

School Calendar Transition Engagement & Communication Plan



Calgary Board
of Education

dialogue)))

Date: Sept. 14, 2022

1. CONTEXT

Currently, the CBE offers and manages two school calendars. There are 28 regular-setting schools, mainly in Areas 3 and 4 (NE/SE Calgary), that operate on the modified instructional calendar. Additionally, there are some unique-setting schools that operate on the modified instructional calendar; however, unique-setting schools are outside the scope of this engagement. All other CBE schools operate on the traditional instructional calendar. Instructional calendars establish common start and end days and system-wide days for schools to schedule parent-teacher conferences, professional development and organizational days. While most schools follow the traditional calendar, those schools on a modified calendar have an earlier start to the school year and additional breaks throughout the year. Instructional hours provided to students are relatively the same between the calendars.

Over the years, changes to attendance areas and school programming have made maintaining two school calendars challenging for families and for operations. Additionally, there is no positive impact on academic results among students who attend a modified-calendar school. For these reasons, the CBE is considering transitioning modified-calendar schools move to the traditional calendar.

There are benefits to having all CBE schools operating on the traditional calendar. Transitioning modified-calendar schools to the traditional calendar supports equity at the CBE by providing students better access to language and alternative programs that typically operate on the traditional calendar. Moving modified-calendar schools to the traditional calendar will ease scheduling challenges that result from some families having children attending schools operating on two different calendars. Operating schools on one calendar will also reduce operational challenges and improve efficiencies resulting in long-term benefits.

Beginning in September 2022, the CBE will commence an engagement process and gather feedback from affected stakeholders. This feedback, along with other factors, will help determine whether the CBE will transition modified-calendar schools to the traditional calendar and how best to implement the transition.

While the CBE is exploring the possibility that modified-calendar schools move to the traditional calendar due to the reasons outlined above, a variety of considerations, including stakeholder feedback, program access and alignment, will help determine if modified-calendar schools will adopt the traditional calendar in the future. It may be possible that some modified-calendar schools will adopt the traditional calendar, while others will continue operating on the modified calendar.

2. PURPOSE: WHAT IS TO BE DECIDED?

By December 15, 2022, the CBE will communicate a decision about whether some or all schools currently operating on the modified calendar will move to the traditional calendar in the future. This decision will consider input and feedback gathered through this engagement process, the importance of providing equitable access to programming for all students and alignment with other programming and operational requirements.

3. DECISION MAKER(S)

While many people will contribute their ideas in this engagement process, the final decision about whether modified-calendar schools will move to the traditional calendar, as well as the final implementation plan, will be made at the superintendent level.

4. ENGAGEMENT PLANNING TEAM

The planning team includes the following members:

Education Director, Area 4 and Education Partnerships & Off-Site
Senior HR Advisor
Manager, Transportation Services
Manager, Community Engagement
Community Engagement Advisor

5. IN SCOPE OF ENGAGEMENT (FACTORS STAKEHOLDERS CAN INFLUENCE)

- Stakeholders can influence whether or not the decision is made to move some or all schools currently operating on the modified calendar to the traditional calendar. Other factors will also be considered including equitable access to programming for all students, alignment with other programming and operational requirements.
- If the decision is made to move modified-calendar schools to the traditional calendar, stakeholders can influence factors related to implementing the decision. This includes timing, phasing-out (providing time when schools may continue to operate on a modified calendar before making the transition to the traditional calendar) and other considerations.

6. OUT OF SCOPE/GIVENS (FACTORS STAKEHOLDERS CANNOT INFLUENCE)

- Schools currently operating on the traditional calendar will not move to the modified calendar.
- Schools with unique settings will not be part of this engagement process – their school calendars will continue to be set based on the particular needs of the student community.
- The days when schools are closed during a school year (non-instructional days, holidays etc.) are determined through an ongoing process that is separate from this engagement.
- The number of instructional hours is determined by the Government of Alberta.
- School bell times will not be considered as part of this process.
- There are budget constraints the CBE must consider in making financially responsible and sustainable decisions.
- All CBE decision-making is guided by legislative and regulatory requirements set out by Alberta Education as well as [CBE policies and administrative regulations](#).

7. OPPORTUNITIES & RISKS

There is an opportunity to use strong, focused communications to help stakeholders understand the factors and considerations behind moving modified-calendar schools to the traditional calendar. It will be important for people to understand the benefits of having all schools operate on the traditional calendar as well as the important role and influence stakeholders have over the decision to transition modified-calendar schools to the traditional calendar, including possible implementation considerations.

8. STAKEHOLDERS

Stakeholders will be offered different engagement opportunities based on the extent they would be impacted by this decision. For this reason, stakeholders have been grouped into two groups: primary stakeholders and secondary stakeholders. The primary group includes staff, students and parents at modified-calendar schools and feeder schools. The secondary group includes staff, parents and students at traditional-calendar schools, other staff and members of the public.

Stakeholders have been categorized in this way because the primary group will be impacted by decisions about implementation should the decision be made to move modified-calendar schools to the traditional calendar. It is important to also gather the perspectives of the secondary group because a decision about whether or not to continue with two school calendars will impact operational efficiencies and taxpayers have an interest in how CBE funds are allocated. The secondary group of stakeholders would not be directly impacted by implementation.

9. ENGAGEMENT & COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES

- Use existing communication channels to inform and communicate that the CBE is exploring the possibility of transitioning schools on the modified calendar to the traditional calendar and the rationale behind it. This includes school websites, social media and direct emails. This approach to communication will apply to both primary stakeholders (staff, students and parents at modified-calendar schools and feeder schools) and secondary stakeholders (staff, parents and students at traditional-calendar schools, all other staff and members of the public). Stakeholders will also be informed about the extent to which their input can influence the decision and the potential implementation plan. The engagement planning team will work closely with principals at modified-calendar schools on communications with primary stakeholders.
- Gather input from primary and secondary stakeholders to determine the level of support for transitioning modified-calendar schools to the traditional calendar.
- Gather input on factors related to implementation from primary stakeholders should the decision be made to move modified-calendar schools to the traditional calendar.
- The engagement techniques used to gather input will differ for primary and secondary stakeholder groups.
- Engagement opportunities could include an online survey (with translation functionality) and virtual meetings. In-person opportunities may be offered if deemed appropriate. Engagement will occur in alignment with the Dialogue Framework.

10. ENGAGEMENT & COMMUNICATION OBJECTIVES

Communication Objective: To <u>inform and communicate</u> with stakeholders about the possibility of transitioning some or all modified-calendar schools to the traditional calendar.		
	Outcomes	Outputs
Inform & Communicate	Stakeholders understand the rationale behind considering the move to one school calendar.	Communication collateral and messaging via school websites, social media and direct emails.
	Stakeholders understand the factors affecting the decision and potential implementation planning.	
	Stakeholders can have their questions answered.	
	Stakeholders understand how to provide input on the decision and potential implementation plan, as well as the scope of their influence.	

Communication Objective: To <u>inform and communicate</u> with stakeholders about how their participation influenced the final decision (including a potential implementation plan).		
	Outcomes	Outputs
Inform & Communicate	The majority of stakeholders support the final decision based on the engagement process.	Communication to stakeholders summarizing input and how it influenced decisions.
	The majority of stakeholders can see their input has influenced the final decision.	

Engagement Objective: To <u>gather input</u> on whether or not stakeholders support moving modified-calendar schools to the traditional calendar.		
	Outcomes	Outputs
Gather Input	The majority of stakeholders say they have been listened to and engaged meaningfully in the engagement process.	Detailed records of engagement activities.
	Stakeholder input is considered in the decision about whether or not modified-calendar schools move to the traditional calendar.	

Engagement Objective: To <u>gather input</u> on considerations for implementation should the decision be made to move modified-calendar schools to the traditional calendar.		
	Outcomes	Outputs
Gather Input	The majority of stakeholders say they have been listened to and engaged meaningfully in the engagement process.	Detailed records of engagement activities.
	Stakeholder input is considered in the implementation plan.	

11. ENGAGEMENT & COMMUNICATION TIMELINE

Date	Action
Sept. 14, 2022	Share plans to gather feedback on the possibility that some or all modified-calendar schools move to the traditional calendar.
Sept. 27, 2022	<i>In-Person Information Session</i>
Sept. 29, 2022	<i>Virtual Information Session</i>
Sept. 30-Oct. 19, 2022	<i>Online Survey</i>
By Nov. 15, 2022	Share survey results and communicate next steps.
By Dec. 15, 2022	Communicate decision about whether or not some or all modified-calendar schools will move to the traditional calendar, including a high-level implementation plan. Communicate how stakeholder feedback influenced the decision.

12. MEASUREMENT & EVALUATION

We will determine the success of this engagement initiative by the feedback provided from participants, including session evaluations and evaluative online survey questions.