break? Modifying the school year by 2 weeks is a considerable amount for students who are from multi-homes(divorced). Unfortunately, the norm is most parents are not amenable to each other, and the courts have had to establish visitation. The impact on children who are in this situation could be more devastating than moving Spring break to give the child ample time to prepare for testing.

131

Late August weather (cloudy rain) and late May long days seems to make the C calendar work nicely.

132

Please start the school year earlier - my child is always eager to return after summer and the wait is excruciating for him (and me!)

133

I believe it's important for students to have a sense of finality before extended vacations such as the Winter Holiday. When the quarter is broken up before and after the break, students are likely to need more review before new instruction can begin. If we set the calendar so that the quarter ends before the break, teachers can begin fresh after the break without wasting important instruction time on review. I also feel that beginning the school year in August and ending in May is more consistent with the Lower 48 school systems. This will make it easier for parents to plan vacation and, more importantly, summer visitations for non-custodial parents.

134

As a student enrolled in AP classes, I think that by starting the school year earlier, you will be increasing the opportunities for success on AP exams as students will have had more classes prior to taking the exam. Also, as a senior I spent much of my winter break finishing college admissions applications. This, coupled with a good deal of homework left me with very little time for a break. I think that the students of the Anchorage School District would be better served by starting school earlier in the year and ending the semester before winter break.

135

I like the idea that students would have more in class time before testing begins, I also like that Christmas break would be a nice break between quarters(semesters) and students would come back refreshed for a new year! Thank you for your efforts in this matter I truly believe this would make a positive impact on students although it may take a year or two to see the results. I support this 100%

136

none

137

I like the Before Labor Day start calendar for three reasons: 1) It gives the kids more time in school to get back with the program before the first set of testing hits. 2) The last date for 2nd Qtr is on the last date before winter break, much better than having the 2 week break and then coming back to finish up a qtr. 3) Having the winter break run a week into Jan. The only reason I dont like the before Labor Day start is it does conflict with the State Fair in Palmer so the kids will have to go during the most crowded times on the weekends. But that certainly isnt a good reason to keep the start till after Labor Day.

138

I think that students would do better on midterm exams if they did not have to study over the holidays.

139

After teaching for ASD for 27 years and now retired I never understood the fragmented calendar. UAA's calendar and the Fairbanks School District calendar's reflect the urban realities and educational advantage of not breaking up the school year. It is high time to initiate the C schedule calendar~

140

I like the August start as it takes advantage of 2 weeks of warmer weather as school starts. Many kids are already starting their team sports anyway. Personally, I would like to see LESS summer break, and a longer winter break. Going to school in the dark, coming home in the dark, is not particularly safe.

141

Ending semester at the high school level at the Holiday break would allow everyone to begin the school year with a fresh start at the beginning of the year.

142

Going into June is silly. The kids are checked out mentally by then. Plus the weather is better in May than August.

143

An end to the school year in May would take advantage of the beautiful weather that often occurs then.

144

Our church takes 50 senior high students to Solid Rock Bible Camp every year, and have been doing so for the past 6 years now. The only time the camp can get us in is the last week of August. If school were to start earlier that would put an end to this important function for our young people. It would also affect the Licensed Daycare that I have run in the Eagle River area for the past 25 years. I do not like the early start at all.

145

I am a childcare provider and a parent, this would impact vacations, custody arrangements, childcare availability, and so much more.

146

I am an operator of a Child Care Facility. Either option is okay with us, as we are flexible and can make either option work. We are concerned about family vacations, the State Fair, and people out of town for Labor Day weekend--kids may miss school. It would be nice for families to be out of school by the end of May.

147

This would mean that the children do not get to enjoy a lengthy summer. Break up is at the end of May. June is a time where the kids can go outside and enjoy themselves with out snow. Also vacation time for the good months are cut short. I do not feel that this change has an impact on testing at all.

148

Our family is seasonally employed with the tourist industry. Starting school 2 weeks early would be a big problem for both my children.

149

I do like the idea of school quarters ending prior to vacation dates. I also would like to see an earlier start date with an earlier ending date. With the longer daylight hours growing in the April and May months it is often very difficult to get children in bed and asleep at a resonable hour. Having the earlier start and ending dates would get the children out of school several days earlier when the warmer days roll around in the "Land of the Midnight Sun!"

150

With choice "C", the families can enjoy the warmer summer months.

151

In Alaska, school in August would eliminate the one month of normal family life we now enjoy. Family time is also important to helping children grow up. Alaska has several dark, cold months, and very short summer. Locking kids up in classrooms in August is asking for unproductive use of time. This is dipnetting month, the only month without organized sports, 1 month to relax before the schedule starts all over again. Please no school in August.

152

How about we extend the school year completely...The way the calander is set up, including 1/2 days, the students will be out of school for an addition 32 days, that is absurd, why all this time off? Why do the students need 2 weeks in December? Why not 1 week. Why do the children need 1/2 days and 1 full day off for parent/ teacher conferences? Why can't the teachers conduct their meetings after school, so that it is convinient for everyone? I think they are getting paid enough. I think our teachers are getting paid way to much for as little work that they do. They're are some great teachers out there, but I have to say that at least 40% are lousey. How about less vacation time and less in-service days and actually start teaching our children! No wonder we have uneducated children, teachers are to worried about their time off.

153

These changes will affect afterschool programs and schedules dramatically. I work for a residential camp, and it will be difficult to hire staff to work that early in May to accomidate the childrens new schedule if changed.

154

It would be nice to be on the same calendar as the KPB Schools and the private schools.

155

The calendar should remain consistant with previous calendars to coincide with other schools and preschools in the area.

156

I am a university instructor. The UAA calendar/schedule of courses is impacted by changes made to your calendar. Much advanced notice would be appreciated if a change is going to be made.

157

My family makes plans far in advance and changing the 2006 calendar is not a good move at this

point. We just discovered this morning that our spring break trip we planned in June of 2004 is for the wrong week in March 2005. Please give at least a year's notice to making changes to the calendars. As it is now spring break is the third week of March. Our trip to Hawaii is the fourth week of March. Statewide testing is the first week of April and parents conferences are the second week of April. This spring both of my kids will have little schooling for four weeks. Not what I would call a productive use of their time. Don't mess with the calendar unless you give over a year's notice. We have summer plans for 2005 for my daughter to go to a french camp in August. School cannot start any earlier or it will ruin this opportunity for her.

158

While the current calendar doesn't optimize the school schedule, it is more likely for most students to start on time. Late August vacations for family are typical and may mean increased absenteeism in the first two weeks.

159

To come back to school with a clean slate would be a welcome change. It would be nice to be able to go on vacation and not worry about the children having to study for tests when they return. I grew up on a schedule similar to "Calendar C" and it was great for family togetherness, and much less stressful.

160

Calendar C provides approximately 5.5 weeks of instruction time before fall testing. This is highly desirable for both students and teachers.

161

All colleges/universities have this schedule, the semester ends right before Christmas break. The benefit to this is they have no homework/studying to do over the break. If the purpose of high school is to prepare students for college, then high school needs to be as similar as possible to college.

162

I would give my vote to a combination of Series C - starting earlier - plus an extra week vacation in January that ties into MLK holiday. Then families could really make use of winter break for travelling/other activities instead of always waffling about whether 2 weeks is worth the effort (usually less due to Xmas commitments). Having said that, if A and C are the only choices put forth, I would vote for C. Having that winter break right before the end of the quarter seems to lower the kids' grades.

163

We vacation with family members in the lower 48 and their schools all begin before labor day. It will be much easier to coordinate vacations if our school calendar was similar to theirs. Also, I like the idea of having as much school as possible when it is light in the morning and evening.

164

I think that starting school right before a holiday makes it too difficult to arrange child care and/or "the final camping trip of the year".

165

With summer ending & Labor Day being the last holiday of the summer, it makes sense to start school after Labor Day. This would make our students who vacation out-of-state have ample time to travel back home & get ready for the new school year.

166

It would be best to end the first semester before the long winter vacation. Also, because the testing dates are already set, allowing more time prior to the tests is going to help. This includes AP examines which are given in early May.

167

I attend UAA, so I support both school calendars synchronizing. It was wonderful when UAA adapted their 2005 spring break to that of ASD....

168

I feel finals should be before vacations so kids can relax and regroup themselves instead of stressing about tests after break.

169

I believe it would take some time for most our community to adjust to a calendar which involves starting school in August, but I think the long term benefits outweigh the short term inconveniences. Psychologically, I think most people are geared up for summer and it's activities by Memorial Day, whether school is in session or not. In August, we're thinking and preparing for school and the seasonal changes that are inevitable for Alaska. My experience as a parent and ASD teacher is that once the daylight hours increase (primarily in May), it is difficult for students to focus on academics. Our inner clocks are thrown off and we all stay up too late and are tired when we arrive at school. We want to be active and outdoors, not cooped up inside studying for finals, writing term papers, etc. It seems to me that many high school sports could take advantage of an earlier start date. (Football, cross country running, tennis etc.) Though, it may mean that track and soccer would suffer a shorter season. Could soccer be moved to the fall as it is in the lower 48? I would also like to advocate for a change district wide from a quarter system to tri-mesters. I don't think that 4 quarters serve the learning needs of our students. If we used tri-mesters, we might not need to drastically change the calendar. A nine week quarter does not provide enough time for teachers to get to know their students, assess academic needs, and collect adequate "data" before the grading period ends and it's time for parent conferences. The reverse is true in the spring. The end of the third quarter and benchmark tests happen around the end of the 3rd quarter. The last 9 weeks are a downhill slide into summer vacation with students and teachers moving into the "mental space" of "we've done most of the year's serious work and now we just have to coast till the end of the year. This is my perspective from 22 years experience in the ASD as a teacher and parent. Don't most of the rural schools end in May and begin in August. Has anyone looked at the Juneau School District? I believe that they operate on a tri-mester, and often begin a week earlier than we do. I would also be in favor of dropping spring vacation and adding a day or two to winter break. or at another time during the year. I think spring break is disruptive.

170

We rely on subsistence and are often berry picking and preparing our fish in the end of August. It would be difficult for our family to prepare for school in August. However, we see the importance of the quarter not being spilt with winter vacation. This year, we feel the beginning of the school was rushed because of the late start. Many families had a hard time getting in to the swing of things. Either calendar has its quirks. Best of luck, Tina Starr

171

Earlier start date matches a growing national trend. Many high level academic and athletic summer enrichment programs (Hopkins CTY, etc) have programs beginning before our kids get out of school. Good luck, it is a very tough decision.

172

This schedule makes more sense for Alaskans. Our families need the extra sunlight time since its an important aspect of our summer activities.

173

In August, our weather can be very warm, sunny and with the daylight hours that we are fortunate to have -- children will not be getting to bed early enough for sufficient rest for a school day. Starting school for a few days and then having a holiday weekend lends itself to students leaving

school early for the holiday weekend therefore losing the achievement that you had hoped for.

174

In Alaska, when summer arrives, kids could care less about their school work. Getting out of school earlier in the year will let them enjoy the summer much earlier.

175

I am surprised that both calendars show such a late December holiday extending into the first week in January. I would prefer the current plan of holiday for a week before Christmas with return to school just after New Year's day.

176

It is difficult for kids to concentrate on studies, work on projects, do homework during the last quarter when we get so much sun and nice weather. They have been couped up all winter. While the start of school the kids are full of enthusiasm, they are so excited to begin that after labor day just seems too long of a wait. I think the kids will get more out of the school year overall by starting earlier. I think it benefits them both on an academic level and an emotional one (will have more of a positive attitude. The only other recommendation I would add is making Spring Break earlier.

177

For Series C calendar- spring break should be moved up- a week earlier.

178

Testing dates could be adjusted to provide additional classtime instruction. Extra-curricular activities do not impact the majority of students. More in-service days and professional education should occur before and after the continuous instructional calendar is engaged.

179

I think it would be even better if the last day of school was May 25th for everyone, so that summer started Labor Day Weekend. It is awesome that you are doing this calendar as it is better for the students to have more class time prior to the tests and that the quarters end prior to vacations.

180

A traditional approach with a start of school after Labor Day and completion in early June is more in keeping with other schools about the country. Consider abolishing the weekday in-service days and permit school to function during those days. You will then be able to complete the year's curriculum before Memorial Day, should others wish an earlier completion of the calendar. Thus, the calendar will be only one day shy of the currently proposed number of scheduled days of school when in-service days are in effect. The in-service days can take place on Saturdays or over scheduled school holidays and will not cause the disruption to students and parents that they now do. Grade reporting and parent involvement can occur in the afternoons and/or evenings after school concludes. Any professional development can aptly occur over the weekends, winter and spring recess and the summer holiday. Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

181

You'll need to start early enough in August so that people don't just keep their kids out until after Labor Day anyway because it is convenient for them.

182

I went to elementary school in Oklahoma and middle and high school in Anchorage. The calendar in OK followed the plan C proposed. It makes more sense because it allows for breaks to fall at the semester, which is a lot easier on the students and teachers. It is very difficult to come back after break and focus on material not covered for a while for 2 weeks and then have finals and another break between semesters.

183

I am pleased to see parents and children may have an option to begin their academic school early.

184

I think student achievement is enhanced when breaks are really breaks. Too many teachers look at Winter Vacation and Spring Break as time to assign projects which destroys family time and makes the downtime of a break a bleak joke and a wished for memory. Also, teachers often look at breaks as a time to "catch up," meaning that they aren't getting the renewal they need either. I think ending quarters before major breaks will improve family time, because school is less likely to intrude with projects, etc. Another consideration, most of the Texas school districts have earlier start times than we do which has caused many oil families no end of heartburn when they are required to move in the middle of the school year. This has been a problem for high school students leaving the state and coming to the state. This also makes it easier for high school students to attend summer school at colleges if they wish to and more of the good weather of Alaska will be when students are out of school. The schedule is not great for berry picking or for those who commercial fish. Tourism is ramping down by late August but is very active beginning Memorial weekend, so I perceive a greater benefit to students looking for summer jobs to be out earlier. They will be more competitive in the local tourist job market with college students who often get those jobs because they are available sooner.

185

Summer in Alaska is short! Kids need to be out of school prior to June. Afterall June is the best month of sunshine! August is rainy and colder!

186

I see no reason for school to start before labor day and end after memorial day. Our family is involved in many activities , subsistence fishing, hunting, etc., and my children will not be able to attend school before labor day.

187

I think it's important to allow children and parents to enjoy every minute of our Alaska summer. Starting school in August cuts into the last remaining days of summer, including the State Fair. I see no advantage to ending school before Memorial Day.

188

A change in the school calendar will affect those providing summer programs for children and youth. A gradual change of the calendar would be better for those of us providing summer programs at various facilities like camps.

189

I grew up on a farm in Montana, and always go "in August" to help harvest. Now that my sons are old enough to help during that time, we would find that getting back for a school start date in the early 20's would cut out some or all of our time to help with the harvest. I can see starting the first of September - especially when Labor day is so late, but the 21st or 22nd seems VERY early.

190

The answers to number 4 are all interrelated. In my opinion, Impact on student achievement is most important. However, in my experience quarters ending prior to vacations impacts student achievement in a negative way. I would put equal importance on both of these issues.

191

I would like to see spring break be 2 weeks in addition. A lot of kids miss school the days before/after spring break due to travel outside. It takes a day to get anywhere and a day to get back if you leave the state...2 weeks would be much better.

192

As you certainly are aware Anchorage citizens have a long history of resisting change. As a parent of both current and former ASD students, having quarters end as proposed on option C would, in my opinion, serve the ASD community best.

193

It seems to me that it would be better for the students to be out of school when the days are longer and in school when they are shorter. Starting earlier in August when the number of hours of daylight is on the decline and letting the students out at the end of May when the daylight hours are increasing seems to make more sense. I would hypothesize that it would help with discipline during the later part of the school year and also provide time out of school when the weather is better and kids can be more active.

194

I see no valid reason to change a calendar that has been successful.

195

An earlier start disrupts family time and summersports calendar. School schedule has never been a problem before except when school started before labor day in the past. Students will perform better if they are allowed to start fresh right after the holiday.

196

Starting in the middle of August would disrupt the schedules of many families who are involved in short summer season businesses in Alaska.

197

Ending before Memorial Day weekend seems ideal. Most students have "checked out" by the end of May. It seems to make sense to end classes at the end of May rather than come back for a week to a week and a half. Most meaningful instruction would be done before then.

198

Seems as if there are too many days off for students. Please do not start school before labor day!

199

I prefer an even earlier start... August 15 for students... and an ending to coincide with May 15 for students, as is being done in Fairbanks, AK. There should be a day off for the Alaska State Fair, for students though...which is usually Labor Day.

200

I personally think that the Series A calendar with little to no change is the most preferable. There really are no serious problems that can be alleviated solely by a calendar change. It's really just a matter of preference.

201

I think that having high schoolers start later in the day would be a good idea. A lot of parents must be to work at 7am and elementary students don't start school till 9am. I believe that we should switch the high schoolers and the elementary times. Parents cannot just leave their younger elementary kids at home while they are at work. High schoolers don't need baby sitting all the time and can be left at home by themselves and get ready for school.

202

IT IS IMPORTANT TO OUR FAMILY THAT OUR CHILDREN PARTICIPATE IN OUR FAMILY COMMERCIAL FISHING OPERATION. THANK YOU FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION.

203

This is not an important issue. The schools have been doing fine without the need for a calendar revision. We are happy with the calendar as it is.

204

the current calender has worked well for us because of a seasonal business.

205

Year round calendars should also be considered

206

My daughter is a 4.0 high school student. She's diligent and extremely hardworking, as a student and a student athlete. Ending the first semester before winter break and having finals before the break rather than after would allow so many students, and teachers as well, to have the relaxing break they deserve. It's logical and should be employed. This should be more of a consideration than when the State Fair starts. Do it for the kids and the teachers.

207

Academic success should always be the priority of our school calendar. If not, what are we holding classes for?

208

Since the In-Service and holidays are the same the only part that effects my family is number of days in school prior to testing. Nothng else in my household will be impacted.

209

considering the short summer season that we have I think it would be better for kids to start before labor day and get out earlier. The kids get spring fever and lose interest in school work at the end of May. They just want to be outside playing.

210

Our short, precious summer co-incides with our most active work and tourist seasons. These are poor times to keep kids at desks. Developing work skills is very important.

211

Present overall schedule should be maintained. Schedule should be broken into three sections (trimester system) with breaks at Christmas and Spring and Summer following trimester exams. Also we need to shift classes for all grades later in the day to facilitate adequate rest for students.

212

I feel that having quarters end before breaks is great because kids can just relax and not have to worry about studying for end of quarter tests.

213

I think the children's education should be the priority. The bottom line is that all else is really even...days in school, days teachers work, holidays, etc. The only real change that i see is that the kids have a few more days to prepare for the tests and that they get to start summer a bit earlier.

214

I like the school calandar the way it is. Please keep that in mind while you read these surveys. Thank you for making this survey open to the public.

215

I have experienced both types of schedules while in College and High School. There was a remarkable difference in my academic achievement and mental outlook when the semester's course work ended before the winter holiday.

216

I think the impact of an early start on seasonal employees and employers is extremely significant. As small business owners, we hire students and need them to work through Labor day. In addition, I think that summer is different in Alaska than anywhere else and has an impact on subsistence lifestyles as well as overall health and activity levels for students. Finally, I think there are more options than the two presented. For instance, a full two week break at Christmas is not necessary. There's no reason students can't go back to school January 2nd or 3rd. Yes, some people travel at that time, but are we to arrange the calendar to accomodate the priviledged few who can afford this? That break is a hardship on most middle income 2-wage earner families. The same is true for Spring Break. There was a time when it was only 3 days, not an entire week. Shaving a few days off each would allow an after Labor Day start as well as a before Memorial Day end.

217

I like the earlier session that allow for no homework during hollidays and and earlier summer vacation.

218

I believe the most critical factor in this determination should be the impact on student learning. In this context, the Series C option seems to offer significant benefits over the Series A, both in terms of quarters ending before vacations... thereby allowing students an actual vacation rather than an extended study break, and two additional weeks of instructional time before Spring testing will have positive results for our youth. This should be the primary consideration above and beyond all logistical challenges and community habits that may exist around the current calendar.

219

Would prefer that my children's vacations were more in line with those of other children throughout the state. I feel that the series C calendar supports improved student achievement because my kids have already left school mentally in May and those late weeks have become useless.

220

A few years ago, the district abandoned the plan to have school start in August because so many students didn't return to school until after Labor Day and obtaining an accurate census of student population was a major problem. Classroom sizes were constantly changing during those first few weeks and teachers were moved from one location to another as student body numbers changed...it was a problem and unsettling to both teachers and students! Nobody knew what to expect from day to day during those first few weeks of school because so many adjustments had to be made. When the change was made to go back to starting school after Labor Day, there must be been a very good reason for doing so and I recall reading something about the fact that it would never change to go back to starting in August. Starting in August shortens the summer significantly when it's already short enough, impacts family vacations, and doesn't allow that much of a gain of time by having school end in May. I vote to keep it the way it is by starting after Labor Day. Students feel more ready to go back to school when summer and all other summer activities are officially over. If something's not broke, why try to "fix" it?

221

1)You do not have Registration on the School Calendar. 2)Conferences in Series C have not been moved back from November to October, to be closer to the end of first quarter. Teachers should be able to meet with parents sooner to more quickly address issues that arise, since not all teachers provide timely progress reports. 3) Beginning in Aug and ending before Memorial Day will greatly facilitate scheduling vacations to the Lower 48, setting up summer school for students who will attend that, and breaking the semester at the winter holiday makes a great deal more sense than coming back for two weeks before the end of term.

222

Given that summer doesn't start in May, and in past years we have still had snow and frozen lakes for Memorial Day, I oppose the early start. I want to spend as many summer days as possible with my child.

223

By the time August rolls around we are usually into our rainy season. May is usually lovely weather and it would be nice to be able to enjoy some extra sunshine. I also would encourage the school district to look at a shorter summer break with an increase in the winter break.

224

When using color on calendars, red identifies stop and green go, these colors should be applied for the beginning and ending of school or red for days off.

225

I am STRONGLY in favor of going to the before Labor Day schedule. Not only will students have more in class time before mandatory testing days but I feel ending quarters prior to vacations is very important. Most students do not study during vacations, I feel they would perform better having final exams prior to ending a semester while material is still fresh in their minds. This will also allow the students to enjoy their holiday breaks more as they won't have to worry about looming final projects or exams. Additionally, getting out of school slightly earlier in May will be nice as this is typically when we have our best weather in Anchorage. It gets difficult for students to keep their minds on studies as the weather outside improves. Fall is typically more rainy so starting earlier really isn't a big deal. Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

226

Alaska only has so many days of summer. To have school start earlier would make our summer even shorter.

227

I agree that the school system needs to start earlier in the year.. ie late August. However, I don't know that starting in mid August will be more effective than to start around the 20th or so. I would like the kids to start earlier and have their quarters end prior to vacations.. thus, returning to a 'clean slate' so to speak. I think that we, as a society, needs to view what is best for the kids - will starting early benefit the learning and test prep? If so, then, go for it! I am still a strong supporter of a year round school in Anchorage as well, and if there was one.. my kids would be in it! I believe it is important to keep the learning process going and not have a three month 'dumping session' of what was learned the year before. Thanks for listening! Susan Brenner, sbrenner@gci.net

228

I would like to continue current calendar because the dates coincide with traditional times for summer vacations.

229

I believe the superintendent and her team continue to examine the calendars and determine the timing which benefits the students. I support, and encourage the School Board to support, their recommendation. At the same time, I recognize there are issues with summer sports -- specifically the club competitive soccer season -- which would end just days before the school year starts under scenario C. I would encourage the District to work cooperatively with these entities to look at alternatives like moving the soccer season start time earlier -- so families still have a break at the end of the summer before school starts. Thank you for all the work you do to ensure our kids get a proper education.

230

I believe that the earlier start/earlier end will also have a positive effect on student achievement, in that students are more ready to learn in late August than in late May/early June.

231

Summer often doesn't get underway here until August, and an earlier start/end doesn't co-inside with Outside school calendars. Many of us travel to visit family but what's the point if they are still in school?

232

I believe that the families will adapt to a new schedule and come to love the change in the school year. The children loose their attention span as the days grow longer and the earlier the school year starts the better opportunity for teachers to teach while children are focused.

233

The proposed earlier start date doesn't fit with the typical Alaskan summer calendar. Getting off around Memorial Day is too early, Alaska summer activities haven't really started. Starting school in mid August is too early; State Fair, fishing, and seasonal work is still in full swing. Students ability to pass the exit exam is determined in the preceeding 12 years of school, not two weeks. Once again, the Anchorage School District is demonstrating how far out of touch they are with their constituency.

234

The reason I voted for the earlier start calendar is that students are ready to experience the outdoors with the nice spring days in May and June when all the daylight comes in AK. Because of sleeping habits of student, the earlier start would have the desired impact on student achievement. Lets try something new in the Anchorage school district. Many colleges are finished in May and many high schools across the land. This would work better for the test dates also. I don't like the calendar for 06-07 having winter vacation on starting on Dec. 25. Maybe do something more creative in that area. I feel the earlier calendar would be better for testing dates & results too. Does spring break in AK have to be the same as spring break in the lower "48". Airline seats can be at a premium in the lower "48" when everyone else is flying for spring break. Thanks for you consideration.

235

As a parent and employee for the ASD May has always been a month that due do the increase light students are having spring fever and their focus is not on their school duties. My children have also mentioned that they don't like the quarter ending after Christmas break as they are assigned large projects during the break and so it really is not a break to them. I think this be a nice change. Our weather is usually better in May and students would be able to enjoy that more and with more rain in August they would be in class.

236

Labor Day weekend is a big deal for Alaskans. Many Alaskans that work the State Fair and/or enter the Fair exebits have their children very much involved. The last weekend of the Fair is the last weekend before school starts. Please don't take this away so that your schools can look good for test scores. Having our children envolved prepairing for this is the future of the Alaska State Fair. As far as I can tell, the school test scores are for the schools report cards not my childs report card. Thank you but NO Thank you....

237

I think you could start earlier, but not as early as proposed, thus having some benefit but not the huge impact to those families that need their kids to help with their businesses.

238

I feel there are many advantages to the Series C calendar. As a state wide coordinator of Royal Rangers summer camps, it would put Anchorage on the same schedule as Fairbanks. Presently

Fairbanks students are out 2 weeks prior to Anchorage students. Coordinating camping activities for state wide camps is more difficult with such a disparity in school district schedules. It also shortens the time frame for state wide camping activities by 4 weeks. I support the C series schedule. I believe there are also many other excellent reasons which support the C series calendar. Student performance in testing being the primary one. Thank you for your time.

239

My family is a military family. By starting school after Labor Day it allows those families who PCS in to find housing and prepare for the fall school year without their children missing two to three weeks of school. Also I have a daughter who is attending college back east and college there start around the 15th of August. These makes it difficult for our family to take care of all of our children's needs.

240

Starting the school year earlier and ending the school year earlier better enables state employees in particular with the ability to schedule vacations earlier in the year to coincide with family members in the lower 48, as well as being able to take vacations perhaps prior to the ending of the State fiscal year in June. I think this would give the most benefit to families in general, as well.

241

Would it be possible to start two weeks early, end the same time as currently and have an extra two weeks during winter break? This may significantly reduce student absences since many families might schedule winter vacations during the long break that they currently schedule while school is in session. Alternatively, it could allow families who currently don't travel during the school year (because school attendance is a high priority) to actually take a trip during the winter. Student achievement should be the highest priority but accomodating families' needs is a big part of student achievement.

242

Modifying a early start date usually has a very low turn out and not much is done educational due to the low turnout. The child left behind act should not change our normal schedules. I've enjoyed the later start date the last few years. Arlene

243

It is really stressful for the high school students to go on christmas vacation and have to worry about their finals when they come back to school. It would also be really nice if students could just use those two weeks to spend time with their families, and not have to study or do homework or projects.

244

I feel that starting school earlier would be beneficial as most families have returned from vacations by mid august and students are becoming bored by that time. Also, should we end up with snow days, we could make them up without running too far into June when we would all rather be fishing!

245

The last 2 weeks of August is the only time we get as a family during the summer due to busy sports schedules.

246

I have been a parent in the ASD school district for the past 30 years! I watched while the school board finally came to their senses and started school after Labor Day allowing families to have the last remaining days of summer before the long winter--other cities don't have the long winter that we have! Ending the semester before the winter break works for colleges who take a long weekend in the fall and make their winter breaks 4-6 weeks long. The 180 days that the school district has to be in session can't afford these luxuries. Thanksgiving has become a popular

holiday to travel as it is the only vacation that everyone in a family gets to take off together-- Thanksgiving will be jeopardized by impending exams. High School seniors who are cramming to get last minute applications in the mail will have to complete with the semester's end. Many students go to school in the summer too. "Summer on Campus" available nationwide gives motivated students supplemental educational skills needed for applying to highly competitive colleges. Local students needing to make up missed work also attend summer programs that are usually rigorous for them. Everyone needs a break in August before the long winter. While this calendar change might help a few families who have children in the ASD system as well as in colleges outside the state coordinate their lives the fall burn-out will be the biggest factor you will create. My sister lives in Atlanta where the school system uses the proposed system and it burns out children there. The weather is better in late fall than it is in late May. Keep calendar A and let students have the summer to work, fish, attend the state fair or attend summer school knowing that they will have a nice rest in August before the fall. Jean Bundy

247

I dislike question 4 as many of those issues are important. To pick only 1 item is deceptive as I could easily pick 2 or 3 of equal importance. I much prefer the earlier start and finish because I like the quarters ending prior to vacations, I like more school before the tests, I like getting out earlier in the spring!

248

We like to use our summer for fishing & camping here in Alaska. There is still ice on the ground in May, So we can't do anything in May. It is still nice enough to get out and go fishing in September. It is also very hard to concentrate on school work when it is nice out & your mind keeps drifting off to what you could be doing out there in the sun.

249

Because August is still summer time for us and fishing is much better after the tourist leave. May is too early to start summer break June is more like summer for us.

250

let's go with the earlier calendar, we will be better prepared for testing.

251

The current calendar most effectively meets the academic needs of my family and two ( three in 05-06) elementary school age students.

252

due to short summer season, shorten vacation time during school year. Then start after Labor Day and end around Memorial Day.

253

I would personally love to have school start and end sooner. My concern lies in the first two weeks attendance. If you start school at the same time as the fair. Most people i know would skip at least 3 days of school to attend the state fair. Especially highschoolers. However, I feel that the academics will be just as well, and all would get used to it. Thank you for providing the opportunity to be heard on this matter. Samantha L Hudon

254

With high stakes national and state testing taking place in April, it would be best to have as many weeks to prepare our students for these exams. An early start enables teachers and parents to get a head start on preparing students for these exams.

255

Have you thought of a 2 week spring vacation or a 1 week fall vacation with the earlier start time? I believe families and kids need more breaks.

256

Having a late start like we currently have only promotes students doing poorly in the higher grades. Having the holiday break two weeks before the end of the semester encourages lower grades, few students actually use the break to do homework or study, and since many families use that time to travel it seems even more ridiculous to wait to have the semester end. Thanks

257

The last two weeks in August are the times when my family travels to do our fishing for the winter. We have a special location where our child as well as a few other families that go with us can fish safely. The harvest time for the silver salmon falls during that timeframe so an adjustment to the school calendar to an earlier time would mean that we would miss that experience of Alaskan tradition as well as a food source for our family. We also have two other families with schoolmates go with us. We have a safe place for the children to fish and learn the tradition of harvesting food to share. This trip is tied in with berry harvest as well that is date specific with ripeness. This annual trip ties in with our Thanksgiving and Christmas holidays. The children have a sense of pride of sharing their harvest with friends & other family members; a tradition we hope they carry on throughout their lifetime. Since growing up in the Anchorage School District myself, I enjoy passing on this tradition to my own children. I have always remembered having that last two weeks in August traveling, gathering & preparing our winter food stores as a family. Please allow we Alaskans the continued ability to have this experience with our children and keep the first day of school after Labor Day Weekend. Thank you. Teri Janis Eagle River, AK

258

Even when I was in school, school started after Labor Day. I see no benefit in changing the schedule if it's worked good up till now.

259

Many families are still on vacation prior to labor day, plus many high school students work in tourism related jobs that usually end after labor day. The early start would also have a negative effect on the Alaska State Fair. I think the ASD will find absenteeism excessive if the school year is started prior to labor day and think this has been proven by past history.

260

The proposed change would help military families transfer their kids from Alaska schools to outside schools. It's a real problem transferring them now because schools in the lower 48 get out so much earlier in the year.

261

Families need time to enjoy the end of summer, late salmon runs, the fair, and labor day. Our family had three children go through the ASD and being able to enjoy the end of summer far outweighs having the fall semester end before Christmas.

262

I support calendar C because I realize the importance of student achievement. I believe it is the duty of the District to help the students achieve and excel. Thanks!

263

I hire about 10 High School age youths for summer work and their employment runs until Labor Day.

264

I am employed as Marketing Director at the Alaska State Fair. I also served two years on the school calendar committee for the Matanuska-Susitna School District. I support starting school after Labor Day. An earlier start would have a negative impact on the Alaska State Fair and it would deprive students of an opportunity to participate and work at the Fair. From my service on

the calendar committee here in the Valley, I believe that the real impetus for this change is driven by the desire of teachers and administrative staff to be able to have two vacations, one during the Christmas holidays and one during spring break. Since this faction does not wish to have the school year extend later into the summer season, the only choice is to start school earlier. The concern for student's welfare is a political hot button selected to advance the vacation agenda plain and simple. When I served on the Mat-Su Calendar committee, I witnessed passionate arguments delivered on the students behalf and carefully orchestrated speeches presented by students from debate classes presenting arguments assigned by teachers wishing to champion their vacation cause. There was never an attempt to present both sides, just a political agenda cloaked carefully within the desire to do what is best for "the students" I found it interesting that the two student representatives on the committee both stated the following: 1. Most students will wait until the last minute to study for exams anyway, no matter the school schedule. 2. They said that many, many students would simply not attend school until after Labor Day anyway. They would instead work at the Fair, go hunting with family or participate in 4H or other Fair activities. I guess my biggest concern is that the issue is not being presented for what it is. It reminds me of ploy often used by school districts to lobby for school budget decisions: they cut popular sporting activities because they know they will hit an emotional hot button. I was very disappointed in your survey. The question asking for a priority choice was clearly weighted to deliver information that could be used to support a predetermined agenda. Try presenting this question to a respected pollster like Dave Dittman and they will tell you the same thing. Thanks for allowing this space to comment.

265

I think starting soon after Labor Day and ending early in June gives us the most summer time and keeps the students on a familiar schedule.

266

It is important to keep in mind the short summer in AK and not let school calendar completely override outdoor recreation activities.

267

I would like to see the ASD continue to start school after Labor Day so their calendar is close to the same as Mat-Su Valley. Though my children are raised, it was helpful for them to have the same holidays and school session dates as Anchorage - for sports/friends/visiting other parent/and more. I am currently a vendor at the Alaska State Fair and employ many young workers throughout the summer months and through the state fair. About 1/2 of my employees come from the ASD and having them start school before Labor Day will limit their employment opportunities. Plus, the impact on Alaska biggest entertainment venue will be very financially devastating with ASD in session before Labor Day. Please consider this aspect when you are making the decision for all future school year calendars.

268

I see nothing on this site that supports the position for changing the calendar. If there is not a significant learning difference, why impact the community for the sake of making change?? If the calendar is changed, you may want to consider that most kids and parents would enjoy a week off prior to, and a week after Christmas instead of two weeks after. Also I would think that if the calendar started two weeks earlier, that spring break might also fall earlier, at a time when most Alaskans wouldn't mind an Alaska break.

269

I believe starting early would not be good. The summer is only so long and families use it to the utmost. Students won't be mentally ready until after Labor Day, the Fair, the whole end of summer activities.

270

Vacations help teachers, students and families do better, overall, during the school year. Since

Alaska is geographically far from many places people visit on school vacations, 2 weeks are usually needed to justify the trip. Therefore, I support a school year which starts on Aug. 22 and ends on June 6, in order to have a 2-week break at Christmas and Easter. (I also think it is very good, but not critical, for the quarter to end prior to the vacation.)

271

I do not support any changes. Any change affects families. Alaskan seasons are very important to those living here. Families need the summer time to spend together due to work, seasonal temperatures and family vacations.

272

leave as is for now. Vacations/hunting in the fall big part of family activities.

273

by the time that August rolls around both children and parents are ready for students to be back in school. This gives them more time in class and more time to prepare for the upcoming testing.

274

I would like the ASD to consider longer breaks after the quarters, therefore shortening the length of summer break. I believe the children's summer break is too long and the children are bored, which cause them to find things to get themselves into trouble.

275

I am very disappointed that a very crucial issue seems to be absent from this debate. While Anchorage is an urban area, a large number of it's families still participate in subsistence activities. Many families, mine included, rely on moose and caribou hunting in the fall to provide substantial food sources for the following year. Additionally, this time has become very important for my family as it is a time to bond and to learn important lessons that can only be found in the natural world. If the proposed earlier start date is adopted, it will drastically impact the many families that take part in early-fall hunting. Additionally, many teachers in the district will have to change their lifestyles accordingly. Many of my friends (and myself, as I am training to be a teacher) currently depend on the week prior to their first day to provide themselves with meat for the year. Changing the schedule with hurt these teachers and many community members in a serious way. At the very least, I implore you to include this issue in your consideration of calendar changes. Thank you.

276

First, question #4 appears to be stacked to favor the outcome preferred by the district. I am guessing that votes for the first, fifth, and sixth issues will count as votes for calendar C, and that votes for the third, fourth and eighth might as well. A preordained outcome disguised as a solicitation of input is offensive. Second, the district seems to have forgotten or given up on one of the nicest aspects of childhood, summer. This is especially sad in Alaska. Two weeks outside in May (cooler, browner) do not equal two weeks outside in August (warmer, greener). Our rush as a society to sacrifice the fun in childhood on the alter of overachievement is not a positive trend. Family time is reduced, and our children's health is diminished. I would ask you to consider which is our children's greater need: "more instructional time before mandated testing dates" or more time playing outside to combat the trends in obesity and to increase creativity.

277

Please don't start school before Labor Day!

278

The current schedule allows our family to maximize coordination of summer activities, travel, vacations, and family considerations. Our family very much prefers the current schedule.

279

I think you should leave the calendar the way it is due to the fact that the summers are so short here in Alaska and calendar A gives more time for the summer vacations, state fair attendance and things like that.

280

My son graduated at semester and because the semester ends so late, he had to try and attend two weeks of high school and two weeks of college at the same time. His grades dropped in one of his high school classes specifically because he could not be in two places at one time. As a parent of a high school student I think it would be beneficial to all students to end before christmas break.

281

I believe having the quarters end prior to vacations will positively impact the student's achievement! Please vote for Calendar C.

282

all other factors being equal to me, the earlier start is psychologically inferior... Having school cut into June is not so bad because spirits are high no matter what from having just started summer.

283

year round school calendar is over due this is the time to offer that option too

284

The way that ASD and Mat-Su calendars coincide now and in the past is working well. Don't see the need for them to be changed because all activities of both Districts work together now for the good of students in both districts. Leave it as it is, please.

285

Leave it alone!

286

My high school kids hate to go on vacation with the thought of coming back to take finals. Also, the schools in the Lower 48 start on a C type schedule.

287

Calendar C had more real class day. For instance, November is not as chaotic as current schedules

288

Only problem I hear about is, parents are going on vacation in August regardless of the start day. I believe getting students to school in late summer is going to be a tough sell. Goodluck

289

why not compromise and begin 8/28/06 and end 6/1/07? why are the only choices to begin in MID(!)-Aug or after Labor day?

290

We support the A calendar because the C calendar would interfere with our family's summer activities, which are very important with the short summer season. Thanks, and good luck with your decision. Steve Lyons

291

On the 2006-07 Series C, the first quarter ends 10/20, with the second quarter beginning 10/30. Is this correct? Overall, I like Series C. The idea of starting early, so that the kids get out early is appealing and personally, works for our family. I think one less in service day at the beginning of the year is smart. And like having the 2nd and 3rd quarters end w/ vacations.

292

I would like to see ASD continue to start school after Labor Day. I totally depend on my kids to help me at the Palmer fair Not to mention that it is totally devastating to the Palmer fair when the kids are in school.

293

I am a teacher at Dimond High. I think calendar C will make the most of the student's time. This way, time before break will be used to wrap up the semester, and when they return they will have a new start with no disjointed two or three weeks left.

294

\*Year-Round School w/four breaks @ various times\*

295

I think series C gives Anchorage ASD students a chance to start summer jobs earlier and have better competition with the summer job market. It's more consistent with college start and end times. Most college students end their summer jobs in mid-August to head back to school. Plus the weather seems to be nicer in May than August and keeps spring fever issues shorter.

296

Dear Carol and school board members. I moved from Anchorage in March 04 (although still own property and so have cause to be concerned). The district in Texas I moved to completes the first semester before Xmas. I just wanted you to know that from experience, The upsides are that students complete the semester before xmas allowing the break to be homework free. This is nice. The down side though, is that every day of each weekend prior to xmas the high school student is working hard to complete projects and reports that are due prior to the end of the semester as well as study for exams. I found this disruptive to the short holiday time that was so important to our family. Every decision has trade offs. I am just not sure which way is best. Homewaork over xmas can get done after the holiday before new years...exam prep and projects due before the holiday take much time way from simple projects like decorating a tree and building a gingerbread house. Just thought you should know since we experienced this this past xmas. Sarah Wright

297

I support an in between calendar that begins the week before Labor Day and ends the week after Memorial Day. I DO NOT support the Fairbanks calendar where school begins in mid-August, students attend until Dec 23, then take a 3-week Christmas break. This is a huge burden on parents. Please avoid this mistake.

298

A longer period of instructional time before mandated testing can be achieved with Calendar C. This may be helpful in raising test scores. Ending a quarter before a vacation makes sense for both the students and the staff. All of them can truly enjoy the freedom of knowing that when they return they will start the new semester fresh and ready to go. The state fair should not be a consideration of Anchorage school calendars. People will go or not go regardless of school. Remember our weather plays a more important part of fair attendance than school calendars. The weather is something you can't control! Please vote for calendar C it deserves a trial run to see if it is a better choice. You won't know until you try it!

299

It is crazy to have students return from a 14 day break for 1-2 weeks of classes and then finals. What a waste of time! If we finished classes before the holidays, families could really have a break. Also, the weather is usually nicer in June, than in August. My vote is for the earlier start date.

300

The month of August, especially the last two weeks are critical to my family. This is when we are able to fill our freezers with fresh silver salmon. After Sept. 1st the ADF&G prohibits bait fishing on the Kenai. This time period is not only a time of bonding with my children but a critical time to get us through the winter. Changing the school schedule would adversely affect our family and no doubt many others as well.

301

Student achievement can be directly impacted by the school calendar solely on when the calendar starts and ends. Our calendars seem to start later and end later every year which makes no sense! All summer sports start in early May to take advantage of weather. That, along with the long daylight hours, make normal bedtimes next to impossible. May and June are always a challenge. Why not start in August when days are getting shorter and body clocks naturally adjust. August is also the rainiest month of the year and summer activities have all ended. Parents are not juggling crazy evening activities with early school schedules.

302

"I would like to see the ASD continue to start school after Labor Day so their calendar is close to the same as Mat-Su Valley. It was helpful for them to have the same holidays and school session dates as Anchorage - for sports/friends/visiting other parent/and more. I am currently a vendor at the Alaska State Fair and employ many young workers throughout the summer months and through the state fair. About 1/2 of my employees come from the ASD and having them start school before Labor Day will limit their employment opportunities. Plus, the impact on Alaska's biggest entertainment venue will be very financially devastating with ASD in session before Labor Day. Please consider this aspect when you are making the decision for all future school year calendars."

303

I believe that going to the C calendar would be easier as it is the same as the lower 48. Being in the military and leaving here in May causes my children to miss school where in the lower 48 school would be over it. It allows the kids more warm weather to enjoy having part of May off and all of June.

304

My real answer to #4 is: For goodness sake, let the kids have a summer. The summer is short enough as it is without them having to start school during it. I know we'll get the week at the beginning, but culturally, socially those last weeks of August are important to Alaskans - kids and adults. Please don't do this. "It ain't broke."

305

I believe the calendar needs to be a mix of the above components something that works for children and their families but without an earlier start date as many families are still wrapping up subsistence issues in August when our children are needed with us. The current calendar seems to meet most people's needs.

306

Splitting the quarters at the December break makes more sense than continuing into January for the 2nd quarter finish. Thanks.

307

Series C is such a big change from the current calendar series. It would make a very short summer the first year it is implemented. Perhaps a couple of school years to transition from the current calendar system to the Series C calendar system would be easier for parents and students to adjust. Series C is well intentioned, but change is not easy unless it is gradual and expected.

308

I put equal weight between quarters ending prior to vacations (especially for senior level students), impact on student achievement, and earlier start, earlier finish (AK summers are too short to be in school in June)

309

Do we need as many inservice days? If so OK.

310

we send our children to school to learn- two more weeks of school before testing is not going to make a difference in scores if the child has been learning all along. Why change a good thing- August is a wonderful time for families to enjoy Alaska together- there are some things more important than trying to make a district look good on test scores!

311

With the proposed C schedule you are taking away the best part of the summer right before September, Many camps and other activities would be affected by starting the school year so early.

312

There are too many INSERVICE days, now. We could shorten Christmas Vacation, These kids don't get enough summer now, why make it even shorter.

313

I do not believe that we need to alter our lives and vacations to accommodate the districts need for high test scores. My children test high. Thanks for letting me sound off though.

314

I prefer year round school, with 5 week vacations between quarters. Of the two choices, however, Calendar A allows the greatest family flexibility during the busy summer months.

315

I think that if you are really concerned about children and their ability to learn the ASD would convert all schools to year-round programs. It works well in other states, while we remain stuck with a time period that only makes sense if you are a farmer or commercial man.

316

We are originally from a village. Spring subsistence hunting begins in late May. By then, schools up there are out. We cannot join them until spring seal hunting is over.

317

I don't think any work is going to get done in school in Alaska during August. This will be a waste of resources.

318

I really like the idea that the Quarters ending prior to vacations will help not only the students but the teachers as well. The teachers and students can start fresh with a new quarter. The students don't forget anything that they have learned. It is hard on the teachers to teach the students after a vacation if you are still in the middle of the quarter.

319

The students are not "there" in the last few weeks of May/June. Because of our weather and light at that time they are not focusing on school. And it's not entirely fair to make them. As a parent I also want to see them get some playtime, outdoor time and time with family. The school takes them most of the year for most of the day. June 9th is so close to the solstice it is not right to still be in school. There are too many inservice days and they don't seem to be planned where we

as a family could make use of them to visit family outside (ie. grouping next to vacations or closer together) Families up here often need to travel to visit extended family and that does not seem supported by the ASD.

320

I wish the school district would also seriously consider uniforms.

321

I am vehemently against calendar C. I think children will show up late anyway. Many families take vacations in late Aug. Kids will not be focused on school inasmuch as it is still summer. It directly conflicts with the state fair which is an annual ritual for most Anchorage families. Kids will be in school for a week and then it is interrupted with labor day weekend where many families take a day or two of early to have an extended end of summer celebration. This is a bad idea and I think there will be much resistance to it.

322

Spring break should be earlier in March, the first or second week, not the third week of the month.

323

none at this time

324

The summer months are very important to Alaskans!! And starting to school amidst fishing season, State Fair, travel time, etc. would not be fair to the students. I think there is more to consider than the timing of tests and truly would 2 more weeks make a difference. Both of my sons are 4.0 Honor students and have done well with the current school calendar.

325

My preference would be to take back the many days wasted on "required" testing, and use them for teaching instead. That way there might be enough time to meet student requirements. The calendar needs to remain almost the same, in order to mesh with parents and teachers lives and schedules. - W. Frey

326

It would be nice to have the full month of June to enjoy. Kids are ready to be done by May and ready to start by August.

327

I would still like to see a movement to later start times for all age groups.

328

Perhaps the school district should consider the following: Considering all of the criteria, following a 180 day school year, consider this point of view: Begin at December 23rd and count back 90 school days allowing the traditional four day weekend at Thanksgiving. The school year would begin on whatever day the 90 days would fall. Inservice, testing, etc. could be inserted where necessary or desired. (As these days do not effect the 90 day requirement.) You have completely completed the semester before break! As for the end of the year, we all know that there is nothing productive after Memorial Day. Therefore, count back 90 days from the Friday before Memorial Day, omitting spring break, and there you would have the first day of the second semester. Essentially, you would be creating a much longer winter break which really could be helpful all the way around. It provides for the ability to actually travel outside at a much cheaper time of year. It is also the darkest and coldest time of year, for those who would like to either go to warmer, sunnier locations. It would also provide a better break time for those who enjoy winter sports, allowing free time during a period when you could almost guarantee snow and ice. The current situation is that spring break often is at a time of high air fares, high hotel costs, majorly crowded and booked vacation areas and possible break-up. This could be a win-win situation!

329

I send my children to school to get the best possible education, make your decision based on what is in the best interest of educating my children

330

QUARTERS ENDING BEFORE BREAKS NOT AFTER. VACATION CAN BE A TIME OF RELAXATION NOT STRESS

331

start on monday the last week of august and end on friday of the first week in june

332

I think its wrong to start early because we like to be different and our kids like starting later than other states

333

I grew up in the lower 48, and personally prefer the earlier start/earlier end calendar to the calendar that ASD currently uses. Besides which, due to the later Labor Day, the current calendar actually makes more than one student fairly mad.

334

Start date of last Monday in August, end date of last week in May.

335

I believe the impact to family life is the most important to our family. I would like to see the number of in-service days reduced, so school would get out earlier in the year as well.

336

I think as many times as our teachers get pulled from the classroom for training, something should be done about the TEACHERS calendar, I realize contracts are very important, but if a teacher is going to training, our students suffer, its not the start/end date that is the biggest impact, its the number of days our teachers are NOT in the classroom, due to personal, sick, and training dates...THAT should be reviewed...its not an easy political subject I realize but if its student achievement we are worried about, then keep the teachers attendance consistant and substitutes at a minimum, and THEN we will see student achivement rise...

337

Works better for students and enables them to travel and visit family during "normal" summer vacations as the lower 48. Just makes more sense!

338

I think it is much better to start earlier, more so for the elementary students. May is a difficult month because of the daylight changes, and the younger children seem to suffer much more from sleep deprivation than the older ones. The younger ones just don't understand that even though it is still "sunny" outside, it is bedtime. I think the teachers and the parents both suffer during May and June.

339

I feel it makes much more sense to finish the school year prior to Memorial Day. Those last days after the holiday seem to be wasted, as the students mentally are already on vacation. Thank you for considering the changes.

340

It would be easier on the children if the quarters ended before a holiday.

341

Although we are living in the Mat-Su valley, we would like to see the school schedule start after labor day to keep the school calendars in the southcentral area fairly consistent with each other. Also, we are fair vendors and want all Alaskans to have the opportunity to visit this great event. If you force Anchorage people to attend on the weekends only, the traffic problems might increase as the fairgoers would not be spread out over the 12 day event.

342

I work at a camp offering summer kid's programming. The transition to a new calendar will be a challenge as it will effectively cut 2 weeks out of our summer schedule and we have to decide which groups to cut. Also, if the Anchorage calendar is two weeks different from the Mat-Su calendar we also have a scheduling challenge about whether we can accommodate both groups.

343

Why doesn't the school board just change the calendar? People will get used to it, just like we did with this one. Plus, it is just a calendar, and it isn't that big of a deal and students, parents, and the community will deal with it and learn to like the new calendar.

344

My child likes school starting after Labor Day because of the consistency from year to year. He would prefer no changes be made.

COMMUNITY ANECDOTAL COMMENTS VIA EMAIL  
AND WRITTEN COMMUNICATION TO THE  
SUPERINTENDENT'S OFFICE AND BOARD MEMBERS

Name: alex

E-mail address: [optionbrdr3@hotmail.com](mailto:optionbrdr3@hotmail.com)

Phone number: 696-3318

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Role in community: Student

Current school boundary: Other

Lives on Fort Richardson: No

Grade of student(s): seventh

\*\*\*\*\*

I think that it would be good to change the start time of school earlier because we could be finished with the first semester by christmas and that means that we wouldn't have homework and worry about our grade.

Sent on: Monday, March 07, 2005

Sent at: 9:21:56 PM

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From: Jean Bundy [<mailto:38144@alaska.net>]

Sent: Monday, March 07, 2005 8:51 PM

To: Comeau\_Carol

Subject: 2006 calendar changes

Hi Carol,

Changing the school year to begin in mid-August seems at first to be a good idea. After all colleges do it and families who have multiple children in various stages of learning across America might at first find this enticing. Colleges however, have added a long weekend in the fall to ease the length of the autumn semester and their winter break can go into late January ( 4-6 weeks). I don't think the school district can take that much time out of their 180 day plus in-service calendar. Many students attend summer schools that are quite rigorous. Six weeks at a "summer on campus" program or even a local one for tutoring or make-up sessions can burn-out even the brightest students. Late summer fishing as well as the State Fair in Palmer provides recreation,

additional monies and fun before the long winter--there will be less time for all that. The weather is generally better in August than late May too.

Thanksgiving, the only vacation in the year calendar where parents and students have the exact same days off will be jeopardized by anticipated finals. Seniors putting in last minute applications for college will have too much to do. Starting in August is not a good program for Anchorage and will not raise test scores but burn students out only to face a winter break that is too short for this type of calendar.

thanks for listening

Jean Bundy

P/S My younger sister lives in Atlanta with her 3 school age children. They use this proposed calendar and she finds the fall semester too long for her children.

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From: John & Cheryl Harkey [<mailto:jdharkey@yahoo.com>]  
Sent: Wednesday, March 09, 2005 9:25 AM  
To: School Board  
Subject: School opening dates

"I would like to see the ASD continue to start school after Labor Day so their calendar is close to the same as Mat-Su Valley. Though my children are raised, it was helpful for them to have the same holidays and school session dates as Anchorage - for sports/friends/visiting other parent/and more. I am currently a vendor at the Alaska State Fair and employ many young workers throughout the summer months and through the state fair. About 1/2 of my employees come from the ASD and having them start school before Labor Day will limit their employment opportunities.

Plus, the impact on Alaska biggest entertainment venue will be very financially devastating with ASD in session before Labor Day. Please consider this aspect when you are making the decision for all future school year calendars."

---

Name: Rick Hoover  
E-mail address: [rrhoover@gci.net](mailto:rrhoover@gci.net)  
Phone number: 349-2821

\*\*\*\*\*

Role in community: Parent  
Current school boundary: Other  
Lives on Fort Richardson: No  
Grade of student(s): 7,10

\*\*\*\*\*

I am ok with the new Calendar C. But I would like to know the pros and the cons in more detail. I am all for the more educational benefits however, I am concerned about the allowing more time before mandated testing. Are we teaching to do well on the tests? When did this become the goal of the ASD?

How will this impact our already very short high school spring sports programs such as track and baseball? Football will be fine as it starts earlier and we need to beat the snow.

Sent on: Tuesday, March 08, 2005  
Sent at: 9:13:08 AM

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Name: James and Teresa Carns  
Phone Number: 907-279-1195  
Email Address: [carnsideas@alaska.net](mailto:carnsideas@alaska.net)

Sent on : Tuesday, March 08, 2005  
Sent at : 12:08:12 PM

\*\*\*\*\*

Suggestion: We are responding to the suggested school calendar

changes that were mailed to us this week. We oppose beginning the school year on August 22nd. August is the only month of the year that we can arrange to get to the lower 48 to see family. The proposed change would make that very difficult.

---

----- Forwarded Message

**From:** Sambo\_Mary\_Kay <[Sambo\\_Mary\\_Kay@asdk12.org](mailto:Sambo_Mary_Kay@asdk12.org)>

**Date:** Tue, 8 Mar 2005 12:49:37 -0900

**To:** Boyer\_Robb <[Boyer\\_Robb@asdk12.org](mailto:Boyer_Robb@asdk12.org)>

**Subject:** calendar comments

Telephone calls I received on the calendar:

Favors the early start and likes the idea of the first semester being completed before the holidays. She is concerned over the study time for students being limited due to a busy schedule for teachers and families prior to the holidays, i.e., music performances, family events, etc.

Does not favor the early start due to the students missing the good weather in August.

Does not favor the calendar change due to financial hardship, increased operational costs, impact on teachers on students, and favors decreasing inservice days because nothing of value is accomplished during those days.

Mary Kay Sambo, Executive Assistant  
Superintendent's Office  
P.O. Box 196614  
Anchorage, AK 99519-6614  
907 742-4312  
907 742-4318 (fax)

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Dear ASD School Board and Superintendent Comeau,

I applaud your solicitation of public comment on proposed calendar changes for the coming years. I believe you will find that the late date for this year's end of classes - June

9th - will cause problems for parents and teachers in keeping kids motivated, not to mention rested, as school days stretch into June and approach the summer solstice. Earlier start and end dates would be wise, in my opinion as a parent.

At the same time, your proposed start date of Aug. 22nd for 2006 seems rather early to me. The choice that has been offered is between start dates of Sept. 5 (series A ) and Aug. 22nd (series C). What I wonder is what happened to series B? What's wrong with Aug. 29? I strongly suspect that would draw the most votes, if it were offered. Is there a problem that I am missing here?

---

> Hello Mrs. Comeau,  
> I am in my fourth year teaching English at Dimond. Though the public  
> comment period is over and there is a lot happening in this week of  
> testing, I just wanted to scribe you a quick email in regards to the  
> proposed calendar shift. Obviously there are many factors to take  
into  
> consideration and I appreciate the length at which you and the  
district  
> are going to make sure that the decision is not a hasty one.  
>  
> Please know that as a younger teacher I strongly support the  
calendar  
> shift for many of the obvious reasons, mostly the consistency I think  
it  
> would ultimately provide for students in the weeks leading up to and  
> after winter break. That's it. I just wanted to weigh in and let you  
> know where an everyday teacher stands on the issue.  
>  
> Thanks,  
> Marcus Reese