

OLYMPIA SCHOOL DISTRICT
Balanced Calendar Exploratory Committee (BCEC)
October 5, 2022 (Meeting #2 of 5)
6-7:30 pm
Board Room, 111 Bethel Street NE, Olympia

Meeting Notes

Welcome, coming together

Dr. Patrick Murphy, Superintendent of Olympia School District, welcomed attendees and thanked them for giving their time and attention to the topic of a balanced calendar. He briefly reviewed the work that has already been done by the school board's Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) last year and indicated that the survey they put out in the community was mixed but showed more interest in moving forward than not.

He related that the school board decided to bring together a representative group of parents, students, staff, transportation, facilities, and community partners for a deeper conversation, but with the provisos that Olympia cannot make this change without coordination with neighboring districts, and also that everything is up for conversation.

Dr. Murphy noted that the outcome of the Balanced Calendar Exploratory Committee's (BCEC) work is not certain. If BCEC finds the idea is worth pursuing, then the conversation will continue with other school districts in our area. He also noted that many districts in Washington State received grants from the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) for the purpose of looking at a balanced calendar.

Introductions (New Attendees)

Attendees who were not at the last meeting introduced themselves.

Review summary from previous meeting

Frank Kwan, In-Person Facilitator, reviewed the notes from the September 21, 2022, meeting of the BCEC, highlighting the report CAC Chairperson Sandy Hallstrom had given regarding the work they completed last year, the overview of the BCEC's work together, meeting norms agreed upon, and the introduction to ThoughtExchange, a survey tool that will be used to get input from the community.

Discuss information requests from meeting #1

J.Marie Riche, Zoom Facilitator, explained that the big ideas brainstormed at the previous meeting could be broken down into the following list of questions / data needs. She asked participants to ponder and discuss if there are more to add. Participants organized into breakout groups and were asked to take notes or place notes in the Zoom chat.

These are the notes received from the breakout groups: (related ideas have been combined)

- What's the problem we are trying to solve?
- Research – guest speakers who have experience with Balanced Calendars.
- Whether or not there is research to show the learning results from a balanced calendar. Does that research exist? We don't need to see research on our current calendar but what would happen to student learning with a switch.

- Energy usage / building maintenance / facility repairs. Impact on Construction and Grounds. Are there regulations on temperature caps to maintain a safe environment for schooling? State? Federal?
- Summer employment – how will those used to summer income be impacted? Impacts: Parents who supplement their income during the summer months. Impact: Students who would normally have summer jobs might have to go to school instead. Staff/employees that work during the summer for supplemental income (to be added to the district employee associations item) #3 Students that work during the summer (to be added to the traditionally marginalized + high needs students)
- Transportation – how will BC affect transportation and extracurriculars?
- What is intersession – who does any teaching? What is it, who will use it?
- What would a roll out / transition period look like? Transition process to New Calendar, Plan for Intersessions
- How will college applications be impacted? College transition from high school
- Is it all / nothing for lottery schools? – transportation?
- Teachers with students
- Deepening the voice - with further intention - underrepresented schools in the district (Garfield?), youth voice (more) - student voices seem to be left out - local college students going into the fields involved (future decision makers).
- Impact on athletics
- Less of a break between start and stop times for school would be better for kids with special needs

The Facilitation Team will incorporate these additional ideas into the BCEC's work.

Questions / data needs from 9/21/22 meeting:

- Interest in **coordinating with other districts**
Dr. Murphy reported that North Thurston had gone through a similar process of looking at a balanced calendar last year; they also received a grant from OSPI. He also talked with the North Thurston Superintendent's Group about it. If OSD decides a balanced calendar is worth pursuing, most likely the Educational Service District (ESD) for this region would be called in to assist with expanding the conversation to a regional level. There are 44 member districts in the ESD.

Ms. Riche commented that coordination with other districts will become relevant only if the BCEC and the school board decide to move forward. The next phase would be engaging with neighboring districts, so this issue does not need to be addressed at this time and can be checked off the list for now.
- Interest in **available research**
Ms. Riche indicated that the interest in research was the topic most mentioned at the last meeting, that participants want to know more about benefits, why to consider a balanced calendar, what are the risks or challenges, and what statistics, scientific data, and anecdotal information are available. The research process was begun by the CAC, and the Facilitation Team contacted Chairperson Sandy Hallstrom for her input and searched for additional information that might be useful to the BCEC.

Candace Wilson, member of the Facilitation Team, shared a document prepared by the team that lists links to research and resources pertaining to a balanced or modified calendar. The document includes articles and studies pertaining to Academic Impact, District Process and Examples, and information from OSPI, including a list of all the Washington State districts that received a grant to look at this issue. This information will be emailed to BCEC participants and posted on the

website.

Ms. Riche asked that all BCEC participants look at a minimum of two of these links before the next meeting, and asked for volunteers to form a teamlet to review all of the research.

Research teamlet:

- **Lead:** Jayme Fierro
- Amanda Villani
- Allison Hellberg
- Colette Paulson

- **Likely timing** of breaks and how summer would be shortened

Paul Sierra, OSD Maintenance and Grounds Supervisor, talked briefly about facilities issues that come into play as consideration is given to when to place new breaks and how and when to shorten the summer. All the OSD buildings bring in outside air all the time to keep air quality high. This is tempered with heat in the winter, but there is no cooling feature to balance this in the summer. August is generally hotter as well as being a wildfire season, but June can be humid, so there are pros and cons to extending the calendar at either end of the summer.

Mr. Kwan asked for volunteers to look at various options for modifying the calendar, hopefully to report back at the next meeting.

Timing teamlet:

- **Lead:** Leslie Huff
- Suzanne Murray
- Paul Sierra
- Bethany Opstedal

- How would changing the OSD calendar affect **community partners and childcare providers?**

Community partners / childcare providers teamlet:

- **Lead:** Alison Weide
- Jennifer Cole
- Chris Woods

- What do the **district's employee associations (unions)** think about this possibility?

Employee associations teamlet:

- **Lead:** Bonnie Hauschka
- Jason Cornelius
- Cole Wilson
- Frank Wilson

- How might changing the school calendar affect **traditionally marginalized and high-needs students and families?**

Marginalized and high needs teamlet:

- **Lead:** Robbi Kessler
- Eowyn Grubbs

- Kaylin Furry
- Alyssa Griffith
- Pastora Hernandez-Barbee
- Aziza Glast
- Kasey Cannan

Ms. Riche indicated that the Facilitation Team will reach out to the teamlets to help them think through their tasks and how and when to report back to the BCEC. She thanked all the volunteers.

ThoughtExchange

Ms. Riche introduced Yasmine Mehtadi from ThoughtExchange who explained that their tool is a collective intelligence platform that scales diverse perspectives. OSD has partnered with ThoughtExchange for the interactive survey that will go out to the community. The survey will be one open-ended question that gives responders the opportunity to share their thoughts openly and confidentially. A second step gives responders the chance to weigh in and consider or rate in importance the thoughts of others. Ms. Mehtadi explained that the programming ensures that a person can only rate any thought once, and the algorithm ensures that each thought is rated an equitable number of times, so the outcomes are truly representative of the community.

Ms. Riche explained that the facilitation team will be working with the OSD district communications office to send direct invitations to participate in the survey to all staff, all families and to use all channels to reach community partners.

Ms. Mehtadi noted that demographics can be embedded into the survey that will help reveal if a group is missing so that reminders can be sent out, and also to show if there are consistent results from a specific group.

The proposed survey question is “What perspective would you like BCEC and district leaders to consider as we continue to explore the idea of changing the school calendar?” BCEC participants then participated in a ThoughtExchange Live survey to share their thoughts about the question. Most participants actually dug in and began answering the question; there were no suggested edits to the question itself. Ms. Riche commented that this feels like a good sign that the question is well phrased as it is.

The survey is expected to launch this Friday, October 7, and to run for 1-1/2 weeks, or until Monday, October 17. The invitation will give responders a link or a QR code to connect to the survey. Ms. Riche will work with ThoughtExchange to be able to report back to BCEC with results disaggregated by roles at the October 19 meeting.

Tasks / activities between meetings

Mr. Kwan reminded BCEC participants to read at least 2 of the resources on the Research and Resources document that will be sent out with the notes. He thanked all those who volunteered to serve on teamlets and asked them to prepare to report in 2-4 weeks. The timing teamlet is asked to report at the October 19 meeting, if possible. Ms. Riche reminded teamlets that the Facilitation Team will reach out to the teamlet leads to provide support as needed.

Draft agenda for 10/19/22 meeting

Mr. Kwan reviewed the draft agenda.

Meeting evaluation

Mr. Kwan conducted a brief meeting evaluation:

- Multiple screens helpful

- Breakout room – screen share didn't follow people into the breakout rooms
- Chats on Zoom could be better brought to the attention of the in-person participants
- Please provide paper and pencils on in-person tables
- Reduce the review of last meeting to give more time for the meat of the meeting
- Please invite more students from the leadership groups to attend
- Suggest inviting local college students who are going into leadership-related degrees to participate in the process

The meeting adjourned at 7:28 pm.

BCEC Participants Attending:

- Jade Austin
- Taylor Bannister (Zoom)
- Paul A. Bitar (Zoom)
- Mary Bowen (Zoom)
- Gladys Brimah
- Kasey Cannan (Zoom)
- Jennifer W. Cole
- Jason Cornelius
- Scott Cushing (Zoom)
- Quinn M. Dickason (Zoom)
- Kaylin J. Furry
- Corrie Gerou (Zoom)
- Aziza B. Glast (Zoom)
- Alyssa Griffith
- Emily J. Griffith
- Eowyn E. Grubbs
- Sandy Hallstrom
- John Hanby (Zoom)
- Bonnie Hauschka (Zoom)
- Pastora Hernandez-Barbee (Zoom)
- Leslie Huff
- Jalissa Jones (Zoom)
- Imran Kasmani (Zoom)
- Robbi Kesler (Zoom)
- Ava G. Miller (Zoom)
- Jessica Morales (Zoom)
- Suzanne Murray (Zoom)
- Abigail Neumiller-Hanell (Zoom)
- Bethany Opstedal (Zoom)
- Collette C. Paulson (Zoom)
- Jeff Pearson
- Joel M. Plewa
- Emily Rambo (Zoom)
- Steve Roth
- MJ (Jennifer) Sathers
- Paul Sierra (Zoom)
- Heather Slater (Zoom)

- Steve Taylor
- Dr. Thysha K. Tolefree (Zoom)
- Carrie Tradewell (Zoom)
- Amanda Villani
- Allison E. Weide (Zoom)
- Cole Wilson
- Frank Wilson (Zoom)
- Condee L. Wood (Zoom)
- Karen Zarate (Zoom)

Also attending: Dr. Patrick Murphy, Superintendent, and J.Marie Riche (Zoom), Frank Kwan, Candace Wilson (Zoom), Facilitation Team.