

2015-2016 Proposed School Calendar Overview



Background

On December 4, 2014 the Peace River School Division (PRSD) Calendar Committee met to discuss the 2015-2016 PRSD School Calendar. The committee consists of PRSD teachers, administrators, parents and management. In addition to the feedback of the committee, it is important for PRSD to gather input from our students, staff and parents on the calendar to best meet the needs of our school communities.

Please email any comments, questions or concerns to Executive Assistant Erin Cusack at cusacke@prsd.ab.ca by February 6, 2016. All feedback will be reviewed by the board of trustees prior to approving the 2015-2016 calendar at the March 3, 2015 board meeting.

Calendar topics

1. Annual staff kick-off event – extended to a two-day session for August 2014-2015

Next school year, the staff kick off will be extended to a two-day professional development session (August 26, 27, 2015). Providing a two-day session focused on Response to Intervention (RTI) led by Dr. Austin Buffum will provide a deeper level of learning for staff division-wide. The Superintendent of Schools and several PRSD staff have attended sessions led by Dr. Buffum and noted the importance of extending the kick-off in order to deepen our understanding and more fully implement the principles of RTI. The implementation of a two-day session is unique to the 2015-2016 school year and will not be an annual practice.

Note: In the 2015-2016 school year, school staff will be provided with one “Site based PD staff meeting day” on August 28, 2015 and one “Operational day” on August 29, 2015 to prepare for the 2015-2016 school year.

2. First day for students – September 1, 2015

The calendar proposes that students begin school on September 1, 2015 due to the timing of Labour Day in 2015 (September 7, 2015). The proposed start date of

September 1, 2015 responds to the division's responsibility to meet the required amount of instructional time and accommodate diploma examination administration. Based on community feedback over the past three years, PRSD notes that the school community prefers a post Labour Day start-up. The committee is committed to schedule school start-up after Labour Day whenever possible.

3. PRSD staff time in lieu of Parent Teacher Interviews (PTI)

In an effort to balance operational days in both semesters, the committee proposes that the two Parent Teacher Interview (PTI) in lieu days be scheduled in April and May of 2016. PTI days in lieu are days off for both students and school-based staff that compensate for time taken to conduct PTIs. The committee proposes that one of the staff PTI lieu days be added to the Easter break (April 4, 2016) and the other be scheduled for May 20, 2016. In past PRSD school calendars, PTI in lieu days were scheduled in November and May.

4. Christmas break

The 2015-2016 Christmas break is proposed for December 19, 2015 to January 3, 2016, with students returning to school on January 4, 2016. The committee proposes these dates based on past feedback that outlines the desire to have extra time before Christmas to allow for preparation and travel. The proposed return date of January 4, 2016 also provides increased time for students, staff and parents to prepare for the end of the semester and government exams.

5. Easter break

The committee proposes that the Easter break be scheduled for March 25, 2016 to April 3, 2016 with the added PTI in lieu day (as explained to in point 3 above) of April 4, 2016. This would mean that students and school-based staff would return to school on April 5, 2016.

Next steps

Input will be reviewed after February 6, 2015 and the 2015-2016 PRSD School Calendar will be presented to the board of trustees at its March 3, 2015 board meeting.

Thank you for your time and input. The input of our school communities will better inform the school calendar committee to develop school calendars that work for families, schools and communities.

Paul Bennett,
PRSD Superintendent of Schools