



EXECUTIVE REPORT TO STANDING COMMITTEE

TO: STANDING COMMITTEE

FROM: Manny Figueiredo, Director of Education

DATE: April 19, 2021

PREPARED BY: Estella Jones, Superintendent of Student Achievement

RE: 2021-22 Draft School Year Calendars

Action ☒ Monitoring ☐

Recommended Action:

That the draft 2021-22 School Year Calendars be approved for submission to the Ministry of Education.

Rationale/Benefits:

The 2021-22 School Year Calendars (Appendix – 1) have been prepared in consultation with the School Year Calendar Advisory Committee and endorsed by Executive Council.

The calendars comply with *Regulation 304, School Year Calendars and Professional Activity Days*. As per the requirements of O. Reg 304, the deadline for submission of regular school calendars is May 28, 2021.

As directed by the Board, public consultation was undertaken from January 25 to February 26, 2021 to receive community feedback regarding the draft calendars. The results were compiled by the HWDSB Research & Analytics Department and are available for review (Appendix – 2).

Background:

Regulation 304, School Year Calendar, Professional Activity Days sets the requirements for preparation and submission of school year calendars to the ministry. This includes a minimum of 194 school days between September 1, 2021 and June 30, 2022. For the 2021-22 school year, the total number of school days available from the Tuesday after Labour Day (September 7) to June 30 is 193. In order to be in compliance with Regulation 304, one PA day has been placed prior to the Labour Day holiday (Thursday September 2, 2021) and another PA day has been placed the day after the Labour Day holiday (Tuesday September 7, 2021) with the last day of school being June 30, 2022. This maintains the minimum number of instructional days at 187.

Regulation 304 establishes holidays for the school year that include a Winter Holiday Break (December 20 to Dec 31, 2021) and the March Break (March 14 to 18, 2022).

School boards must dedicate three (3) Professional Activity (PA) days to provincial education priorities and may provide up to four (4) additional PA days per school year. A board may also designate up to 10 school days as examination days.

Development of the 2021-22 school year calendars have been undertaken in consultation with the School Year Calendar Advisory Committee that consists of members representing: Elementary and Secondary Principals (HWPC); Elementary and Secondary Teachers (HWETL, OSSTF, HWOTL); Parents (Home & School; PIC); Educational Assistants (COPE), Early Childhood Educators (HWDECEL), School Office Assistants (OCTU) and Maintenance and Caretaking staff (CUPE).

The School Year Calendar Advisory Committee met in December to review the directions provided by the Ministry and develop draft elementary and secondary calendars for consideration. The committee met again in March to review feedback through the public consultation process and provide further feedback.

Executive Council and the School Year Calendar Advisory Committee supports the school year calendars (Appendix – 1) that include:

Elementary

Start Date for Students	September 8, 2021
End Date for Students	June 29, 2022
Professional Activity Days	September 2 & 7, November 26, 2021 January 28, March 4, June 3, June 30 , 2022 (7 days)

Secondary

	<u>Semester 1</u>	<u>Semester 2</u>
Start Date for Students	September 8, 2021	February 3, 2022
End Date for Students	January 25, 2022	June 21, 2022
Examination Days (5)	January 26 – February 1, 2022	June 22 – June 28, 2022
Professional Activity Days	Sept 2 & 7, Nov. 26, 2021 Feb. 2, 2022 (4 days)	Mar. 4, June 29 & 30, 2022 (3 days)

Professional Activity Days

Dates for Professional Activity (PA) days have been determined through Executive Council to prioritize timely professional learning opportunities for staff that adhere to provincial requirements and maximize influence on student learning, achievement and well-being. These dates have been informed by the School Year Calendar Advisory Committee that includes representation from all employee groups as well as HWDSB Parent Involvement Committee and Council of Home and School Association.

	ELEMENTARY	Focus		SECONDARY	Focus
X/C	September 2	Health & Safety Training Violence Prevention	X/C	September 2	Health & Safety Training Violence Prevention
X/C	September 7	Mandatory Provincial Education Priorities	X/C	September 7	Mandatory Provincial Education Priorities
X/C	November 26	Mandatory Provincial Education Priorities	X/C	November 26	Mandatory Provincial Education Priorities
C	January 28	Evaluation & Reporting		February 1	Transition/Promotion
X/C	March 4	Mandatory Provincial Education Priorities	X/C	March 4	Mandatory Provincial Education Priorities
C	June 3	Evaluation & Reporting		June 29	Transition/Promotion
X	June 30	Improvement Process	X	June 30	Improvement Process

X=Joint Elementary and Secondary PA Day

C=Coterminous Board PA Days

Board-wide Professional Activity Days (September 2 & 7, November 26, March 4, and June 30) will focus on Health & Safety Training, Violence Prevention Training, mandatory Provincial Education Priorities, and the Continuous Learning & Improvement Process aligned with the HWDSB Annual Plan. More information regarding the mandatory Provincial Education Priorities will be provided by the Ministry by May 7, 2021.

Consultation with the coterminous board has taken place to align PA days wherever possible to reduce costs and disruption.

Required School Year Holidays (based on O. Reg. 304 (4))

Labour Day	September 6, 2021
Thanksgiving	October 11, 2021
Winter School Holiday Break	December 20 – December 31, 2021
Family Day	February 21, 2022
March School Holiday Break	March 14 - March 18, 2022
Good Friday	April 15, 2022
Easter Monday	April 18, 2022
Victoria Day	May 23, 2022

Note: Ontario school holidays are available publicly through Ontario Education website – School Year Calendars up to and including the 2024-25 school year.

<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/general/list/calendar/holidaye.html>

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- As per the requirements of O. Reg 304, the school year shall commence on or after September 1 and will end on or before June 30.
- The minimum number of school days required in a school year calendar is 194. Any school days not designated as professional activity days are to be regarded as instructional days. As a result, the minimum number of instructional days per school year is 187.
- School boards may designate up to seven professional activity (PA) days per school year. Three of those PA days must be devoted to provincial education priorities identified by the Minister.
- A board may designate up to ten instructional days as examination days.
- The deadline for submission of regular school calendars is May 28th, 2021.

Consultation Purpose

Every year, school boards across Ontario must submit school year calendars to the Ministry of Education. According to Regulation 304, school boards must develop a school year calendar for elementary and secondary schools that includes 194 school days (including seven Professional Activity Days) between September 1 and June 30 with up to 10 days designated as examination days for secondary schools.

The Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board (HWDSB) asked members of the public to comment on the Draft 2021-2022 School Year Elementary and Secondary Calendars through the completion of an online survey. The survey ran from January 25th, 2021 until February 26th, 2021 and garnered a total of **891 responses**.

Respondent Characteristics

The majority of responses (71%, 629) came from parents/guardians, 23% (206) from HWDSB staff members, 5% (42) from HWDSB students, and 2% (14) from community groups/members.

79% (644) of responses were received from respondents who indicated they had children attending an HWDSB school, and 21% (181) of responses were from respondents who indicated they did not have children in an HWDSB school.

Of the responses received from respondents with children attending an HWDSB school, 69% (458) from parents/guardians of elementary students, 14% (92) from parents/guardians of secondary students while 17% (115) were from parents/guardians with both secondary and elementary children.

Summary of Findings

Members of the public were invited to provide feedback on each of the significant key dates of the elementary and secondary calendar. Following is a summary of the feedback received across each significant date:

The Draft Elementary School Year Calendar

Respondents were asked to indicate agreement or disagreement with each of the significant key dates for the Draft **Elementary** School Year Calendar:

Elementary Dates	Agree % (n)	Disagree % (n)	Total % (n)	Respondent Comments
Start date for Students: September 7, 2021	97% (685)	3% (26)	100% (771)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Why is this nearly a week after the mandated September 1st start? School should always start after Labour Day. Start earlier considering there is a lot to catch up on due to strikes, Covid-19 and learning loss. Consider continuing schooling virtually until the virus is gone. Rosh Hashana - Jewish High Holy day-Sept 6 at sundown and on the 7th and the 8th.
End date for Students: June 28, 2022	90% (640)	10% (68)	100% (708)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The week should end on a Friday-either the previous Friday or this week on Friday (it is difficult for working parents and getting childcare for end of week) Students should remain in school until mid July-two months summer vacation is too much and the kids get lazy and lose focus on learning. Does this allow for 194 school days? I only counted 191 days.
PA Day 1: September 1, 2021 Health & Safety Training, Violence Prevention Training	82% (540)	18% (122)	100% (662)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is unfair to DECE, EA and office staff to start before the labour day. Only coming back for 2 days messes up their EI and they lose 3 days pay for that week. Teachers need time to set up classrooms and prepare for students, especially if they're moving schools or classrooms. Violence Prevention training should occur later on in the year when students have settled into classes. Should include review for all staff of bullying policy and procedures. What about a focus on equity, diversity & inclusion during this time as well? PA days should be throughout the school year for students to have a break and catch up on their work. Do not clump PA Days together at the start or end of the year.

PA Day 2: September 2, 2021 Mandatory Provincial Education Priorities	81% (536)	19% (123)	100% (659)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This training by the province should be compressed into half days. Students won't receive a PA Day later in the year- PA Days should be set in a way that breaks up the school year for children.
PA Day 3: November 26, 2021 Mandatory Provincial Education Priorities	93% (626)	7% (51)	100% (677)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make a return of parent interviews to this PD day. It is important for families to connect with teachers and schools. Should be close to when progress reports go home. Historically they go home at the end of October/beginning of November. Should be set the week before because the Christmas break would be less than a month after. Add this PA Day to Thanksgiving.
PA Day 4: January 28, 2022 Evaluation and Reporting	97% (659)	3% (21)	100% (680)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can be done online. They just returned from Christmas break-no need for another day off. This should be a report writing day. Should this not be done prior to the kids starting school? PA days in conjunction with other holidays is preferred.
PA Day 5: March 4, 2022 Mandatory Provincial Education Priorities	90% (611)	10% (69)	100% (680)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parents are finding care for March Break already, extra care during March/extra time off can have repercussions on their jobs. We are off for a week already-move this to April. Move this to a month where there are no other days off. Why are there 3 full days required to address provincial education priorities? Knowing what these priorities are would be helpful.

PA Day 6: June 3, 2022 Evaluation and Reporting	96% (647)	4% (30)	100% (677)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can be done online. • Should be a report writing day. • The week before is a short week due to holiday-move this to the next week. • Focus should be on having these days before or after school starts so that education is maximized. • It's almost the end of the year, and Victoria Day is a week before this. • This would be a great one to shift to the end of June to allow students to finish the Friday of the week before the 27th of June. • Attach PA days to statutory holidays.
PA Day 7: June 29, 2022 Improvement Process	91% (623)	9% (57)	100% (680)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some staff are moving building or even schools-they need time to pack, leave and arrange their new workspaces. • This can be discussed/achieved virtually. • End on the Friday before. • Improvements should be made and evaluated many times throughout the year not just on one day. • This is not necessary-the school board should instead be finding ways to recoup missed learning time.

The Draft Secondary School Year Calendar

Respondents were asked to indicate agreement or disagreement with each of the significant key dates for the Draft **Secondary** School Year Calendar

Secondary Dates Semester 1	Agree % (n)	Disagree % (n)	Total % (n)	Respondent Comments
Semester 1 Start Date for Students: September 7, 2021	99% (309)	1% (4)	100% (313)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I think school should start a week earlier and end a week later to compensate/give an extra week at Christmas and at March break. Secondary and elementary PD days should line up.
Semester 1 End Date for Students: January 24, 2022	98% (306)	2% (5)	100% (311)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PA Days should be during the school year, not before the school year starts. Why not end it on the Friday the 21st? Kids need breaks between class and exam so end classes on January 21st.
Semester 1 Examinations: January 25, 26, 27, 28, 31, 2022	96% (294)	4% (11)	100% (305)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Should have off days between exams. Students don't need 5 days to complete exams. Back to back examination days are stressful for students. This time is better used for credit rescue rather than exams.
PA Day 1: September 1, 2021 Health & Safety Training, Violence Prevention Training	83% (251)	17% (52)	100% (303)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PA days should be spread out during the year to give students a chance to get caught up with work. Start the 7th of September. Can be done on a PD day during the school year. Extremely affects EI of employees such as EAs only working 2 days. Staff should start the same day as Students, the day after Labour Day. Should include a review of bullying policy and procedure. You need more than one day for this! It's important. I'm certain that most secondary teachers would prefer to use the entire last week before school begins to prepare for the year ahead. Should be later in September or October.

PA Day 2: September 2, 2021 Mandatory Provincial Education Priorities	83% (252)	17% (52)	100% (304)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students won't receive a PA Day later in the year. This break recharges students and staff. Vague "priorities "-needs explaining. Teachers should have this time to prepare for start up. Staff should not have to start before labour day. Extremely affects EI of employees such as EAs only working 2 days.
PA Day 3: November 26, 2021 Mandatory Provincial Education Priorities	96% (291)	4% (12)	100% (303)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Too far in the semester to be useful to those of us parents who are trying to be actively engaged in their high school children's education. PA days in conjunction with other holidays is preferred.
PA Day 4: February 1, 2022 Transition and Promotion Process	98% (296)	2% (7)	100% (303)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What does this mean? Shouldn't more training around empathy and violence be occurring? Why can't this be addressed in a staff meeting rather than taking a whole day? Why not have the transition be the 31st of January?
Secondary Dates Semester 2	Agree % (n)	Disagree % (n)	Total % (n)	Respondent Comments
Semester 2 Start Date for Students: February 2, 2022	96% (278)	4% (10)	100% (288)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This isn't enough time to prepare for the second semester. Students should have a little break between semesters and after exams. Why not start fresh on February 1st? Match secondary dates with elementary dates as closely as possible. Shouldn't start in the middle of the week.
Semester 2 End Date for Students: June 20, 2022	97% (280)	3% (8)	100% (288)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finish on the 22nd of June. This should be June 17th of June.

Semester 2 Examinations: June 21, 22, 23, 24, 27, 2022	94% (270)	6% (16)	100% (286)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why not Monday June 20 to the 24th? • Why did students have six days off plus an additional PA day when there were no exams this semester. Don't waste learning time-students need to catch up. • I believe this time is better used for credit rescue rather than exams. • Back to back examination days is not good for a student mental health.
PA Day 5: March 4, 2022 Mandatory Provincial Education Priorities	95% (265)	5% (13)	100% (278)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where is the time for parent communication? • I think this should fall on the Friday before March break. • Too close to March Break.
PA Day 6: June 28, 2022 Transition and Promotion Process	96% (269)	4% (12)	100% (281)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • End sooner because classrooms don't have AC. • Explain what this refers to. • Why not on June 27th?
PA Day 7: June 29, 2022 Improvement Process	95% (269)	5% (14)	100% (283)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This day should be used for staff to close and prepare for the next year, especially since PA Days are set for the start of the school year. Many staff move buildings and classroom. • Reflection should occur part way through the year, why is this placed at the end of the year?

Respondents were asked to add any additional comments that they would like to share about the [Elementary](#) and [Secondary](#) DRAFT School Year Calendar 2020-2021. Their responses were:

- The winter break should start closer to Christmas and we go back a bit later in January so we can have an opportunity to prepare for classes instead of right after New Years Day.
- If school year starts as hybrid rotational model again, having a few days of tech support for students to get their iPads BEFORE the start of classes is critical. Many of us wasted the first two weeks of class waiting for iPads to be rolled out and then having to teach our students virtually how to use the tech required (Teams, Hub, etc.).
- P.A. Days when teachers are writing report cards and not in school should be the days EAs are off site for professional learning.
- Please make training and PA days virtual for all staff, including EAs.
- Staff should not be expected to do parent interviews and organize during their own time.
- High School staff and students need more time for discussion on bullying, violence awareness, and reporting.
- I would appreciate education related topics in the mandatory provincial pd days like math, language arts etc.
- There should be something like a PA day for Eid-UI-Fitr just as there is for Christmas. There is a high percentage of Muslim students at HWDSB-this would show all Muslim students and staff that they too are considered and appreciated.
- Utilize snow days for online learning-we learned from the pandemic that online teaching is possible. Snow Days should not be days off for children and teachers.
- Please consider parents working parents when setting PA Days-it would be best to attach these to statutory holidays rather than forcing parents to seek childcare.

This report was written by the Research and Analytics Department