



Olympia School District

# Balanced Calendar Exploratory Committee

Report to the  
School Board

February 2023

# REPORT TO THE SCHOOL BOARD

## Table of Contents

Executive Summary .....	1
Background .....	2
What is a balanced calendar, and what might a more balanced calendar look like in OSD? .....	2
Infographic – Model Balanced Calendar .....	2
The Process .....	4
Formation of the Balanced Calendar Exploratory Committee (BCEC) and Overview of the BCEC Steering Committee’s work .....	4
Overview of BCEC Meetings .....	5
Note on the Process .....	12
Findings and what BCEC added to the conversation .....	13
Next Steps .....	14
Final Remarks .....	17

### Appendices:

Appendix 1 – 9/21/22 BCEC Meeting Notes

Appendix 2 – 10/5/22 BCEC Meeting Notes

Appendix 3 – PowerPoint Presentation of ThoughtExchange Results

Appendix 4 – Teamlet Report – Community Partners and Childcare Providers

Appendix 5 – Teamlet Report – Research

Appendix 6 – White Paper on Research and Resources

Appendix 7 – 10/19/22 BCEC Meeting Notes

Appendix 8 – Teamlet Report – Timing

Appendix 9 – Teamlet Report – Traditionally Marginalized and High Needs Students and Families

Appendix 10 – Teamlet Report – District Employee Associations

Appendix 11 – 11/2/22 BCEC Meeting Notes

Appendix 12 – 11/16/22 BCEC Meeting Notes

OLYMPIA SCHOOL DISTRICT  
Balanced Calendar Exploratory Committee

## REPORT TO THE SCHOOL BOARD

### Executive Summary

The school board of Olympia School District, using grant money from the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI), formed a Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) in 2021 to look into issues around the idea of adopting a more balanced calendar. The Balanced Calendar Exploratory Committee (BCEC), formed in the fall of 2022, was given the task of digging deeper into the questions and concerns raised by the CAC. They were not a decision-making body; their work was to further the conversation, to evaluate pros and cons, and perhaps to make a recommendation to the board.

Starting with the questions and concerns raised by the CAC, the BCEC added questions of their own. They set up teamlets to do research on several topics, fielded a ThoughtExchange survey in the community, heard from a student panel and a panel from Winlock Public Schools, and discussed pros and cons.

At the end of their exploration, many questions and concerns remained without answers. The BCEC did not land on a clear answer for a course of action for the board; they found that as a body of volunteers, they did not have the expertise needed to resolve all of the issues. Their work furthered the conversation about a balanced calendar in Olympia by clarifying the problem that needs solving – to support struggling learners and to improve mental health – and by adding to the body of research and information available to the board as they continue to look at the issues involved. The BCEC also have made several recommendations for more study in specific areas, and created a list of key concerns that will need to be resolved **before** moving forward with any calendar change.

Among the next steps recommended by the BCEC is a suggestion to use the remaining grant money from OSPI to engage staff in pursuing answers to some of the questions identified as priorities. For example, what specifically would a more balanced calendar look like in Olympia? The BCEC recommends engaging union representatives and HR staff to develop one or more sample calendars. Another suggestion is that the district prepare an infographic and/or video to help staff, students, and community members better understand what is being discussed. Other questions the BCEC recommends for further attention by staff are related to intersession content and staffing, and HVAC issues.

*“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. Patrick Murphy, 10/5/22 BCEC Meeting](#)

This Executive Summary is intended as a brief introduction to the BCEC's work and reflection. For full understanding of the work and conclusions of the committee, we recommend reading the entire report.

## **Background**

In August of 2021, the Washington Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) announced a grant opportunity for school districts interested in exploring the feasibility of moving toward a more balanced calendar to potentially improve and equalize academic achievement. A balanced calendar would maintain the school year of 180 days, but with a potentially shortened summer and additional breaks spread throughout the school year. Olympia School District (OSD) applied for a grant and received \$75,000 for the 2021-2022 school year, with the opportunity to carry funds over for the 2022-23 school year.

In 2021, the OSD School Board convened a Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) to look into the pros and cons associated with modifying the school calendar. All interested parties were invited to participate in the CAC, which met four times December 2021 – April 2022. The CAC looked at research, different calendar models, questions to be answered, and pros and cons. They provided information to the community through the school district website and through a webinar. The CAC fielded a survey in the community in the spring of 2022, and over 3000 people responded. Results were mixed, but there was sufficient interest to continue exploring the topic.

## **What is a balanced calendar, and what might a more balanced calendar look like in OSD?**

A balanced calendar, like a traditional calendar, has the same number of school days (180). The difference is how the breaks are spread out. Instead of a calendar dominated by a very long summer break, students could have more periodic, longer breaks throughout the school year and a shorter summer break. In Olympia, as we have explored a more balanced calendar, we have generally focused on adding approximately two weeks of additional break time to the existing school year and shortening the summer break from 11 weeks to 9 weeks.

The teamlet that shared initial guidance related to the placement of breaks suggested starting by expanding upon existing breaks, such as bringing back a week-long mid-winter break and possibly expanding the break around Memorial Day weekend. They also felt strongly that the school year should end in June to avoid running into the week that includes the July 4<sup>th</sup> holiday.

## **Infographic – Model Balanced Calendar**

A sample of a balanced calendar infographic that could be used as a discussion point and help give people the basics to continue the discussion. It is not a proposal – only a visual explanation to help continue the discussion.



## DRAFT - DO NOT PUBLISH

What is

# Balanced Calendar?

A balanced calendar is an approach to calendaring that reorganizes—but does not increase—the number of school days across the year.

### Traditional Calendar

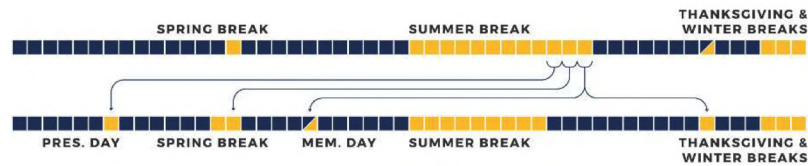


### Balanced Calendar



## Redistributed Days

A traditional calendar and balanced calendar have the same number of total school days—the pacing of those days varies, however. Each square in the graphic below represents one week of the year.



### Benefits

- Potentially reduces learning loss
- Consistent access to resources
- Special education / IEP growth
- Less burnout
- Child care spread out
- Intersessions - innovation opportunities

### Challenges

- Defining the problem
- HVAC in summer
- More research desired
- Child care
- Regional approach
- Funding

email@site.gov  
(111) 111 1111

For more information about Balanced Calendar, visit  
[www.notawebsite.com](http://www.notawebsite.com).

logo

## The Process

The School Board decided there was enough interest in the community to warrant continuing exploration of the issues involved in creating a more balanced calendar.

In August 2022, they approved a proposal from Ideal Communications which outlined a process for a deeper exploration by a representative community committee. The proposal included the following:

- Formation of a Steering Committee to plan, select participants and conduct end of process review;
- Formation of a representative group of staff, students, parents, community partners, and other interested parties to review the CAC's work, identify possible schedule scenarios, brainstorm pros and cons of each, and consider a variety of associated potential solutions;
- Coordination of additional communication tools, for example ThoughtExchange and/or Video;
- Writing support throughout, including draft invitation and language for a short survey of potential participants, as well as meeting summaries and community information with blurbs for use in social media, the staff blog, and district/school home page;
- Final summary of the group's work for sharing with the board and community.

### Formation of the Balanced Calendar Exploratory Committee (BCEC) and overview of the BCEC Steering Committee's work

A Steering Committee was formed to help shape the process. Members of the Steering Committee were: Dr. Patrick Murphy, Superintendent, Sandy Hallstrom, parent, Pastora Hernandez-Barbee, high school parent, Frank Wilson, Executive Director of Operations, Karen Zarate, Assistant Principal, Reeves Middle School, Christine Zhang, student board representative, and members of the Facilitation Team. The Steering Committee met on August 18, September 8 and November 29.

*"It was a really good idea to have the principals reach out because they have a much better view of who these people are, that will be most impacted by this or that really are often left out of these kinds of conversations."*

Sandy Hallstrom, Chair of CAC and BCEC participant.

The plan for the BCEC was to invite participants that would represent the broadest possible cross-section from the schools, opinions, and interests in the community, inclusive of those with a variety of backgrounds and experiences, and to request that participants commit to attend all meetings. School principals were asked to invite staff, students, parents, and community partners. The Steering Committee identified priority invitees and gaps in representation based on the initial invitation list. The Superintendent and Facilitation Team then sought additional

participants to fill those gaps. Members of the Steering Committee and the original CAC were also invited to attend. In addition, the Steering Committee helped the facilitation team determine the approach to meetings (online vs. in-person: a hybrid approach was selected), timing, and day

of the week for BCEC meetings that would likely work best for as many members of the OSD community as possible.

The Steering Committee met a final time on November 29 to review the initial draft of the report to the board and give feedback on structure and content. Members of the Steering Committee also reviewed the draft report in February 2023 before review by the School Board and BCEC participants, with continued participation by community volunteers.

### **Overview of BCEC Meetings**

The Facilitation Team from Ideal Communications, consisting of J. Marie Riche and Frank Kwan, Co-facilitators, and Candace Wilson, Writer and process historian, outlined a plan for the BCEC to meet five times, from September to November, 2022. Meetings were held every two weeks, on Wednesdays, from 6-7:30 pm, both on Zoom and in the OSD board room.

*"I feel it's my responsibility to be part of this decision-making process, rather than just sitting by and letting someone else make this decision for me or my family."*

Pastora Hernandez-Barbee, CAC and BCEC Participant

### **Meeting #1, September 21, 2022**

Dr. Patrick Murphy, OSD Superintendent, welcomed and thanked participants and assured participants that the outcome of the BCEC's work is not pre-determined. BCEC participants introduced themselves and established meeting norms for their work together. Sandy Hallstrom, chairperson of the CAC, reviewed the work done by the CAC in the previous year. The Facilitation Team laid the groundwork for the BCEC's work. Participants identified remaining gaps in representation and began to brainstorm questions and data needs for consideration. Some of the main questions raised were:

- What research is available?
- What would a balanced calendar look like?
- How would it affect other programs, like childcare and athletics?

- How do students and staff feel about this?
- What work has been done with neighboring districts?
- What about air conditioning and HVAC?

Participants were asked to review the information and survey results on the district website prior to the next meeting. Meeting notes are attached to this report as Appendix 1.

### Meeting #2, October 5, 2022

Dr. Murphy welcomed and thanked participants. He outlined that along with the board's decision to move forward with exploring a more balanced calendar came the provisos that Olympia cannot make this change without coordination with neighboring districts, and also that everything is up for conversation. New attendees introduced themselves. Participants were asked to add to the list of questions and data needs generated at the previous meeting. Some of the additional ideas were:

- What's the problem we are trying to solve?
- Summer employment – how will those used to summer income be impacted?
- Transportation – how would a more balanced calendar affect transportation and extracurriculars?
- What would be offered during intersessions – who does any teaching? What is it, who will use it?
- How can we deepen the voice - underrepresented schools? Student voice?

In reviewing the top ideas and questions from the previous meeting, it was determined that coordination with neighboring districts would be a next step that would only become needed if the district decides to move forward with changing the school calendar. The superintendent explained his plan to work with the regional Educational Service District to facilitate this coordination if needed. Therefore, regional coordination would not need to be any further part of the BCEC's work. Based on other top questions, teamlets of volunteers were formed to do work on specific topics between meetings and report back to the full committee. The teamlets included: research, timing (of summer and breaks), and seeking feedback and questions from staff employee associations, community partners and childcare providers, and traditionally marginalized / underserved and high needs students and families.

A representative from ThoughtExchange gave a presentation on how their tool works to get a good picture of what the community feels and thinks about an issue. BCEC participants had an opportunity to review and confirm the draft question for the survey to be fielded in the community October 7-17. Participants used the opportunity to start engaging in the dialogue, and there were no suggested changes to the draft questions. Meeting notes are attached to this report as Appendix 2.

### Meeting #3, October 19, 2022

Dr. Murphy welcomed participants and reminded them of a couple key points: first, that there has been no decision made about the possibility of creating a more balanced calendar in Olympia. And, second, if the district decides to move forward, there would still be much work to do in order to make such a change possible. He noted that the very earliest such a calendar change could be initiated would be the 2024-25 school year. He also shared information about a conversation he'd had with the leader of the local Educational Service District about the possibility of coordinating through them a regional conversation about a balanced calendar if OSD decides it is worth pursuing.

Facilitator J.Marie Riche presented a PowerPoint presentation with highlights of results from the **ThoughtExchange survey** that was fielded in the community October 7-18. The full presentation is included in this report as Appendix 3. There were 3,748 participants; 80% were parents, 6% students, 19% staff, and 9% community members. Top thoughts focused on:

- HVAC systems – these thoughts came up most often
- Families with parenting plans, or families with multiple households
- After care, including summer and break enrichment
- The need to align with neighboring districts

Additional prevalent thoughts:

- Childcare – some felt the changes to childcare scheduling are achievable; that our community partners will provide programs when needed
- Concern over sports programs, more need to align with other districts
- Comments about families' time, expressing both support for and concern about changing the calendar
- Comments about a shortened summer: concern about students and staff who work, logistical challenges and the importance of ensuring affordable enrichment activities



To help with deepening the student voice, a **panel of students** shared what excites them and what concerns they have about a balanced calendar, and what effects it may have on learning. Things that excite them:

- Learning can be forgotten over long breaks. A more balanced calendar ensures the learning experience can be more consistent for all students throughout the year.
- More balance to the schedule.
- One benefit of a shorter summer is mental health burnout. Students stay more engaged – bigger breaks during the year lead to mental health recuperation.

Concerns they have:

- The fact that people confuse a balanced calendar and year-round school. We need to explain what it is we're actually considering and what it would really look like.
- Most students do not know what this is – many didn't see the invitation to ThoughtExchange. They suggest using advisory period class time for this conversation to increase student engagement.
- HVAC / air conditioning and hotter weather.
- Summer school – how would we do it in a shorter window?
- Summer camps and sports – lots of notice about change. We need to know what it would look like. It won't seem so chaotic if they know in advance how it would affect them.

Effects on learning, helpful or a hindrance? Both.

- A hindrance because teachers say kids lose ground over breaks; even from the weekend some kids are out of it. Some teachers even avoid giving tests on Mondays because of that. More breaks might lead to more time being "out of it." And might increase the need for review time throughout the year.
- Helpful because more regular breaks help with mental health and give opportunities to catch up.

When asked for final thoughts, they added:

- Childcare, summer camps.
- Teachers are busy all of August with planning. More breaks in the school year come out of summer break. It will impact teachers if summer is shortened.
- It would affect everyone – the purpose is to give more breaks. A model calendar should be designed to help students and teachers as much as possible.
- A shortened summer can be helpful (ex: potentially reduced learning loss).

*"I feel like the student voice I saw represented pretty well - especially once we brought in the student panel. And I feel very included in the process."*

Student Panel participant, 10/19/22 BCEC Meeting

The **Community Partners and Childcare Providers Teamlet** shared feedback from the organizations they had contacted. The organizations raised questions as well as pros and cons, but overall, they said that they would adjust the programming they offer to accommodate the school calendar, however it looks.

The **Research Teamlet** reviewed research results; there is not much in the way of statistically valid, peer-reviewed research available yet on the topic of balanced calendars. There is data to show that summer learning loss does impact learning for our most fragile students, and there is data to support that remedial interventions, such as intersession weeks, will improve achievement. A **white paper** of research and resources was developed for the use of BCEC members. Among these resources are a few presentations prepared by WSSDA and other districts to present research summaries, sample calendars, and also some data from a district that has adopted a more balanced calendar.

Both teamlets presented written reports, which are included in this Report as Appendices 4 and 5. Also included as Appendix 6 is the white paper developed by the Facilitation Team which includes known research and links to other districts which have adopted a more balanced calendar.

BCEC participants shared the main ideas that are coming to the top from what they have heard and learned. Meeting notes are attached to this report as Appendix 7. Some of the main ideas shared are:

- We need a clear understanding of what a balanced calendar is before we can support it.
- More consultation with the students.
- Realistic concerns of staff for outside work and work-life balance.
- What are the challenges we're seeking to address? Are we doing all we can to address those within the current format and resources?



#### Meeting #4, November 2, 2022

**A panel of guests from Winlock Public Schools** shared their process and motivation in moving toward a balanced calendar, reducing their summer break by 3 weeks and adding additional breaks during the school year. Their district is high poverty, and the grant gave them the opportunity to make this shift in hopes of improving the connection between school and their students and families while providing increased academic support to their highest needs students. The panel also answered questions from BCEC participants.

The **Timing Teamlet** suggested ending the school year before the week that includes the July 4<sup>th</sup> holiday. They were also moved by students' comments about how every break involves time for more ramping up and down. They therefore suggested that starting earlier in August would be at least part of the answer to shortening the summer, and noted that lengthening existing breaks might be preferable over creating additional ones.

The **Traditionally Marginalized and High Needs Students and Families Teamlet** reported that they had contacted several groups, but that more work is needed, and that it is beyond the scope of volunteers. Although the groups they contacted raised concerns, the overall feeling was that if changing the calendar will be a benefit to students, this group of students and families would support it.

The report from the teamlet assigned to interview the **District Employee Associations** report reflected feedback from the leaders of the seven organizations who represent district employees. While the associations have not yet polled their members, the leaders shared that they see benefits in maintaining a long summer break and consistency. However, they also recognize a more balanced calendar could benefit students by reducing learning loss and providing more learning opportunities. Challenges would include rewriting their contracts and having to change the way they plan curriculum. HVAC, childcare, and summer employment opportunities were also mentioned. The written reports of these 3 teamlets are included in this report as Appendices 8,9, and 10.

BCEC participants were divided into small groups to dialogue with each other on how what they have heard and learned may have caused their opinions to shift. Some of the ideas shared:

- High school is already short of staff – how to service special needs
- There is not much available research
- Noting most districts with balanced calendar – staff appreciate and like it. Appreciate what it does for kids and atmosphere. Enrichment can change the environment at school, the climate and attitude toward school and learning in general. These kinds of conditions are additional components to learning loss.
- How would we pay for this? Is there a better way to use the money to directly support the students who need it? What is the most cost-effective way to support students and staff?

Meeting notes from this meeting are included as Appendix 11.

### **Meeting #5, November 16, 2022**

Ms. Riche reviewed the work the BCEC had done in the previous meetings and formed attendees into small groups according to their current feeling about a balanced calendar. These groups were asked to develop lists of pros and cons. Those in a neutral group were also asked to identify what they would need to form an opinion. Main ideas from the report out are: (See Meeting Notes in Appendix 12 for full list of ideas shared.)

#### **Intrigued, Supportive** (three groups)

##### Thoughts about the Process

- More info is needed.
- Concrete calendar example(s) would be useful.
- Hearing from the panel from Winlock was a key factor in developing support; we would like to hear from others who are doing this

##### Pros

- Continued learning opportunities; more consistent access to resources
- Financial burden of child care would become more spread out
- More connection with children and families
- Mental health for students / teachers / staff

##### Cons

- Child care availability during new breaks
- HVAC / clean air

#### **Concerned / Opposed** (three groups)

##### Pros

- Help with student burnout / mental health
- Continue talking about issues, such as learning loss
- More frequent breaks could mean less teacher burnout

#### Cons

- We need to clearly define the problem we are trying to solve
- There is not good data
- Costs for intersessions / HVAC
- Loss of summer employment time

#### Other thoughts

- We need a robust summer plan
- We need the right decision for kids, staff, and parents

#### **Neutral (1 group)**

##### Pros

- Could address learning loss?
- Could provide academic support / enrichment opportunities?
- Could help with mental health?

##### Cons

- It would be hard to get regional agreement
- Costs: HVAC, paying staff for intersessions
- Could contribute to learning loss?
- Could further divide the community?

#### What would it take to form an opinion?

- Research and data most people agree on
- A clear majority wanting to move forward
- Agreement of other districts
- A pilot of something smaller to see if it works. Examples: Winlock just made a three weeks change; one suggestion has been for us to start by bringing back a mid-winter break.

Ms. Riche invited participants to share their closing thoughts. Dr. Murphy closed by commenting that the problem is broadly defined: to support struggling learners and to improve mental health. But we don't really know how adjusting the calendar might affect these issues. He thanked all the participants for giving of their time and attention to this process.

Ms. Riche outlined the next steps to complete the BCEC process, including a review of the final report draft by participants. The Meeting Notes are included in this report as Appendix 12.

#### **Note on the Process**

The BCEC did their work with the understanding that this was a conversation to explore all the issues, not to make a decision. The people who participated brought curiosity and open-mindedness to the table, which advanced the conversation. They were assured at the outset that no decision has been made about moving to a more balanced calendar, and that the school board

had two provisos: That Olympia cannot make this change without coordination with neighboring districts, and also that everything is up for conversation.

The hope for the BCEC was to have consistency of attendance in a group that represented all the diversity of the Olympia community. Of the list of potential participants originally invited, 51% attended at least one meeting. And of those, 75% attended 3-5 meetings. That core group invested themselves deeply in this process, and some additional participants who were unable to attend regularly involved themselves in teamlet work outside of meetings.

The district has so many things going on, it is hard for folks to give the time and attention that was needed to this topic. Despite extensive efforts to create an inclusive invitation list, some school sites and some interest groups were ultimately not represented in the meetings. Perhaps attendance tapered off in part due to the fact the BCEC was not a decision-making body. While open-mindedness on one hand leads to open conversation and curiosity, it may also have been a challenge and may have contributed to how people prioritized attendance at these meetings.

It should be noted that the timing for gathering attendees together was fairly short. It was felt that a shorter process, ending the meetings before the holidays, would have the most success in getting commitment from participants. But, ultimately, district staff did not have a lot of capacity to dedicate to the balanced calendar project at this time, which affected both the invitation process and efforts associated with the BCEC's work between meetings. Some of the teamlets suggested using remaining grant funds to pay staff to dig more deeply into next steps, such as the development of a sample calendar and the exploration of both student input and the needs of traditionally marginalized and underserved communities. These suggestions are outlined in detail below.

### **Findings and what the BCEC added to the conversation:**

The BCEC work built on the groundwork laid by the Board's Citizens Advisory Committee. Here is what has been added to the resources that the Board has to further its study:

- A **white paper of available research and resources** has been developed by the Facilitation Team. While there is not a lot of research available specifically about balanced calendars, this paper adds to what was brought to the table by the CAC and includes links to what comes up in an internet search. Included in this list are a presentation prepared by WSSDA about the [Board's role in Exploring a Balanced Calendar](#), a [summary of other research](#) (Knox County Schools) and a [slide show](#) prepared for the Louisiana Department of Education to explain calendar models, benefits and steps to implementation. The white paper is attached to this report as Appendix 6.
- The BCEC has brought clarity to the question of: "What is the problem we are trying to solve?" As Dr. Murphy stated in his closing remarks, "This is broadly defined as: to support struggling learners and to improve mental health."
- BCEC **teamlets delved deeper** into specific topics, and their work is key in identifying specific next steps to continue the exploration. Attached to this report are all the written summaries of the teamlets' work, Appendices 4, 5, 8, 9, and 10.

- The **ThoughtExchange** survey fielded by the BCEC in October both validates and builds on the survey fielded by the CAC last spring, broadening the thinking by adding additional data as well as more clearly sorting and weighing specific concerns and questions held by respondents. The form of this survey not only provides the individual thoughts of respondents but also shows how they are prioritized by others. This will help the district know what questions need to be answered if the board decides to move forward. The results summary is included in this report as Appendix 3.
- The ThoughtExchange results, responses from BCEC participants, and teamlet work give the district **give insight to the main questions** that will need to be answered for the community to move toward support of a calendar change.

## Next Steps

The BCEC process has brought clarity to next steps to be taken if the board decides to move forward with the conversation.

A key question that needs to be addressed is “What problem are you trying to solve?” Dr. Murphy has summed this up as: to support struggling learners and to improve mental health. But he also has noted we don’t know how the calendar affects these issues. There is not a lot of research available at this time.

**“What problem are we trying to solve?”**

- **to support struggling learners, and**
- **to support improved mental health.**

This naturally leads to another question: is a more balanced calendar the best way to address the problem? Or might there be other, potentially more effective and less costly approaches? And are there other questions or issues within the main problem that could be addressed individually?

As the board considers the issues, we recommend looking at a variety of possible solutions to address the problem and to weigh the benefits and costs of each. Is a more balanced calendar the best way to support struggling learners? To improve mental health? For example, would it be more effective to provide regular tutoring after school throughout the year? This would be more consistent support. What would that cost? How would it be funded?

Another key issue that will need to be addressed if the board wishes to gain popular support for a calendar change is to demonstrate how a change will benefit most, if not all students, as well as be beneficial for staff.

If the board chooses to move forward with exploration, there are some key issues to note:



- At this point, there is confusion about what is meant by a balanced calendar; how does it differ from year-round education? Students and parents alike share this confusion. We suggest creating an infographic and/or video to help the OSD community visualize the concept.
- People want to know how this change will benefit students and staff. It will be important to demonstrate that any change will help most if not all students and also be good for staff.
- People want to know more about what school staff and students think about this.
- People want to know how HVAC improvements will be funded.
- People want to know how intersessions will be funded and how they will be staffed. What will they look like? Only remediation? Enrichment, too? Will transportation be provided?
- How are families going to provide child care during breaks in what was once the traditional school year?
- Can the district help blended families navigate custody / travel issues?
- Is a regional approach absolutely necessary, and how do we define a regional approach?
- People want to know how athletics and other extracurricular programs will work.

*“...A model calendar should be designed to help students and teachers as much as possible.”*

Student Panel participant, 10/19/22 BCEC Meeting

Any plan the board and district prepare will need to reflect real clarity about how the plan addresses the problem, i.e., support for struggling learners and mental health of all staff and students.

### To Move Forward:

If the school board decides to continue the exploration of a more balanced calendar in Olympia, the following steps are recommended:

#### **Stage 1**

- Build on the work and recommendations of the BCEC teamlets, as follows:
  - Timing
    - Pay union reps and HR reps to mock up one or more sample calendars that represent their considerations and suggestions.
      - Take a look at calendars in other districts in our region to see how aligned they are now.
    - Consider bringing back mid-winter break
    - Consider recommendations of timing committee:
      - Avoid July 4th, start in August
      - Consider bringing back mid-winter break
      - Look to lengthen existing breaks before adding new ones, such as adding two days at Memorial Day

- While the teamlet suggested a break might not be needed in October, if school starts in August, consider adding a couple of days at Indigenous People's Day in October
  - Traditionally marginalized & high needs students and families
    - Involve family liaisons to run focus groups of these students and families
    - Use grant money to pay for staff costs, childcare, and food
  - Community partners and childcare providers
    - Assign staff responsibility for contacting these interested parties
- Once sample calendars have been developed, develop a video and / or infographic to be used for presenting the proposal to staff, students, parents, and community partners
- Deepen the student voice in the consideration of this change:
  - Develop a presentation for students that explains what a balanced calendar is
  - Form student focus groups to develop a meaningful student survey
  - After students have seen the presentation, field the survey during advisory periods
- Begin HVAC research
  - What are current temperatures in the schools on hot days?
  - Cost estimates – what capital improvements will be necessary to ensure safe and comfortable learning environment
  - Funding proposals to make HVAC improvements necessary
  - Note: An observation was raised that even warm schools might be a better environment than some students' living situations in high temperatures. This might be an area to research.
- Develop a plan for intersessions
  - What will be offered?
  - Who will attend?
  - How will they be staffed?
  - What will it cost and how will it be funded?
  - Will support services continue (transportation, meals, child care)
- Look into other ways to “solve the problem” and weigh costs and benefits for each. Are there smaller, individual issues within the big issue that could be addressed piecemeal?

## Stage 2

- Begin conversations with employee associations over the calendar model. How do they feel? What are their questions and concerns? How would student opportunities during the intersessions be organized and funded?
- Once all the additional information is in from students, community partners, traditionally marginalized and high needs families, the board needs to thoroughly consider all of the issues surrounding a change to a more balanced calendar and weigh the costs and benefits.
- Begin the work of a regional conversation at the ESD level.



- Determine to what extent is regional cooperation necessary. For example, would it be acceptable for OSD to bring back mid-winter break even if others districts did not? Would this be an insurmountable challenge?

### **Stage 3**

- Prepare a proposal that includes the following:
  - How changing the calendar addresses the problem you are trying to solve. What is the data on learning loss in Olympia? What is the research you can bring to the discussion? What do educators in districts which have made the change say about it?
  - How does this change benefit most if not all students? How is this good for staff?
  - A concrete calendar so people can really understand what is being proposed and think about how it will affect them
  - Information about regional cooperation
  - Details about how extracurricular and cooperative programs will work, such as athletics.
  - A strategy for how to fund intersessions and support services
  - Answers to some of the primary questions / concerns raised by BCEC participants and survey respondents, such as:
    - HVAC concerns, e.g. any plans for upgrading equipment, how high temperature days / smoke days might be handled, any available data
    - Childcare and community partner programs
    - Intersessions: what will they look like? Who can / will attend? Who will teach them? Will meals and other support services continue?
    - What do teachers and students think about it?
  - Information about the timeline and strategy for making the transition

### **Stage 4**

- Begin the rounds of presenting the proposed change to all the interest groups, Refine the proposal as needed based on feedback from these groups

## **Final Remarks**

Dr. Murphy said at the final meeting of the BCEC, “Some say we need to get back to normalcy; this is not the right time to do this. Others say this is the perfect time; everything is already shaken up.” This reflects the community ambivalence about how to move forward after the pandemic.

It is safe to say that everyone wants strong support for students and teachers, a decrease in stress and anxiety, reduced burnout, and improved mental health. The question is only about *\*how\** to achieve those things.

As for the possibility of adopting a more balanced calendar, many don't really understand what is being discussed. It will be critical to share clear visual information about what is being considered (a difference of a couple weeks rather than year-round schooling). People also long for more research, and while that might not be available, they would like to hear from more districts who have made this shift. As more districts move toward a balanced calendar, more research and more anecdotal information will be available.

The next steps outlined above will give the school board a significant body of work to guide their thinking on this matter.

Dr. Murphy also went on to say, "In Olympia, we never hesitate to consider the road less traveled. Is there a better way to schedule education in our community? Changing the school calendar would not be easy, but that alone is not a reason to avoid the conversation." The facilitation team concurs with this perspective.

While the BCEC did not come to a clear-cut long-term recommendation, we do feel the recommended next steps laid out by the committee will guide the district well as it continues its exploration. Once the district has engaged in this additional work, the board will have a significant body of information to support its thinking about how best to move forward.

One possibility that seems promising is to consider smaller steps to begin with, perhaps bringing back a week-long mid-winter break in February and lengthening the Indigenous People's Day and Memorial Day weekends. Being more limited in scope, these actions might not require the same level of coordination with neighboring districts. They could be paired with modest, targeted intersession / remedial learning opportunities and assessed after a couple years to see if they are providing the desired supports to staff, students, and families.

The facilitation team is grateful for the opportunity to support the district in the important exploration of this topic. We found it to be a meaningful question and appreciate the community's good faith engagement in the conversation.

**Appendix 1**  
**OLYMPIA SCHOOL DISTRICT**  
**Balanced Calendar Exploratory Committee (BCEC)**  
**September 21, 2022 (Meeting #1 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 to the first meeting of the Balanced Calendar Exploratory Committee and thanked them for their time and attention to this topic. He talked about the school board's interest in continuing the conversation around the possibility of adjusting the Olympia School District calendar to be more balanced (to potentially increase the number of breaks throughout the school year while shortening the summer break by the duration of the additional breaks). He noted that this group is coming together to build on the work of an earlier Citizens' Advisory Committee and emphasized that there is no predetermined outcome.

### **Introductions**

Attendees introduced themselves, sharing their schools and roles.

### **Meeting norms**

J.Marie Riche, in-person facilitator, introduced meeting norms / agreements for how the committee will work together. She also outlined details about the hybrid meeting process and dual facilitator roles – one facilitator will be in-person each meeting and one will join by Zoom to support the online participants. She presented some initial agreements for the group to consider and welcomed edits and additions from the group. After discussion, the committee agreed on the following norms for their work together:

- Be present. (Be here now.)
- Mind your “air time” (those who tend to speak a lot will make room for others; those who tend to be more reserved will be intentional about sharing their views).
- Use technology intentionally.
- Listen to understand, not just to respond.
- Take good care of yourself (ex: stand, take breaks as needed).
- Collaborate with facilitators for meeting efficiency (ex: come back together quickly from small groups).
- Zoom participants: keep camera on for parity with in-person attendees
- Meeting notes will be high level, focused on big ideas and agreements.
- Speak your own truth from your own perspective
- All ideas are welcome
- All participants will be respected

### **Brief review of past work on the subject**

Dr. Murphy introduced Sandy Hallstrom, Chairperson of the school board's Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC), which did preparatory work last year on the question of whether Olympia might move toward a balanced calendar. She described the work of the CAC, and noted that the CAC put out a survey to explore the larger community's thoughts on the concept and determine whether or not to move forward with an exploratory committee to study the topic further. Of 3,000 responses, the reaction was mixed, but there was more interest to move forward than not. There was also strong interest in taking a regional approach along with North Thurston, Griffin, and Tumwater School Districts. Dr. Murphy noted that what the BCEC is looking at is whether to change the structure of the same 180-day school year, not year-round school. To get a better understanding of the CAC's work and what is meant by a balanced calendar, BCEC participants are encouraged to review the information on the school district website at [https://osd.wednet.edu/news/announcements/balanced\\_calendar\\_information](https://osd.wednet.edu/news/announcements/balanced_calendar_information)

### **Overview of the steps in our work together**

Frank Kwan, Zoom facilitator, outlined the process this committee will go through to perform this work. There will be 5 meetings of the larger committee every 2 weeks, and tonight is the first meeting. He noted that there will be some tasks to be done between meetings. After the meetings, a summary report will be prepared for the board and community. The BCEC will identify information needs, explore the possible ways to structure an alternative break schedule, and think about whether it is worth going forward with a regional conversation about this idea. The facilitators noted that while it is known that many members naturally come into this work with an opinion about the idea, they stressed the importance of approaching this work with an open mind.

Ms. Riche discussed ThoughtExchange, a tool that combines a survey with a social media style opportunity to upvote others' ideas in order to produce a broad picture of how a group thinks and feels about a topic. A ThoughtExchange survey will be put out to the community as part of the BCEC work. Depending on the outcome of the survey and the BCEC's reflections, the committee's work could lead to a regional conversation with neighboring districts.

### **Explain selection process**

Ms. Riche and Superintendent Murphy described the process used to select those invited to attend the BCEC meetings. Initially, principals were asked to invite representatives from their school community, including parents, staff, students, and community partners, such as childcare providers and those who provide programs for students. A steering committee met to review the lists, add missing voices, and review the proposed plan for the committee's work. The goal is to include a breadth of perspective and diversity of every kind.

### **Determine if there are voices missing**

The committee broke into small groups of 4 to brainstorm additional names / groups that could be included in order to increase the community representation for this committee.

Recommendations for additional participation are:

- YCore
- Boys & Girls Club
- Preschool / Childcare
- Summer camp providers
- Timberland Library
- Athletics / sports
- Student support
- Newmarket
- Community Colleges / Running Start
- CIHS
- Staff / admin
- Clubs
- Elementary principals
- DLC / Leap teachers and/or advocate
- ELL teacher or para
- More families of students with special needs
- Coaches
- Teachers, counselors, social workers
- Family liaison
- Reps from extra-curricular groups who have summer tournaments – OAR, Black Hills Soccer Club, Black Hills Baseball, etc.
- Frank Wilson or facilities rep
- Bus driver or teamster rep
- Special ed staff
- Diverse educators – kindergarten
- Wide variety of schools
- Transportation
- Dance schools, gymnastics
- Chamber of Commerce

### **What additional information would be helpful to you?**

Using ThoughtExchange Live, the BCEC members were asked to identify additional information they would like to receive to do the work of exploring what a balanced calendar might look like in Olympia. Key thoughts are (Ratings indicate how people rated the importance of each idea.):

- Measurable evidence / peer-reviewed research for all BCEC participants that shows the benefits for all students / impact on student achievement. (9 people mentioned this idea, with a rating of 4.0 out of 5.)
- Questions about implementation. How will it play out in the long run? Can we see a cause/effect layout? Do you consider incremental steps, such as adding a fall or mid-

winter break, or starting with one middle school and its partner elementaries? What is the timeline? (8 people mentioned this idea, with a rating of 3.5 out of 5.)

- What are the pros and cons / how has a balanced calendar worked for other districts / other states? How do students feel about it? (6 people mentioned this idea with a rating of 4.0 out of 5 stars.)
- What are different options of how the calendar might be split? (6 people mentioned this idea, with a rating of 3.8 out of 5.)
- More school personnel on the BCEC; are the teachers behind this? Do you need union buy-in? What do OSD decisionmakers think are the pros and cons? (4 people mentioned this idea, with a rating of 3.8 out of 5.)
- How will a balanced calendar affect our community partners / childcare providers? (3 people mentioned this idea, with a rating of 3.7 out of 5.)
- Good communication and good outreach to all affected. What are the demographics of the BCEC so we know whose input to seek out? (4 people mentioned this idea, with a rating of 3.7 out of 5.)
- What work has been done to collaborate with neighboring school districts; it is important to coordinate with the larger region. (3 people mentioned this idea, with a rating of 3.8 out of 5.)
- Information on support systems for high needs students, families, transportation, daycare, funding for daycare, food, vouchers, teachers with summer jobs, summer school. (3 people mentioned this idea with a rating of 3.7 out of 5.)
- How many students and staff rely on summer jobs? (2 people mentioned this idea, with a rating of 3.8 out of 5.)
- Information on air conditioning and hvac. Smoke season? (2 people mentioned this idea, with a rating of 3.7 out of 5.)
- What benefits do we see for our most marginalized families and students (equity)? (1 person mentioned this idea, with a rating of 4.2 out of 5.)
- Will we see more staffing reduction for bus drivers and paras, many work to have the summer off (1 person mentioned this idea, with a rating of 3.4 out of 5.)
- What are the reasons for pursuing this? (1 person mentioned this idea, with a rating of 3.5 out of 5.)

### **Tasks / activities between meetings**

District staff and the Facilitation Team will invite additional representatives as suggested by BCEC participants.

BCEC participants are asked to review the balanced calendar information and survey results on the district website (see link above).

Mr. Kwan reviewed the draft agenda for Meeting #2, October 5. Ms. Riche invited feedback.

Ms. Riche conducted a brief meeting evaluation.

Things that went well

- Putting times on the agenda
- The hybrid option
- Online participants keeping their screens on

Things to do differently:

- Name tags for in-person participants
- Turn on captioning
- Attendees would like more information about those participating
- Online participants couldn't hear those in the room well; add more microphones
- Put any web links in the chat, not just on screen
- Reminder that in-room participants can look at others in the room, not just at those on the screen

Dr. Murphy thanked everyone for attending. The meeting adjourned at 7:30 pm.

### **BCEC Participants Attending:**

- |                             |                               |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------------|
| • Jade Austin (Zoom)        | • Pastora Hernandez-Barbee    |
| • Paul A. Bitar (Zoom)      | • Leslie Huff                 |
| • Jennifer W. Cole          | • Robbi Kesler                |
| • Scott Cushing             | • Ava G. Miller (Zoom)        |
| • Aimee C. Delamater (Zoom) | • Emily M. Nichols            |
| • Quinn M. Dickason         | • Collette C. Paulson (Zoom)  |
| • Tad Earley (Zoom)         | • Sarah Pearson (Zoom)        |
| • Kaylin J. Furry           | • Joel M. Plewa               |
| • Aziza B. Glast (Zoom)     | • MJ (Jennifer) Sathers       |
| • Noir Graves (Zoom)        | • Christianne G. Smith (Zoom) |
| • Alyssa Griffith           | • Allison E. Weide            |
| • Emily J. Griffith         | • Cole Wilson                 |
| • Eowyn E. Grubbs           | • Condee L. Wood              |
| • Sandy Hallstrom (Zoom)    | • Dana A. Woods (Zoom)        |
| • John Hanby (Zoom)         | • Karen Zarate (Zoom)         |
| • Sonia E. Hernandez (Zoom) | • Christine Zhang (Zoom)      |

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



**Appendix 2**  
**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 Intercessions
- 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.




Appendix 3  
ThoughtExchange Results Slide Presentation  
October 7, 2022

Slide 1

## Exchange Summary

J.Marie Riche, Olympia School District  
October 7, 2022

What perspectives would you like the BCEC and district leaders to consider as we continue to explore the idea of changing the school calendar?

 ThoughtExchange

Slide 2



### PARTICIPATION Breakdown of Participation

3,748 Participants

3,528 Thoughts

82,644 Ratings



Slide 3



**PARTICIPATION**  
Breakdown of Participation 2



Knowing what you know now, what's your current opinion of creating a more balanced calendar for OSD schools?

27%	(965)	1 – strongly intrigued or supportive
20%	(687)	2 – somewhat intrigued or supportive
11%	(394)	3 – neutral
14%	(508)	4 – somewhat concerned or opposed
28%	(998)	5 – strongly concerned or opposed



Slide 4



**PARTICIPATION**  
Breakdown of Participation 3

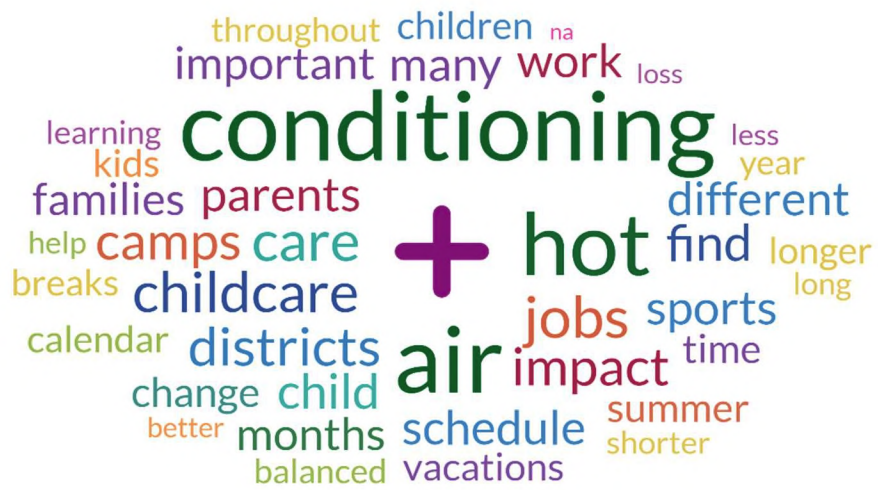


What is/are our roles(s) within the Olympia School District?

3524 responses	80%	(2829)	Parent
	6%	(214)	Student
	19%	(693)	Staff Member
	9%	(335)	Community Member



Slide 5



Slide 6



THOUGHTS  
Key Thoughts



**Families with parenting plans in which one parent has summers would be forced to buy additional transportation to accommodate multiple breaks.** 4.5 (25)  
Unfair burden placed on those families, possibly depriving kids of time with that parent if expenses are too great for multiple trips for many breaks. Ranked #2 of 3528

**Are our schools' HVAC systems equipped for this? Most of our schools don't have A/C in every classroom, especially the portables.** 4.4 (28)  
We've been seeing skyrocketing temperatures the last few summers. Are schools equipped with A/C to make the learning environment comfortable? Ranked #3 of 3528

Slide 7



THOUGHTS  
Key Thoughts 2



**Ensuring partnering after care programs, like boys and girls, are still available during extended breaks.** 4.3 (27)  
If we shorten summer, but elongate other holiday breaks, child care during those times would be limited. Ranked #6 of 3528

**A long summer break is a tradition and opportunity to have rich experiences.** 4.3 (25)  
Ranked #12 of 3528

**Align with neighboring school districts.** 4.3 (18)  
Day care, sports, summer jobs, families on  
Ranked #15 of 3528.

Slide 8`



THOUGHTS  
Air Conditioning



**Many classrooms lack air conditioning.** Summer months may be uncomfortable or dangerous. 4.5 (28)

**Are our schools' HVAC systems equipped for this? Most of our schools don't have A/C in every classroom, especially the portables.** We've been seeing skyrocketing temperatures the last few summers. Are schools equipped with A/C to make the learning environment comfortable? 4.4 (28)



Slide 9



THOUGHTS  
Air Conditioning 2



**The summers are getting hotter and smokier. What is the plan for days that are over 90 degrees, and or when the air quality is dangerously bad?** I doubt the schools have air conditioning and air purifiers. As these conditions are only going to get worse, how will we adapt? 4.4 (26)

**Does EVERY classroom in EVERY district building have the ability to control the temperature to make the environment ideal for learning?** Give all students access to equitable facilities that can ensure environmental conditions benefit all students. Even 80 degrees with a class=too hot. 4.3 (26)

Slide 10



THOUGHTS  
Child Care



**Ensuring partnering after care programs, like boys and girls, are still available during extended breaks.** If we shorten summer, but elongate other holiday breaks, child care during those times would be limited. 4.3 (27)

**Concerned about child care, conflicting schedules with Running Start, schedules may not align with other school districts, a/c for schools?** N/a 4.2 (26)

**Collaboration with all area camps and child care providers so there are (affordable) offerings that reflect the new schedule.** Many of us work full time and rely on a mix of family, camp offerings and traditional childcare. 4.0 (28)



Slide 11



THOUGHTS  
Child Care 2



**Concern over having adjacent and nearby schools on different schedule.** May limit child care options. Makes breaks out of sync, especially problematic for families who members in schools with differing schedules. 4.0 (28)

**Daycare challenges.** Community organizations would need to align and offer care. 4.0 (28)

Slide 12



THOUGHTS  
Districts



**Align with neighboring school districts.** Day care, sports, summer jobs, families on different school schedules.

4.3 (18)

**This HAS to be done at a regional level. Only 1 district switching would make life impossible for care providers and other support folks.** For this to be impactful it has to be community wide. Being the lone district on this schedule would be chaos for all.

4.2 (25)

**Calendars need to align with other nearby school districts.** I work in a different district and my daughter lives in two homes in different districts.

4.1 (28)



Slide 13



THOUGHTS  
Districts 2



**Needs to be a regional decision, so that parent employees and kids who attend different districts aren't on different calendars.**

4.1 (25)

**Sports! How will our schools be able to coordinate outside the district on sports schedules?** Sports are a critical piece for many students.

4.1 (23)

Slide 14



THOUGHTS  
Families Time



**Conflict with other family members' schedules for vacations & family time.** Family 4.2 (25)  
time to connect us extremely important!

**Consider families who have legally binding parenting plans w/non custodial parents out of state. Where children spend the most time w/ncp over summer.** 4.1 (25)  
Parenting plans must be modified, at the expense and time of the families involved. Our courts are back logged. More expensive send kids on many trips.

**Thinking about when families typically take vacations in this state is often weather dependent.** 4.0 (27)  
In Washington, a majority of our sunshine is present June – August and many families plan travel during this time.

Slide 15

More thoughts



THOUGHTS  
Families Time 2



**I think you should pay particular attention to families of children receiving special education services as well as low income families.** 4.0 (21)  
Transitioning between breaks and school can be difficult for SPED kids. Low income families may struggle to find childcare multiple times per year.



Slide 16



THOUGHTS  
Parents' Work



**In order to work, this would require support and coordination from sectors of Society outside school.** Impact of school schedule cannot be separated from other aspects of life.

4.2 (24)

**Working parents' schedules and childcare availability.** Because it can be hard for working parents to adjust these schedules.

4.1 (28)

**What about the parents who work? Childcare is expensive and parents rely on school so they can work and not pay for expensive daycare.** Stated above, worried that some parents will have to quit their jobs because of lack of childcare.

4.1 (27)

Slide 17



THOUGHTS  
Parents' Work 2



**Work schedules of parents.** Not everyone has flexibility.

4.1 (26)

**This would impact children who have split residential schedules between parents.** Typically, a parent who lives out of state might have residential time during long breaks and summer.

4.1 (23)

Slide 18



THOUGHTS  
Summer Breaks



**A long summer break is a tradition and opportunity to have rich experience.** 4.3 (25)

**No choices for second job for lower earning positions in the district.** Many paras, bus drivers, etc., rely on the earnings of a summer job that may even pay more than their regular job. Not an option during short summer. 4.1 (28)

**A lot of summer activities and opportunities lined up with a traditional summer break (internships, jobs, summer camps, etc.) would be missed.** Missed earning opportunities for older students (volunteer hrs, \$, or experience) and non-traditional learning opportunities for younger ones. 4.1 (27)

Slide 19



THOUGHTS  
Summer Breaks 2



**No choices for second job for lower earning positions in the district.** Many paras, bus drivers, etc., rely on the earnings of a summer job that may even pay more than their regular job. Not an option during short summer. 4.1 (28)

**A lot of summer activities and opportunities lined up with a traditional summer break (internships, jobs, summer camps, etc.) would be missed.** Missed earning opportunities for older students (volunteer hrs, \$, or experience) and non-traditional learning opportunities for younger ones. 4.1 (27)

**High school students often work summer jobs.** A shorter summer will impact both the students' ability to earn money and will reduce community business's employment force when it's needed. 4.1 (27)

Slide 20



## THOUGHTS

### Change



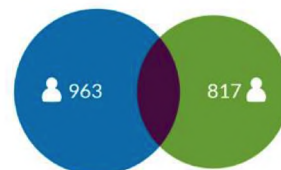
- What about athletics? How will this be coordinated with league schedules?** 4.1 (26)  
**This is a massive change and we cannot make it in a vacuum.** Implications beyond the Olympia bubble.
- If this change is made, it would be very important to find a way to preserve the Running Start program.** Running Start is one of the greatest educational assets in our state and is a needed option for many students and families. 4.1 (22)
- What do the data suggest is best for teacher retention?** Teachers' opinions are Too often ignored in educational policy changes. 4.0 (28)
- Ensure the change won't harm low income families or families with children Who need extra support.** Equity 4.0 (26)

Slide 21



## DIFFERENCES

### Summer Schedule | Balanced Calendar [963 | 817]



#### Side A

##### Don't consider it at all

5.0 1.1

**Why are you still pushing this?** This needs to be a super majority type decision.

4.9 1.5

#### Side A/B Common (high)

**Many classrooms lack air conditioning.** Summer months may be uncomfortable or dangerous.

4.9 4.3

**Facilities.** As summers get warmer, teaching and learning in a classroom that is 90 degrees would be difficult.

4.8 3.6

Slide 22



DIFFERENCES 2  
Summer Schedule | Balanced Calendar [963 | 817]



Side B

**This seems a long overdue step in the right direction. Excited to learn more about it.**

1.1 4.9

**Mental Health** More equally spaced breaks from school will be better for both teacher and student burnout.

1.4 4.9

## Appendix 4

### Teamlet Report – Community Partners & Childcare

#### **Community Partners & Childcare Providers Consulted**

- South Sound YMCA
- Boys and Girls Club
- Together!
- Olympia Parks and Recreation
- Hands On Children's Museum
- Serendipity Children's Center
- Cadence Academy Preschool
- Black Hills Gymnastics
- US Marshall Arts Center

#### **Concerns for Students/Families/Teachers**

- Difficulty finding space because of other events that happen during the year.
- Less time for travel, unwinding, visiting colleges during summer break.
- Parents may pull kids from school for summer vacations.
- Students may miss out on traditional and/or overnight summer camp opportunities – e.g. church, YoungLife, Parks & Rec, sports
- Siblings on different schedules – family time and/or babysitting challenging/impossible
- IB/AP students not having consistent schedule leading up to Spring testing
- Bussing to programs for children experiencing homelessness
- Will meals be available for students during breaks?
- Staffing for students who need interventions during breaks

#### **Concerns for Community Partners**

- Staffing needs
  - More difficult to find staff throughout the year – most summer staffing is done by college students.
  - More difficult to find staff willing to work for shorter periods of time – specifically referring to college students in the summer.
- Rainy weather interferes with outdoor activity options.

#### **Benefits for Students/Families/Teachers**

- Reduce summer learning loss, easier transition to next grade level
- Better engagement due to sustainable energy levels
- Vacation opportunities during off-seasons
- High school kids with after school jobs will earn \$ year-round, better budgeting.

- Less stress for parents to find childcare/camps all summer – financial burden is spread out.
- Less long-term care needs.

### **Benefits for Community Partners**

- Increased revenue
- More family engagement, better relationships

### **Additional Comments from Community Partners**

- “Other districts do this and have adjusted.”
- “We can adjust with the sports schedules.”
- “No problem, we will adapt with extracurricular activity schedules changing.”
- “2-week long camps throughout the year would be no problem.”
- “I think that if shorter, more frequent breaks is what works best for the kids, then we can make it work! At the end of the day, it’s about the kiddos!”
- Scheduling would match majority need

### **Challenges for Teamlet Members:**

- Misunderstanding about ‘balanced calendar’ vs. ‘year-round school’
- Limited timeframe
- Not having approximate dates or picture of what the school year would look like

## Appendix 5

### Balanced Calendar Research / Lead: Jayme Fierro

October 18, 2022

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Research is mixed regarding the potential benefits of a balanced calendar approach, however the quality of research to date has been limited

- “Previous research regarding the balanced school calendar and its effects on the summer learning loss has been somewhat inconclusive and dated” (Stark 2018).
- The most growth is seen in marginalized students.
- “A likely contributing factor to this improvement for certain student groups is the additional instructional time provided...during intersessions,” (Stark 2018).

#### General Findings

With limited research done in this particular area it is difficult to draw definitive conclusions.

- We do know:
- Summer learning loss does impact learning for our most fragile students.
- There is data to support remedial interventions, such as intersession weeks, will improve achievement.
- What we don’t know:
- Would distributing some of school days in a different way improve student achievement?

#### Summer Slide

- 2007 study done by John Hopkins showed that “ $\frac{2}{3}$  of the 9th grade reading gap can be attributed to summer learning loss” (ASCD 2011).
- 2011 Rand Corporation study showed “it appears that summer learning loss is cumulative and that, over time, these periods of differential learning rates between low-income and higher-income students contribute substantially to the achievement gap” (ASCD 2011).
- “Results from older tests can’t be replicated on modern tests, and modern tests don’t necessarily agree with each other” (Education Next 20220).

### Questions that came up

- Why did other local districts dismiss/adopt this idea? (NTSD/WSD)
- Are we only looking at academics or is the whole child being considered?
- Are there other areas of research that we are not considering? Such as the measures being used to collect data.



# Appendix 6

Olympia School District  
Balanced Calendar Exploratory Committee

## Research and Resources

October 3, 2022

### Introduction

The Olympia School District (OSD) has convened a community committee, the Balanced Calendar Exploratory Committee (BCEC) to look at the pros and cons of a balanced calendar.

A balanced calendar would modify the traditional 180-day school calendar to keep the learning process more continuous. Instead of a calendar dominated by a very long summer break, students would have more periodic, longer breaks throughout the school year and a shorter summer break. Students attending schools that follow a balanced calendar receive the same number of instructional days and hours as those who attend schools that follow a traditional calendar.

The term modified calendar is also used to refer to a balanced calendar.

This paper presents a collection of research and resources for potential use by the BCEC and other interested parties. Resources are organized in the following categories: Academic Impact, Research on Related Topics, District Process and Examples; Washington State Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI).

### Academic Impact

Research on the effects of a balanced calendar on student achievement is sparse; more is available on the topic of summer learning loss. The following represents some of the research available, but is not meant to be a conclusive list.

On the OSD website:

[https://www.osd.wednet.edu/our\\_district/board\\_of\\_directors/board\\_advisory\\_committees/balanced\\_calendar/research](https://www.osd.wednet.edu/our_district/board_of_directors/board_advisory_committees/balanced_calendar/research)

- [Making the most of summer school -- a meta-analytic and narrative review](#) (Cooper, Charlton, Valentine & Muhlenbrock, 2000)
- [Summer Learning Loss: The Problem and Some Solutions](#) (Cooper, Harris, 2003)
- [Visible Learning](#) (Hattie, 2009)
- [Slowing the Summer Slide](#) (Smith 2012)
- [Lasting Consequences of the Summer Learning Gap](#) (Alexander, Entwisle and Olson, 2001, 2006)
- [Using a Balanced School Year to Improve Student Achievement. A White Paper of the Stark Education Partnership](#)
- [A Reset for Assessment: Toward a Less Burdensome Accountability System](#) (Buckley, Jack, 2021)
- [A Blueprint for Scaling Tutoring Across Public Schools, EdWorkingPaper No. 20-335](#) (Kraft, Matthew A.; Falken, Grace T.)

- [Invest in Teachers First: A Call to Action for Teacher-Focused Investments of Federal Relief Funds](#) (Center on Great Teachers and Leaders)
- [Agrarian roots? Think again. Debunking the myth of summer vacation's origins](#) (PBS; Saskia de Melker and Sam Weber)

#### North Thurston Public Schools

<https://www.nthurston.k12.wa.us/cms/lib/WA01001371/Centricity/Domain/4438/WSSDAPresentationSlides.pdf>

- WSSDA Presentation Slides from 12/16/21 presentation to the Balanced Calendar Initiative, includes research summaries and a close look at stats from Schoolfield Elementary compared to the rest of the district in Danville, VA.

#### Winlock School District

<https://www.winlockschools.org/page/modifiedcalendar>

- Impact of Summer Recess on Mathematics Learning Retention (Hornak, 2015) [https://core-docs.s3.amazonaws.com/documents/asset/uploaded\\_file/1209/WSD/2235905/Hornak-Dissertation-May\\_2015-.pdf](https://core-docs.s3.amazonaws.com/documents/asset/uploaded_file/1209/WSD/2235905/Hornak-Dissertation-May_2015-.pdf)
- Five Insights on the 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of John Hattie's Visible Learning Research <https://aplusala.org/best-practices-center/2019/02/14/five-insights-on-the-10th-anniversary-of-john-hatties-visible-learning-research/>

Knox County Schools, TN, <https://www.knoxschools.org/domain/4273> research summary: <https://www.knoxschools.org/cms/lib/TN01917079/Centricity/Domain/4273/full%20lit%20review.final.pdf>

Louisiana Dept of Education, Balanced School Calendar: Key Considerations for Implementation – includes some research summary, options for calendar structure

[https://www.louisianabelieves.com/docs/default-source/district-support/staffing-and-scheduling-\(balanced-calendar\).pdf?sfvrsn=40506418\\_2](https://www.louisianabelieves.com/docs/default-source/district-support/staffing-and-scheduling-(balanced-calendar).pdf?sfvrsn=40506418_2)

#### Other Resources

- Pros & Cons of Modifying the School Calendar, Seattle PI article (date?) <https://education.seattlepi.com/pros-cons-modifying-school-calendars-2540.html>
- The Effects of Modified School Calendars on Student Achievement and on School and Community Attitudes [https://cdn5-ss13.sharpschool.com/UserFiles/Servers/Server\\_81788/File/Calendars/Board%20Approved%20Calendars/Effects%20of%20Modified%20Calendars%20article.pdf](https://cdn5-ss13.sharpschool.com/UserFiles/Servers/Server_81788/File/Calendars/Board%20Approved%20Calendars/Effects%20of%20Modified%20Calendars%20article.pdf)

#### **Research on Related Topics**

- Sustaining a Balanced Calendar in Hopewell City Public Schools, (Baber, Petrosky, Snow, Walton, 2021) [https://scholarscompass.vcu.edu/edd\\_capstone/9/](https://scholarscompass.vcu.edu/edd_capstone/9/)
- Designing an Evaluation Plan for Hopewell City Public Schools Balanced Calendar (Blosser, Burnett, Elmore, Smith, Zahner, 2022) [https://scholarscompass.vcu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1012&context=edd\\_capstone](https://scholarscompass.vcu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1012&context=edd_capstone)



### **District Process and Examples**

Winlock School District, Washington

<https://www.winlockschools.org/page/modifiedcalendar>

- Announcement article <https://www.chronline.com/stories/winlock-school-district-adopts-modified-calendar-for-next-three-school-years,297232>

Hopewell City Public Schools, Virginia

[https://www.hopewell.k12.va.us/apps/pages/index.jsp?uREC\\_ID=1734816&type=d&pREC\\_ID=1911303](https://www.hopewell.k12.va.us/apps/pages/index.jsp?uREC_ID=1734816&type=d&pREC_ID=1911303)

Washoe Schools, NV (2022-23 balanced calendar)

[https://www.washoeschools.net/cms/lib/NV01912265/Centricity/Domain/449/2022-2023\\_Balanced\\_Calendar.pdf](https://www.washoeschools.net/cms/lib/NV01912265/Centricity/Domain/449/2022-2023_Balanced_Calendar.pdf)

Louisiana Dept of Education, Balanced School Calendar: Key Considerations for

Implementation – includes some research summary, **options for calendar structure**

[https://www.louisianabelieves.com/docs/default-source/district-support/staffing-and-scheduling-\(balanced-calendar\).pdf?sfvrsn=40506418\\_2](https://www.louisianabelieves.com/docs/default-source/district-support/staffing-and-scheduling-(balanced-calendar).pdf?sfvrsn=40506418_2)

Michigan Dept of Education: <https://www.michigan.gov/mde/services/flexible-learning/balanced-calendar>, includes some sample calendars

Calgary Board of Education – list of schools using modified calendar

<https://cbe.ab.ca/registration/calendars/Pages/modified-calendar.aspx>

### **OSPI**

Q&A <https://www.k12.wa.us/sites/default/files/public/communications/2022docs/Balanced-Calendar-QA.pdf>

Includes questions about those with disabilities, childcare considerations, etc.

### **Grantees**

To date, grant funding has been awarded to the following school districts across Washington to look at balanced calendar considerations:

- Asotin-Anatone School District
- Benge School District
- Bremerton School District
- Candy Mountain Academy
- Cashmere School District
- Chewelah School District
- Chimacum School District
- Columbia School District (Walla Walla)
- Crescent School District
- Elma School District
- Finley School District

- Freeman School District
- Goldendale School District
- Highland School District
- Kiona-Benton School District
- Kahlotus School District
- Kittitas School District
- Lopez Island School District
- Mossyrock School District
- Mount Adams School District
- Mount Vernon School District
- North Mason School District
- North Thurston School District
- Oakville School District
- Olympia School District
- Paterson School District
- Pomeroy School District
- Port Angeles School District
- Port Townsend School District
- Prescott School District
- Rainier Valley Leadership Academy
- Roosevelt School District
- Selah School District
- Soap Lake School District
- Skykomish School District
- Thorp School District
- Toledo School District
- Toppenish School District
- Touchet School District
- Union Gap School District
- Vancouver School District (balanced calendar on the website is password protected; they only show an announcement about looking at it)
- Wahluke School District
- Waitsburg School District
- Winlock School District
- Yakima School District (<https://www.ysd7.org/modifiedcalendar> They have some presentations, no links to research)

### **Background & Resources**

OSPI is partnering with several K–12 statewide organizations to support local education agencies interested in exploring modifying their school year calendars. The [Association of Educational Service Districts \(AESD Network\)\(link is external\)](#), a key partner, provides hands-on support and technical assistance to grantee districts to support networking and learning together across school district and regional boundaries.

Other partners include the

- Association of Washington School Principals (I did not find research on their website – maybe we could call?)
- Washington Association of School Administrators (I did not find research)

- Washington State School Directors' Association (no search – maybe you need to sign in)
- Washington Education Association (I did not find research)

**Appendix 7**  
**OLYMPIA SCHOOL DISTRICT**  
**Balanced Calendar Exploratory Committee (BCEC)**  
**October 19, 2022 (Meeting #3 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 (OSD), welcomed participants and explained the technology set-up for the meeting.

He related that he'd engaged in conversations with people in the community around this committee's work and wanted to make it clear that no decision has been made on whether or not to move toward a more balanced calendar. He also noted that, even if the district decides to move forward, the very earliest that a calendar change could be initiated would be the 2024-2025 school year.

Dr. Murphy also announced that he had talked with the superintendent of the Winlock School District, which recently decided to try a balanced calendar, and has invited people from their district to come to talk to the BCEC at the November 2 meeting. Additionally, Dr. Murphy spoke with Dana Anderson, the superintendent of the Educational Service District for our region (44 districts in Thurston County, Mason County, Lewis County and more) to share the work OSD is doing and that if Olympia decides to move forward, he will ask the ESD to coordinate a regional discussion of this idea among our neighboring districts.

Frank Kwan, In-Person Facilitator, noted that the Facilitation Team has been working with a variety of members of the BCEC to get answers to the questions that have been raised. He commented that the teamlets are working on the key areas and questions that BCEC has raised, and the next two meetings will be focused on sharing their findings and answers to help move to the next step, including more data from ThoughtExchange.

**Review results of asynchronous ThoughtExchange**

Survey Question: What perspective would you like BCEC and district leaders to consider as we continue to explore the idea of changing the school calendar?

J.Marie Riche, Zoom Facilitator, shared a PowerPoint presentation with highlights of results from the ThoughtExchange survey fielded to parents, students, staff and select community members October 7 – 18. There were 3,748 participants; 3,528 thoughts were expressed, and 82,644 ratings were given. Of the 3,524 who responded to the question of roles, 80% were parents, 6% students, 19% staff, and 9% community members.

Top thoughts focused on:

- HVAC systems – these thoughts came up most often

- Families with parenting plans, or families with multiple households
- After care, including summer and break enrichment
- The need to align with neighboring districts

Additional prevalent thoughts:

- Childcare – some felt this is achievable; that our community partners will provide programs when needed
- Concern over sports programs, more need to align with other districts
- Comments about families' time
- Concern about summer: work for students and staff, logistical challenges and affordable enrichment activities

Those who are supportive of a balanced calendar represent 47% of respondents; 42% have concerns; and 11% are neutral.

To give a sense of what kind of response the survey received, Dr. Murphy said there are 9,000 students in the district and 1400-1500 staff. The student response was quite low; a suggestion was made that giving secondary students the opportunity to complete surveys during their advisory time would give a higher response rate.

The PowerPoint presentation will be sent out to BCEC participants and posted on the website.

### **Student Panel – What is most important to students with the school calendar?**

Mr. Kwan noted that there was a strong interest at the last meeting on having more student input and participation, and a student panel was convened for this meeting to help meet that need. Ms. Riche invited students in attendance to participate in the Student Panel. Jade Austin, Adi Waters, Malachi Cardona, and Ava Miller volunteered.

Ms. Riche invited students to respond to the question: What excites you about the prospect of a balanced calendar? Students made the following responses:

- A large part of learning can be forgotten over long breaks. A balanced calendar ensures the learning experience can be more consistent for all students throughout the year.
- More balance.
- One benefit of a shorter summer is mental health burnout. Students stay more engaged – bigger breaks during the year lead to mental health recuperation.

Ms. Riche posed the question: What concerns do you have about a balanced calendar? Students responded:

- The fact that people confuse a balanced calendar and year-round school. We need to explain what it is and what it would really look like.
- Most students do not know what this is – many didn't see the invitation to ThoughtExchange.
- HVAC / air conditioning and hotter weather.
- Summer school – how would we do it in a shorter window?
- Summer camps and sports – lots of change. We need to know what it would look like. It won't seem so chaotic if they know in advance how it would affect them.

Ms. Riche asked: What effects do you think changing the calendar in this way might have on your learning? For instance, we talk about a summer learning slide. Do you think this would be helpful or a hindrance?

- A hindrance because teachers say kids forget; even from the weekend some kids are out of it. Teachers avoid giving tests on Mondays because of that. More breaks might lead to more time being "out of it." And maybe more need for review throughout the year.
- Helpful because more regular breaks help with mental health.

Mr. Kwan asked students what would be the best way to reach other students for their input.

- Through their teachers / advisor.
- During advisory periods – get live time responses.

Ms. Riche asked: Is there anything you would like to say that hasn't been mentioned?

- Childcare, summer camps.
- Teachers are busy all of August with planning. This comes out of their summer break. It will impact teachers if summer is shortened.
- It would affect everyone – the purpose is to give more breaks. A model calendar should be designed to help students and teachers as much as possible.
- A shortened summer can also be helpful.

Ms. Riche and Mr. Kwan thanked the students for participating in the panel. Ms. Riche commented that the students echo many of the comments expressed in ThoughtExchange, but that it is good to hear it in the students' voice.

### **Report outs on answers to questions and research on data needs**

**Community Partners / Childcare Providers** - Allison Weide shared a one-page summary of the information collected by the Teamlet, which will be sent out to BCEC participants and posted on the website. The team has not heard back from everyone, but questions raised so far are:

- Will there be a break leading up to spring testing?
- Is there a bussing program for homeless students?
- Will there be meals during breaks?
- Will there be staffing for interventions?

Providers mentioned potential difficulties, such as:

- Space for their programs due to other events during the year
- Staffing throughout the year since college students will not be available
- Rain interferes with outdoor programs

Benefits mentioned:

- Better engagement with families
- Vacation opportunities on off-seasons
- Opportunities for high school students to have longer shifts during breaks
- With childcare spread out, less financial burden for parents
- For businesses, more revenue



- More family engagement

Ms. Weide said the overall theme from their conversations is that providers feel that the majority preference should rule, and programmatic scheduling will adjust to match the need.

**District employee associations** – Bonnie Hauschka reported on their Teamlet’s work to contact leaders of the 7 employee associations in the OSD. They are collecting responses and will meet to create a summary for reporting at the next BCEC meeting. Themes that have come up so far include concerns about HVAC and the need to match calendars with neighboring districts.

**Research** – Jayme Fierro presented a one-page synopsis of information gained from a study of available research. This document will be sent out to the BCEC participants and posted on the website. She commented that there is not much research available about balanced calendars. As for summer learning loss, it is an issue, but there is no clear answer to how to prevent it. There is some data about the positive impacts a balanced calendar can have on marginalized students due to enrichment activities and intersessions, such as opportunities through community partners.

She said some questions arise from the research study:

- Why did local districts adopt or reject a balanced calendar?
- Are we only looking at academic impact or at the whole child? Most of the research is about social / emotional learning. Academic benefits or risks are not as well studied.
- Other areas of research raise questions about how data is collected: standardized testing? Local testing? The data are inconsistent.

Bottom line, says Ms. Fierro, is that we don’t have clear answers about the benefits and risks of this kind of calendar adjustment.

**Timing** – Ms. Riche explained that the Timing teamlet ran into challenges getting together to consider what a more balanced calendar might look like in Olympia. When are the breaks, where would summer be shortened? They will report in 2 weeks.

**What were the most important ideas from what you've learned so far - from the research you read as part of your homework assignment, from the ThoughtExchange results, and/or from the reports from the Teamlets?**

Ms. Riche asked participants: from what they have heard and read, from conversations with neighbors and others, what is rising to the top regarding the possibility of a balanced calendar? Participants formed into breakout groups to consider this question. Comments from the groups are as follows:

- We need a clear understanding of what a balanced calendar is before we can support it.
- Having calendar models as examples
- More consultation with the students. Students can be reached through their advisory room, but could they have a presentation first – in a student friendly language?
- Realistic concerns of staff for outside work and work-life balance
- Student summer work is impacted
- Work-life balance

- What are the challenges? Are we doing all we can to address those within the current format?
- Is there enough compelling evidence to support this change?
- Academic vs. social / emotional benefits?
- What is the policy about assigning homework over the breaks? Having homework will not help mental health. Multiple breaks might mean multiple projects.
- Many impacts for divided families.
- Difficulty transitioning sports/activities = social impact
- Running Start, standardized tests, how will they be impacted?
- More data on learning loss – address it directly; maybe we don't need a balanced calendar
- Will there be more unnecessary review? This might not be an issue but we want student perspective.
- A minimum reduction of summer might not be so large.
- Research is inconclusive; what is the problem we are trying to solve?
- Where could we have an impact on learning loss? (identify and resolve)
- The research on either side is not pushing one way. Votes in the community are tied. There are no clear lines to show what works on learning loss. All of this is from pre-covid. Mental health, academic gap has all shown up since then.
- Cost factor: HVAC, pay for teachers
- Enrichment during breaks
- Alignment with other districts. North Thurston? We are spinning our wheels unless there is community buy-in. Tumwater, Griffin, Yelm, Shelton, etc.
- Are we wasting our time?
- Even if we do not follow this with the balanced calendar, this process has identified multiple shortfalls of our current system that need to be addressed.
- Forgetting curve? Research.
- Balanced calendars for elementary vs secondary have different effects.
- Additional transitions could be difficult for special ed students and staff.

The following comment was submitted by an attendee after the meeting:

- Each level of education would be impacted in different ways. The elementary years are crucial for developing a love of learning and for a student to even see themselves as a “learner”. This may seem simple but it's huge and there is a lot of research to suggest this. Elementary years impact middle and high schools. The balanced calendar would potentially look different (in terms of programming only) for grade levels and from one building to the next. This would allow creative planning that meets the needs of each building's student's/family's learning needs within their balanced calendar. So, again allowing some ownership at the building level for how to potentially implement programming.

### **Review of agenda**

Ms. Riche explained that the next meeting on November 2 will be organized much the same as this one. BCEC will hear from a panel from Winlock School District; there will be more reports from teamlets, and participants will have more time to talk.

This will give participants an opportunity to consider the opinion they came with into this committee, and how that perspective has been confirmed or changed by what we have learned together.

At the 5<sup>th</sup> and final meeting in mid-November, participants will be asked to talk about that: how do you feel now? Had your perspective changed? Then we will divide into groups based on support or opposition, identify pros and cons, and have time to talk about those.

### **Meeting Evaluation**

What worked well:

- Student Panel – it was good to hear the student perspective
- It's nice to see people in the room; Zoom participants, try to attend in person

Dr. Murphy thanked the teamlet members for their volunteer work. Ms. Riche echoed appreciation for all the participants and especially for the students who had been willing to express their thoughts out loud in a room full of committee members.

The meeting adjourned at 7:30 pm

BCEC Participants Attending:

- Jade Austin
- Taylor Bannister (Zoom)
- Kolanye Bykoff (Zoom)
- Malachi Cardona
- Jennifer Cole
- Scott Cushing (Zoom)
- Quinn Dickason
- Tad Earley (Zoom)
- Jayme Fierro
- Kaylin Furry
- Azisa Glast (Zoom)
- Emily Griffith
- Bonnie Hauschka (Zoom)
- Imran Kasmani (Zoom)
- Elliot Malpass-Branch (Zoom)
- Ava Miller (Zoom)
- Suzanne Murray (Zoom)
- Abby Neumiller-Hanell (Zoom)
- Bethany Opstedal (Zoom)
- Colette Paulson (Zoom)
- Jeff Pearson
- Sarah Pearson
- Joel Plewa (Zoom)
- MJ Sather
- Paul Sierra

- Heather Slater (Zoom)
- Steve Roth
- Carrie Tradewell (Zoom)
- Amanda Villani
- Adi Waters
- Allison Weide
- Frank Wilson
- Dana Woods
- Karen Zarate (Zoom)

## Appendix 8

### BCEC Timing Teamlet, Meeting 10/25, 4 p.m.

Those who came together to start this thinking are mindful that they're a very small, not particularly representative group. They would value others' perspectives being added to this group's thinking, particularly folks with deeper knowledge of the high school schedule and all their testing windows (mid-terms, finals, AP, etc).

#### **There were two questions before the group:**

Where might additional breaks be added into the school year?

And, where would that time be made up?

#### **Where breaks might be added:**

The comments made by students about the challenges of needing some reset / coming back together time after every break resonated with the members of this teamlet. This led the group to think more in terms of lengthening existing breaks rather than creating new ones.

#### **Some possibilities include:**

- Turning Thanksgiving into a full week off (+2 days in November)
- Turning Presidents Day Weekend into a full week off (+3 days in February)
- Making Spring Break into a two week break (+ 5 days in April)
- Extending Memorial Day break, perhaps not into a full week (+1-2 days in May. This break in particular depends on compatibility with HS testing needs)

The group talked fairly extensively about the possibility of adding a break into October, and while there wasn't active opposition to the idea, most members felt that the month is already highly disrupted with testing, conferences, and the start of clubs and other student programming such as band in the lower grades. They also feel that kids and staff are pretty pumped about the start of school, and may not yet be in need of a break.

#### **Where to make up the time:**

In terms of where to make up the time, the group felt strongly that the school year should not run into the week before the July 4th holiday, so the most likely solution to a modified school year will involve moving at least some school days into late August.

It was also requested that calendar writers work hard to avoid a last day of school that falls on a Monday or Tuesday, as that often causes families to pay for a full week of child care or cobble together other options.

#### **Data requests:**

Committee members were interested in learning about the current rates of absenteeism at the end of the school year as the calendar stands now.

They also noted that while HVAC issues have been well-raised, the issue of costs associated with watering fields and playgrounds has not yet been explored. This could potentially be quite expensive, depending on how much additional watering is needed by shortening the summer break.

### **Follow-Up**

Information from the facilitator's conversation with Carrie Blackwell, Director of Student Information & Assessment:

At the teamlet's request, Ms. Riche shared highlights of the teamlet's thinking with Ms. Blackwell and asked for her feedback, particularly any concerns she might have about additional breaks and high school mid-terms, finals, AP, ACT/SAT or other assessments. Ms. Blackwell noted that it will depend, of course, on the details of how a calendar is built, pointing out that there are a lot of moving parts between potential changes in the start dates and exactly how many extra days of break are built in. She did not, however, have any general concerns with the suggestions of the teamlet. In fact, she thought the teamlet demonstrated creativity in its approach and that the ideas they generated might work better in this community than making bigger changes all at once.

She noted that the high schools are already accustomed to planning assessments around existing breaks in the calendar. She also pointed out that state-required assessments and national tests like the SAT have big windows of time in which they can be performed, and district-directed assessments can be scheduled at the district's discretion.

She also agreed with the feedback voiced by members of the BCEC and received in the ThoughtExchange about approaching any big calendar changes regionally, noting that there are many programs that are coordinated between districts, not just athletics.

## Appendix 9

### Traditionally Marginalized and High Needs Students and Families – Research & Interviews

- 2/3 of the total achievement gap between students from high and low socioeconomic backgrounds can be traced to differences in summer learning opportunities during their elementary school years
- Summer learning losses have later life consequences
- Many students experience a loss of learning and continuity during the extended break
- Every summer, low-income youth lose two to three months in reading achievement

### Special Education

- Transitions are harder for students with disabilities, and learning/skills loss happens at every break, regardless of length; more frequent breaks would cause more disruptions throughout the year
- With proper A/C and air filtration upgrades medically higher risk students would be better protected from heat and wildfire smoke than home or other care placement
- Schools would need to drastically expand ESY services or other in-school care for students with disabilities during breaks. Families would support if it meant more opportunities to receive extra services
- Long summers are isolating for students with disabilities
- Many parents would be on board, even if it negatively affects them, if there was a big benefit to staff.
- Tumwater, North Thurston, and Griffin would need to be on a balanced calendar

### Foster Youth

#### *Positive Impacts*

More consistent opportunities to connect with school/resource staff without larger summer break.

- More opportunities to build rapport with educational staff
- Build on successes of skill acquisition – not remediation
- More opportunities to connect with a school system sooner than later
- More opportunities for credit accrual and recovery

#### *Possible Negative Impacts*

- Credit recovery may be difficult -moving from one school district with a balanced calendar to another with a standard calendar
- Technical/trade school and summer internships may be affected

### Immigrants & Refugees

#### *Positive Impacts (No Concerns shared)*

- More exposure to English language and to practice skills
- Less reteaching skills



- More enrichment activities
- Allows for more student/family “connection” to school and learning

### **Improvements in process**

- Large task for volunteers –we recommend using existing school staff relationships such as Family Liaisons, Bilingual Family Engagement Specialists, McKinney Vento Staff, etc.
  - Those in the building can advise on best ways to communicate and gather input from families
- It’s very difficult to gather effective feedback when so much is unknown – many of the same questions and concerns were raised (a/c in buildings, actual proposed schedule, teacher support, etc.) so it’s hard to gather feedback when so much is unknown
- The district should also consider direct outreach to known groups to answer questions and gather feedback
- Thank you to Kayla Furry and Eowyn Latham Grubbs for the information they gathered!

## Appendix 10

### Views of Bargaining Group Leaders on a Balanced Calendar

OEA - Jodi Boe

<p><b>What are your thoughts about this idea? What might be the benefits and challenges to families? Your members?</b></p>	<p>Challenges for members include HVAC systems. Classes being too hot are the number one complaint this fall. Extending the year into summer months will be impossible without new HVAC systems.</p> <p>Challenges to members/families: Would be difficult if there isn't a regional approach to Balanced Calendars.</p> <p>Benefits could include more often and longer breaks to give members a chance to recharge.</p>
<p><b>What impacts would this have on the responsibilities of the group you represent as a union/bargaining group leader?</b></p>	<p>How teachers plan for the year (scope and sequence) would change. They would need to time units to end as breaks occur. A review cycle would need to be built in when returning from breaks.</p>
<p><b>What impacts might there be to student learning?</b></p>	<p>Theoretically there would be less learning loss over the summer. There is a potential for intersession learning but that comes with its own set of questions. (Who would teach it, who would attend, How would it be paid for?)</p>
<p><b>How might a shorter summer affect summer jobs (for school employees and/or students), summer programs?</b></p>	<p>Education type jobs (daycare/summer school) would just be spread out through the breaks. Seasonal work would be shorter and provide a loss of income. Some things would even out and be fine, other things would not.</p>
<p><b>What effect might this have on extracurricular programs, such as athletics and extended learning opportunities?</b></p>	<p>Athletics are already happening during breaks. (No impact on HS sports, MS would conform to the calendar.) Summer school type opportunities would get sprinkled throughout the year during the breaks and would be a benefit.</p>

**OPA - Denise Pigue and Mario Mejia**

<b>What are your thoughts about this idea? What might be the benefits and challenges to families? Your members?</b>	Strain caused to underprivileged families. (I.E. Childcare) Current calendar is set so families can plan. Balanced Calendar will create more financial hardship. Will impact parenting plans for split families. Outside employment opportunities would be limited.
<b>What impacts would this have on the responsibilities of the group you represent as a union/bargaining group leader?</b>	Minimal impact. The impact might be that staff would not have as much of a break to recharge. Could cause them not to be as ready coming back from the breaks.
<b>What impacts might there be to student learning?</b>	Not as much learning loss. Harder on students who struggle with transitions from break to school and back to break which impacts their behavior. Homelife may not be conducive to multiple breaks. School may be the only food source. Kids may be left home alone more due to the calendar breaks. Inability to regulate temperature in buildings during hot months will not be conducive to learning or working.
<b>How might a shorter summer affect summer jobs (for school employees and/or students), summer programs?</b>	Negative impact for staff and students to do summer work and activities. Employers may be reluctant to hire or keep students who have multiple breaks during the year/summer months.
<b>What effect might this have on extracurricular programs, such as athletics and extended learning opportunities?</b>	It would be difficult to have a schedule that does not match surrounding districts and districts they complete with. Student participation might drop off due to lack of time for conditioning. The calendar could cause more stress on students. Adding more work to balance their academic and extracurricular or outside opportunities.



**OEAPA - Brandi Sorem**

<b>What are your thoughts about this idea? What might be the benefits and challenges to families? Your members?</b>	Personally, I think that in my position not restarting a school every year would be better. There are benefits to this. As a mom who doesn't have to think about childcare, that is a privileged thing. I like the idea of shortened breaks because I have care set up. I hear the concerns of our membership. Our wages don't necessarily afford members to not work other jobs. We have members who have to work during the summer. Cutting out this option is a concern for me.
<b>What impacts would this have on the responsibilities of the group you represent as a union/bargaining group leader?</b>	It will make some parts of our job easier and some more difficult. We won't have the summer to get everything completed. When will these things happen? We have athletic secretaries. What will this do to them? We have very few members who work 242 days. Most of us don't work year round. This would change all of our schedules.
<b>What impacts might there be to student learning?</b>	I want to say it would be a benefit because we would not be restarting from scratch. We would not lose the time we spend reacquainting our kids with school each year.
<b>How might a shorter summer affect summer jobs (for school employees and/or students), summer programs?</b>	We need to consider our kids and staff members that work summer jobs. This is very important.
<b>What effect might this have on extracurricular programs, such as athletics and extended learning opportunities?</b>	<p>I think that if we do this, all will shift so we can do this. In athletics we play a league that is not local. This will not align with a balanced calendar. I think this is a privileged viewpoint. There are always programs out there. It is about how we get this information to our community. Maybe we will need to offer more y-care and programs overall, including athletics. Maybe this is something that we would have to consider.</p> <p>Our AC systems are a concern. There is no way we could be in our buildings without this being addressed. It was 90 degrees in Lincoln Elementary this summer.</p>

**Teamsters Business Agent - Jim Jack**

<b>What are your thoughts about this idea? What might be the benefits and challenges to families? Your members?</b>	<p>People don't like change and will be hesitant. No big breaks for parents to find childcare and no summer learning loss.</p> <p>Could impact 180-day employees and may require more hours/days of them.</p> <p>Workforce will have to adjust to not having summer work opportunities.</p>
<b>What impacts would this have on the responsibilities of the group you represent as a union/bargaining group leader?</b>	<p>180-day personnel (Food Service).</p> <p>Difficult to accomplish large summer projects.</p>
<b>What impacts might there be to student learning?</b>	<p>Positive because they don't have the large breaks of a traditional schedule. Won't have summer learning loss.</p>
<b>How might a shorter summer affect summer jobs (for school employees and/or students), summer programs?</b>	<p>Shorter summers will be a negative for summer work but the continued learning is a positive.</p> <p>180 personnel might need to adjust.</p> <p>Significant maintenance happens during the long summer break. Maintenance schedule will need to be adjusted wherever possible. (Gym floor refinishing, deep cleaning.)</p>
<b>What effect might this have on extracurricular programs, such as athletics and extended learning opportunities?</b>	<p>No effect on athletics but may need to be shifted to accommodate the calendar.</p> <p>Summer school is usually offered during the summer, not sure how this will be offered.</p>

**OAAA - Danelle Wright**

<b>What are your thoughts about this idea? What might be the benefits and challenges to families? Your members?</b>	<p>From the lens of my bargaining unit: My thoughts in general are it would be extremely difficult to try and coordinate sports and activities if all schools were not on the same calendar. Spring Break is already very difficult.</p> <p>High School athletes would not get breaks. Their coaches would coach through the breaks unless sports seasons were changed to match the balanced calendar.</p>
<b>What impacts would this have on the responsibilities of the group you represent as a union/bargaining group leader?</b>	<p>Coaching more days than our contracts represent. Contracts would need to be rewritten to make allowances for the new schedule.</p>
<b>What impacts might there be to student learning?</b>	<p>As a coach, breaks are necessary if students are truly given breaks. I worry that there would be assignments and expectations that would carry over the breaks.</p>
<b>How might a shorter summer affect summer jobs (for school employees and/or students), summer programs?</b>	<p>Short breaks would limit students' opportunities for employment as many businesses will not be willing to hire them for that short amount of time.</p>
<b>What effect might this have on extracurricular programs, such as athletics and extended learning opportunities?</b>	<p>Concerns regarding transportation for athletics. There are big HVAC concerns. Using a gym in the middle of summer can be very uncomfortable.</p>



**TOPA - Sean Shaughnessy**

<p><b>What are your thoughts about this idea? What might be the benefits and challenges to families? Your members?</b></p>	<p>It is complicated. The advantages are a more consistent year-round school schedule. You have a long summer break. That is the main advantage.</p> <p>There are challenges with child care. The Boys and Girls would also be impacted. They rely on college students to run their programs. They will have to completely retool how they do things.</p> <p>From a family perspective we have a lot of kids who go and spend summers with family members.</p>
<p><b>What impacts would this have on the responsibilities of the group you represent as a union/bargaining group leader?</b></p>	<p>I wonder if we will have a hard time with staff taking breaks at times when school is in session because they won't have a break.</p>
<p><b>What impacts might there be to student learning?</b></p>	<p>I do not know what impact it will have on learning.</p>
<p><b>How might a shorter summer affect summer jobs (for school employees and/or students), summer programs?</b></p>	<p>There are many considerations that need to be made. I think from a staff perspective it would be tough for staff that are working second jobs in the summer.</p>
<p><b>What effect might this have on extracurricular programs, such as athletics and extended learning opportunities?</b></p>	<p>I don't know. I am not a secondary person.</p>

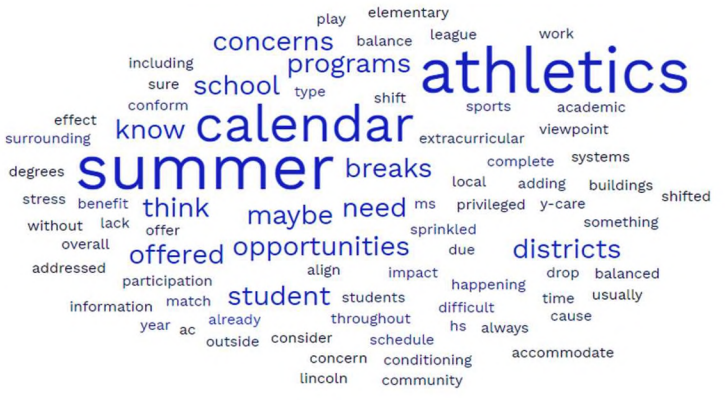
**OTPAA - Amy McGuire**

<b>What are your thoughts about this idea? What might be the benefits and challenges to families? Your members?</b>	Don't really have thoughts because the jobs she represents are 260 day jobs. Feel neutral. A few do not work a full year but have not voiced an opinion.
<b>What impacts would this have on the responsibilities of the group you represent as a union/bargaining group leader?</b>	Payroll - More time or positions to help with increased workload. Business Office - Same as above. Some workload may increase which may create some part time work needs or an increase to those working less than 260 days. Reduced summer day to day workload which allows for project work.
<b>What impacts might there be to student learning?</b>	Do not know. Not involved on the student side.
<b>How might a shorter summer affect summer jobs (for school employees and/or students), summer programs?</b>	Do not know. Not involved on the student side.
<b>What effect might this have on extracurricular programs, such as athletics and extended learning opportunities?</b>	Do not know. Not involved on the student side. Would hopefully make it better.



[illegible]

<p><b>What impacts might there be to student learning?</b></p> <p>-----</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Less learning loss</li> <li>-Intercession Learning Opportunities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Who pays for it?</li> <li>-Who attends?</li> <li>- Who teaches it?</li> </ul> </li> <li>-Breaks are necessary, would assignments carry over?</li> <li>-Harder on students who struggle with transitions</li> <li>-School may be only food source</li> <li>-Kids may be alone more often</li> <li>-Inability to regulate building temperature</li> </ul>	<p>A word cloud with 'learning' and 'breaks' as the most prominent words in large blue font. Other visible words include 'school', 'loss', 'kids', 'summer', 'students', 'conductive', 'struggle', 'questions', 'home', 'alone', 'involved', 'spend', 'time', 'side', 'student', 'schedule', 'assignments', 'set', 'say', 'benefit', 'multiple', 'traditional', 'temperature', 'source', 'left', 'food', 'transitions', 'homelife', 'impacts', 'months', 'idea', 'necessary', 'less', 'want', 'due', 'intercession', 'expectations', 'teach', 'behavior', 'buildings', 'potential', 'calendar', 'theoretically', 'attend', 'year', 'harder', 'worry', 'back', 'working', 'reacquaining', 'inability', 'paid', 'lose', 'large', 'coach', 'scratch', 'comes', 'positive', 'impact', 'regulate', 'truly', 'know', 'carry', 'given', 'hot', 'know', 'carry', 'given', 'hot', 'know', 'carry', 'given', 'hot'.</p>
<p><b>How might a shorter summer affect summer jobs (for school employees and/or students), summer programs?</b></p> <p>-----</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Difficult for staff and students who work other jobs in the summer.</li> <li>-Significant maintenance happens in the summer in schools</li> <li>-Loss of income for families</li> </ul>	<p>A word cloud with 'summer', 'students', 'work', 'need', 'jobs', 'staff', 'breaks', and 'negative' as prominent words in green and blue. Other visible words include 'short', 'things', 'hire', 'activities', 'student', 'positive', 'opportunities', 'seasonal', 'education', 'made', 'considerations', 'long', 'learning', 'keep', 'fine', 'break', 'willing', 'think', 'summers', 'multiple', 'spread', 'months', 'members', 'employment', 'time', 'adjusted', 'possible', 'shorter', 'maintenance', 'amount', 'reluctant', 'side', 'involved', 'personnel', 'loss', 'working', 'deep', 'daycare', 'just', 'continued', 'consider', 'significant', 'year', 'income', 'wherever', 'provide', 'important', 'happens', 'impact', 'second', 'type', 'limit', 'kids', 'refinishing', 'cleaning', 'perspective', 'made', 'considerations', 'long', 'learning', 'keep', 'fine', 'break', 'willing', 'think', 'summers', 'multiple', 'spread', 'months', 'members', 'employment', 'time', 'adjusted', 'possible', 'shorter', 'maintenance', 'amount', 'reluctant', 'side', 'involved', 'personnel', 'loss', 'working', 'deep', 'daycare', 'just', 'continued', 'consider', 'significant', 'year', 'income', 'wherever'.</p>

<p><b>What effect might this have on extracurricular programs, such as athletics and extended learning opportunities?</b></p> <p>-----</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- HVAC concerns</li> <li>-Summer school opportunities provided throughout the year</li> <li>-Transportation concerns for sports</li> <li>-Difficult if it does not match the surrounding districts</li> </ul>	 <p>A word cloud visualization of survey responses. The most prominent words are 'athletics', 'calendar', 'summer', 'breaks', 'opportunities', 'student', 'districts', 'programs', 'concerns', 'school', 'offer', 'need', 'think', 'maybe', 'align', 'impact', 'happening', 'drop', 'balanced', 'time', 'usually', 'cause', 'difficult', 'throughout', 'already', 'ac', 'year', 'information', 'match', 'participation', 'addressed', 'overall', 'without', 'lack', 'benefit', 'stress', 'degrees', 'surrounding', 'effect', 'know', 'conform', 'sure', 'including', 'play', 'elementary', 'balance', 'league', 'work', 'sports', 'academic', 'viewpoint', 'extracurricular', 'complete', 'systems', 'local', 'adding', 'buildings', 'shifted', 'something', 'sprinkled', 'due', 'ms', 'privileged', 'y-care', 'hs', 'always', 'schedule', 'concern', 'conditioning', 'accommodate', 'lincoln', and 'community'.</p>
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## Appendix 11

OLYMPIA SCHOOL DISTRICT  
Balanced Calendar Exploratory Committee (BCEC)  
November 2, 2022 (Meeting #4 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 (OSD), welcomed participants and thanked everyone for attending, especially in light of the busy week. He also expressed appreciation for the guests from Winlock Schools, a district that has adopted a more balanced calendar beginning with the 2022-2023 school year, noting that OSD can learn from them.

Frank Kwan, In-Person Facilitator, also welcomed BCEC participants and thanked them for attending.

J.Marie Riche, Zoom Facilitator, added that all committee members began this process with an opinion about the balanced calendar, some strongly in favor, some with strong concerns, and others in the middle. She said up till now the committee has been dealing with questions and information to answer those questions and to learn more about balanced calendars. She asked participants to listen carefully and in an open, listening mode to the panel and report outs today and to weigh the question of whether anything heard or learned in the BCEC meetings has led to a change in their thinking or feelings in either direction. There will be an opportunity to discuss these thoughts and feelings later in the meeting.

#### **Panel Discussion and Q&A, Winlock Schools**

Dr. Garry Cameron, Superintendent of Winlock Schools, introduced himself and gave a quick synopsis of the process Winlock undertook to move toward a more balanced calendar for the 2022-23 school year. Beginning with the OSPI grant in March 2021, the district engaged in conversation with the teacher's union, which initially was opposed to the idea. A committee was formed; more conversations and study occurred, with a focus on how a change might benefit their students. Winlock is a high poverty district, with a great need for school improvement. They visited schools in Kelso, WA and Michigan that have modified their calendar; those visits helped answer their questions. The Winlock school board approved changing the calendar by reducing the summer break by 3 weeks. School began August 29 and will end June 29. They have just finished their first intersession October 14, and will have an extra day at Thanksgiving, the week prior to Presidents' Day, 5 days at Memorial Day, and Mondays in June off.

Ms. Riche asked if Winlock had approached the change to the calendar regionally. Dr. Cameron said they had not. They moved Homecoming from October 14 to October 7, but had not made other changes. He acknowledged that there might be some impact to athletics with the February

break. Randy Hall, Winlock school board member, related that the board had dialogued with the teachers' union about changing the calendar. The teachers were apprehensive about the change, but wanted to be proactive to make things better. Winlock is 80% high poverty in a region that is otherwise not high poverty. Mr. Hall noted that they had to look at what their students need, and the grant gave them the opportunity to do this other thing.

Michelle Jeffries, Special Programs Director, joined in once the calendar was approved to oversee intersessions. For the October intersession, they asked teachers who wanted to work or not, strictly on a volunteer basis. Many wanted the break for rest; others were excited at the opportunity to teach other subjects. Many held back to see how it would go. They ran the intersession with 3 certificated teachers, substitutes, one counselor, and about half the paraeducators. Already about half of the teachers have signed up to teach in the February intersession.

Over one third of the elementary students signed up; more wanted to attend, but didn't register by the cut-off date. They expect this to improve in future years as awareness about the opportunities grows. About 10-15 middle and high school students signed up on their own, and the district called the homes of all students who needed credit retrieval or tutoring to ensure they knew of the opportunities.

Ms. Riche asked what the biggest benefits are so far. Dr. Cameron noted that it is still early, but connections between students and school / staff are better. On recent instructional walks in the middle and high schools, they also noted that it was calmer after the break. Also, there were some activities they could provide during the intersession that made it special, such as a visit to the Pumpkin Patch.

Mr. Kwan asked how the change is being received by the community. Mr. Hall noted that the union reps are monitoring that closely, but it appears that a lot of parents and teachers are very positive following the intersession. Staff appreciated time to be parents – able to go to their own child's school and volunteer.

A BCEC participant asked if it is hard to keep students focused before breaks. Dr. Cameron said they think it is actually helpful rather than more difficult, but they will need to collect data.

Another BCEC participant asked if air conditioning was a concern. Dr. Cameron shared that their elementary schools have air conditioning, and that they are purchasing mobile ac units for the middle and high school classrooms. They are applying for modernization grants to improve the HVAC systems in the district. He also noted that when there are concerns about winter weather, the school day is cancelled or ended early. They plan to follow the same policy if high temperatures or air quality are a concern on any particular day.

An additional question was raised about how the intersessions are being funded. Dr. Cameron indicated that grant funds are providing the per diems and transportation. He acknowledged that this would be a cost to the district in the future, but that if it keeps their students more connected and improves academics, it will be worth it.

One BCEC member question was whether high needs students receive prioritization for intersession enrollment. Ms. Jeffries said that everyone who registered was able to attend, and one 1:1 student who did not register was also allowed to attend.

Responding to a question about administrative coverage, Ms. Jeffries said that if the intersession caused administrative personnel to work above their contract, they would be paid from grant funds. In the schools, principals and vice principals split their time, so that there was always one administrator in the building.

BCEC participants were encouraged to write down any additional questions, and the Facilitation Team will follow up with the guests from Winlock to get answers. No additional questions were submitted.

Dr. Murphy and Ms. Riche thanked Dr. Cameron, Mr. Hall, and Ms. Jeffries for taking the time to come to this meeting and share their information and experience.

## **Report outs on answers to questions and research on data needs**

### **Timing**

Suzanne Murray reported for the Timing teamlet. They were heavy on elementary representation on their team and were concerned about not having sufficient perspective from the high school, so asked Ms. Riche to follow up with HS staff, which she did. They worried that spring scheduling around testing might make the scheduling of additional breaks difficult at the high school. Their team was also moved by student and ThoughtExchange comments that ramping up and down for breaks takes time and energy; so they thought it would be better to add time to existing breaks rather than create additional ones, such as:

- Turning Thanksgiving into a full week off (+2 days in November)
- Turning Presidents Day Weekend into a full week off (+3 days in February)
- Perhaps making Spring Break into a two week break (+ 5 days in April)
- Extending Memorial Day break, perhaps not into a full week (+1-2 days in May. This break in particular depends on compatibility with HS testing needs)

They felt October is early to have a break as so many things have just begun, such as kindergarten, special programs and clubs, and they felt that students and staff might still be feeling the excitement of the start of the year and not yet need a break.

As for how to make up the time, the teamlet wanted to avoid ending the school year close to July 4<sup>th</sup>, so thought it would be likely that at least some of the made-up time would need to go in August.

They question what absenteeism is like at the end of the year and in addition to the HVAC concerns, and wonder if having more school in the summer would lead to increased needs for watering of fields and playgrounds.

Ms. Riche shared highlights of her conversation with the high school assessment director about the teamlet's concerns over the timing of the breaks conflicting with assessments. The director said that it really depends on what the calendar looks like, but they already adjust assessments to

work with the calendar. She did mention that it is important to work with other districts in our region as there are many cooperative agreements for providing special programs, not just athletics.

Ms. Riche thanked the teamlet for their work. She mentioned Bethany Opstedal had also worked on this issue, but had been unable to attend this meeting.

### **Research**

Mr. Kwan shared that Ms. Fierro had indicated there was not much more to add to the report she made at the previous meeting.

### **Traditionally marginalized and high-needs students and families**

Robbi Kesler reported that the teamlet was able to talk to a few different groups, and those groups are reaching out to parents. Most are concerned about summer learning loss, but it is difficult when so much about a balanced calendar is unknown.

Special Education - Transitions are hard for special education students; loss happens at every break. More breaks would be more disruptive. There is a concern about whether services will continue during breaks; support for a balanced calendar is likely if students could receive extra services and none will be cut back.

The general feeling from most is that if this will be a benefit to schools generally, most would support it even if it is not directly beneficial.

There is a concern about credit recovery if students transfer from a balanced calendar to a district with a traditional calendar.

Immigration & Refugees – Most comments were positive. It would give more exposure to English, more enrichment, and more connection.

Improvements in process – The teamlet concluded that this is a large task for volunteers and suggested staff, such as the family liaisons and bilingual family engagement specialists, be involved in getting additional information from these groups.

Mr. Kwan thanked Ms. Kesler for her work, especially since she had been dealing with a family health issue.

### **District employee associations**

Bonnie Hauschka thanked Frank Wilson for his work on this teamlet and reported that they had contacted leaders of all 7 employee associations. She reviewed the main thoughts that came out of their conversations.



Benefits:

- Not Restarting
- Still have long summer break
- Consistency

Challenges:

- HVAC
- Child care
- Scheduling sports
- Not being able to have other summer jobs (hardship for classified staff)

Impacts to those in the associations:

- Contracts would need to be rewritten
- Difficult to accomplish projects with less summer work time
- Not enough recharge time
- More staff needed for increased workload
- Instruction would need to be adjusted to fit breaks

Impacts to student learning:

- Less learning loss
- Intercession Learning Opportunities
- Who pays for it?
- Who attends? Who teaches it?
- Breaks are necessary, would assignments carry over?
- Harder on students who struggle with transitions
- Benefit: school may be only food source
- Kids may be alone more often
- Inability to regulate building temperature

Impact of a shorter summer:

- Difficult for staff and students who work other jobs in the summer.
- Significant maintenance happens in the summer in schools
- Loss of income for families

Effect on extracurricular programs:

- HVAC concerns
- Summer school opportunities provided throughout the year
- Transportation concerns for sports
- Difficult if it does not match the surrounding districts

Ms. Haushka noted these are the reflections of the leaders of each group; the members have not been polled.



Ms. Riche commented that all teamlet reports will be included in the full documentation of the BCEC's process. Participants will receive copies of the reports with the meeting notes, and the reports will be posted on the district's website.

Ms. Riche also noted that the teamlet reports are dipstick assessments in each case. Every teamlet has identified additional questions. If the district decides to move forward, each committee has identified ways to dive deeper into exploring the issues surrounding a move to a more balanced calendar. As an example, each employee association would need to initiate a deeper conversation with its members

### **Student Voice**

Ms. Riche reported that there had been a conversation with district leaders to brainstorm ways to understand a student perspective on the balanced calendar issue. A few strategies were suggested as possible:

1. A ThoughtExchange targeted to students, administered in their advisory period;
2. Work with teachers to facilitate a dialogue with students – also probably during their advisory period.
3. Create focus groups of cross-sections of students

As with the questions for the associations, a deeper dive in this area is a good idea to pursue if the BCEC and the School Board determine there is merit to continue the exploration. For now, it was decided it would be too rushed to try to gather this information between meetings 3 and 5, and it would shortchange the process. It would be better to host a focus group of students to craft questions that would be meaningful to them and then to implement either a survey or class dialogues. This will be documented in the BCEC report as a suggested next step to explore the student perspective.

### **Committee dialogue**

Ms. Riche asked BCEC participants to form into groups of 4-5 to talk with each other and share how their thinking has shifted based on all we have heard and learned, not just tonight, but over the full process. Participants were asked to jot down anything that might need to be included in the meeting notes.

### **Reflections**

- Family benefits
- Students needing support – hard to replace all of those
- High school is already short of staff – how service special needs
- What is the research? The data is not there
- Will we need to add instructional time?
- Concerns about weather, mental health of students not outside enough if summer is shortened
- Testing must not happen directly after breaks
- Coordinate breaks to fit with schedule so students don't have to study over breaks
- Concerns for marginalized and traditionally underserved students

- Noting most districts with balanced calendar – staff appreciate and like it. Appreciate what it does for kids and atmosphere. Enrichment can change the environment at school, the climate and attitude toward school and learning in general. There are other components to learning loss.
- We underestimate students – if they understand the reasons for this, they will be on board
- Coming with a childcare perspective – it's been good to hear reasons to make this change.
- If OSD went ahead with this, it might help other districts to get on board. Understanding the problems involved in not working regionally, but recognizing sometimes there is a need to make a change, to be the first
- Important to support students and staff – how affects burnout, learning loss?
- How would we pay for this? Would it be better to use the money to support the students who need it? What is the most cost-effective way to support students and staff?

Ms. Riche thanked everyone for reflecting and sharing, and indicated this will be at the heart of the work at the next meeting.

### **Review of agenda**

Ms. Riche reviewed the agenda for the next meeting, in which the BCEC participants will further reflect on their views and identify areas of common ground and disagreement as well as next steps.

### **Meeting Evaluation**

What worked well:

- Appreciate the extra meeting time available from not having introductions

Ms. Riche encouraged everyone to attend the next and final meeting. Dr. Murphy expressed that he was very grateful and thankful to the participants for their work. The meeting adjourned at 7:30 pm.

### **BCEC Participants Attending:**

- Taylor Bannister (Zoom)
- Kolanye Bykoff (Zoom)
- Malachi Cardona
- Jennifer Cole
- Scott Cushing (Zoom)
- Tad Earley (Zoom)
- Jayme Fierro (Zoom)
- Kaylin Furry (Zoom)
- Corrie Gerou (Zoom)
- Eowyn Grubbs
- Bonnie Hauschka (Zoom)
- Pastora Hernandez-Barbee
- Sandy Hallstrom (Zoom)
- John Hanby (Zoom)

- Leslie Huff (Zoom)
- Robbi Kessler
- Elliot Malpass-Branch (Zoom)
- Ava Miller (Zoom)
- Suzanne Murray (Zoom)
- Abby Neumiller-Hanell (Zoom)
- Colette Paulson (Zoom)
- Jeff Pearson
- Sarah Pearson
- Audrey Perry (Zoom)
- Joel Plewa (Zoom)
- Steve Roth
- MJ Sather
- Heather Slater (Zoom)
- Carrie Tradewell (Zoom)
- Allison Weide
- Frank Wilson
- Condee Wood (Zoom)
- Dana Woods (Zoom)

## Appendix 12

OLYMPIA SCHOOL DISTRICT  
Balanced Calendar Exploratory Committee (BCEC)  
November 16, 2022 (Meeting #5 of 5)  
6-7:30 pm  
Board Room, 111 Bethel Street NE, Olympia

### Meeting Notes

#### **Welcome, coming together**

J. Marie Riche, In-Person Facilitator, welcomed participants and thanked them for their participation in the Balanced Calendar Exploratory Committee, commenting that the options that have been looked at are “more balanced” but not actually “balanced,” meaning that this committee has not been exploring the idea of year-round school.

She reviewed the agenda and asked participants to think about where they would land if they had to make a decision in terms of support or opposition tonight, for the purposes of the breakout discussion groups that will happen later in the meeting. She asked those who are still neutral to think about which way they might lean.

#### **Opening Remarks, Review our work together**

Dr. Patrick Murphy, Superintendent of Olympia School District (OSD), thanked all the participants, especially students, for taking time from their busy lives to engage in this conversation about the calendar. He also thanked the facilitation team.

He then pointed out that timing has an impact on the community’s conversation around this issue. For instance, if we ran the ThoughtExchange survey again now that the weather has cooled off, would HVAC be the same concern? Dr. Murphy continued that this conversation about the calendar began as we all recovered from a once-in-a-century pandemic. He recently met with Dimyana Abdelmalek, the Thurston County Health Officer, who shared that Covid-19 cases are down to 54 per 100,000 people over the last 7 days, and 90 per 100,000 over the last 14 days. Less than 5% of hospitalizations are now Covid-19-related. The State of Emergency is over. Through the pandemic, Dr. Murphy said, we learned that nothing is sacrosanct; everything is open to conversation. We developed an online model to deliver education. It was super hard, but it showed that we can do anything. We can look at other things. Similarly, is there a better way to do our calendar?

Some say we need to get back to normalcy; this is not the right time to do this. Others say this is the perfect time; everything is already shaken up. In Olympia, we never hesitate to consider the road less traveled. Is there a better way? Changing the school calendar would not be easy, but that alone is not a reason to avoid the conversation. He referenced his article for the community in last week’s Spotlight on Success, and paraphrased an African proverb by saying: “If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to make it last a long time, go together.” Dr. Murphy expressed

his appreciation for everyone coming together, bringing their opinions and perspectives, and for engaging in this conversation respectfully.

Ms. Riche then reviewed the BCEC's work, beginning with the first meeting in September when the participants came together and looked for who else needed to be in the room and brainstormed the information that committee members wanted to learn more about. The Facilitation Team and Steering Committee then worked to deepen representation. In the second meeting, participants looked at what is meant by the term balanced calendar, identified additional information that would be important to learn in order to think about this idea well, and volunteered to form small teams to dig into the questions that have been raised.

In meetings 3 and 4, participants shared information with each other. Teamlet volunteers gave context and consideration to questions, such as what do employee association leaders think about this? What do students think about this? A student panel came with their questions and concerns. What additional considerations are there for community partners who run programs, child care, and athletics. We began to explore special considerations for families who are traditionally under-represented or underserved. If the district moves forward, when would be best to place breaks and how best to adjust summer. A panel came from Winlock Public Schools, a district that has adopted a more balanced calendar, shared their experience in going through the process of making the transition.

OSD has been using a grant from OSPI to explore this. Additional funds are available. A couple of the BCEC teamlets have suggested that the work continue with use of paid staff. For example, the Timing teamlet made suggestions that adding new breaks could be valuable, but thought lengthening existing breaks might be less disruptive. Recognizing they were not equipped to weigh all the considerations, they suggested the district pay union representatives and HR staff to build a sample calendar to show how the modifications might actually work in Olympia. This is one example of a next step that would involve a more focused group of people. The Teamlet that looked into Traditionally Marginalized and High-Needs Students and Families suggested that staff already established to connect with these families, family liaisons, set up focus groups to look at the calendar issues. Ms. Riche suggested that OSPI grant funds could potentially be used to pay for food and childcare in order to make these focus groups more accessible for the targeted families.

She also noted that, even if the BCEC recommends that the district keep the conversation going, changing the calendar will not happen overnight. One concern voiced is how will we make that transition. Dr. Murphy said that given the logistics, and depending on the actual calendar, if there are significant changes, there will be a lot of "runway" time. The board wants there to be no surprises. Such a change would involve bargaining with staff, additional conversations with parents, collaboration with childcare providers, and a regional approach. The earliest Olympia would consider such a change is likely 2024-25. If the board wants to go ahead, and the BCEC recommends it, there would be a lot of work to do.

### **Form breakout / table top groups**

Ms. Riche outlined the process for breaking the BCEC participants into groups of 4-5 based on their opinion about whether the district should adopt a balanced calendar. Each group is to

develop a list of pros and cons. There remained three attendees, including Superintendent Murphy who remain firmly neutral on the idea. Those people were put into a group together and also asked to consider what it would take for them to form an opinion. Ms. Riche and Frank Kwan, Zoom Facilitator, organized the groups in the room and online.

## **Brainstorm Pros and Cons**

### **Group #1, Intrigued / Supportive**

Thoughts about the process:

- More info is needed. We haven't heard enough to say stop. There is more exploration to do, especially if there is money to pay people.
- Concrete calendar example(s) would be useful.
- Hearing the panel from Winlock was a key factor in developing support; we would like to hear from others who are doing this.
- Would like to hear more about the social/emotional impact. We want to hear more; we have been focused on the academic

Pros:

- Continued learning opportunities
- More consistent access to resources
- Financial burden of child care spread out
- Mental health for students & teachers / staff

Cons:

- Child care availability
- HVAC / clean air

### **Group #2 (Zoom) – Intrigued / Supportive**

Pros:

- Mental health, less burnout, less anxiety for both students and adults; help people stay in education longer.
- Intersessions can improve academics & students' engagement in academics by supporting students before they fall too far behind.
- The financial burden on our most vulnerable families may be reduced by shortening summer child care and adding in intersessions free of charge.
- Intersessions could provide opportunity for innovation in teaching/learning
- **HVAC concerns** - We struggle to elevate this concern into a deciding factor. Many of our students live in housing circumstances that do not include climate control such as a/c. The schools tend to be better environments, even without a/c, at keeping a generally tolerable environment. Also, the difference between the last week of August and the first week of September aren't drastically different w/r to climate and weather. Same with the middle and end of June.
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### **Group #3 – Concerned / Opposed**

Cons:

- The region isn't ready

- We haven't defined the problem we are trying to solve; there is no good data
- We haven't exhausted all the other options for improvement
- Current staff not wanting to teach at intersessions
- Other jobs during the summer – teachers, students, paras, etc.
- Costs for intersessions; HVAC
- Lots of other changes lately
- No robust summer program lately; with a shorter summer, not enough time to plan one
- Loss of instructional time with more transitions
- Many changes lately - stress

Pros:

- Help with burnout
- Opportunity to do research about the idea – not much has been done
- Continue talking about issues, such as learning loss
- Need a well thought-out plan, sample calendar, communications plan

Other thoughts:

- We need a robust summer plan
- We need the right decision for kids, staff, and parents

**Group #4 (Zoom) – Concerned / Opposed**

Pros:

- Does not extend school year. It would just mean starting earlier.
- More frequent breaks for staff and students. Less teacher burnout.
- Less opportunity for learning loss (maybe). More studies needed.
- Challenges Status Quo, trying something different could be good.

Cons:

- Needs to be a regional decision.
- The state of funding would make it difficult for us to fund intersession times. The intersession times are what makes a difference for academics. Why can't we do summer school instead at schools with HVAC systems?
- Lots of instructional review needed due to numerous breaks.
- HVAC issues.
- Childcare challenges.
- Loss of time for summer employment for students and staff.
- It would be difficult for students to have to undergo another massive change in schooling. This would be hard on student and staff mental health.

**Group #5, - Intrigued / Supportive**

Pros:

- Social-emotional benefits
- More connection with children and families – more consistent access to resources (big benefit to marginalized groups)

- More eyes on children to prevent abuse and neglect
- More opportunity for extracurriculars, etc. / Resources
- Less learning loss – more opportunity for remediation
- Special ed – mostly benefits related to IEP growth
- More frequent breaks – benefit to teachers (teacher perspective)
- Any research of 45 day schedule benefits all scores math, for all other subjects for marginalized students

Cons:

- \*Lack of information / misunderstanding of what this could look like; make sure everyone gets the info.. A sample calendar would be helpful
- Lack of knowledge related to research on the benefits

Other thoughts:

- We should focus on emotional well-being of students. Get them to weigh in.
- Going forward make sure students have all the research and benefits to them and others.

**Group #6 – Concerned / Opposed**

Pros:

- Intrigues some staff and students
- ???help with burnout and fatigue

Cons:

- Sounds expensive, underserved schools are already short on funding/ staffing
- Why not put the intersession support for students of need during our current breaks
- Increased breaks, increases disruptions during the school year–less consistency during
- Difficulty coordinating childcare during breaks for working families
- Difficult adjustments for summer camp programs and college interns that support those programs
- Difficult for split families with parenting plans in different regions
- Financial impact on students/ families needing the income support offered by a full summer break
- Staff burn-out
- NW weather not great for breaks; vacations in March different from those in June / August
- Lack of data on the problem that is assumed (learning loss)
- Lack of data that going to this model improves learning for a district our size

Question:

- What other options are there for increasing student support without the intersessions?

**Group #7 – Neutral**

Pros:

- Could address learning loss?
- Could provide academic support opportunities?



- Could provide enrichment opportunities?
- Could help with mental health?

Cons:

- It would be really hard to get regional agreement.
- Costs: HVAC, paying staff for intersessions.
- Could contribute to learning loss?
- Could further divide the community?
- How pay for intersessions?
- Impact to summer employment
- Childcare

What would it take to form an opinion?

- Research and data most people agree on
- A clear majority of all groups wanting to move forward
- Kick-in of other districts
- Being clear in our communication and acknowledging the pain points of change; being good listeners
- A pilot of something smaller to see if it works. Examples: Winlock just made a 2 weeks change. One suggestion has been a re-enactment of winter break.

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**Notes from participants that were emailed to add to the conversation:**

- I'm not sure about the argument people are making about "what's the problem we are trying to solve?" I feel like the whole conversation is around improving the learning environment/outcomes and addressing the mental health crisis in our schools. The idea is to do better, not necessarily that something is wrong now.
- My final thoughts are that I would personally support a balanced calendar, but would need to be reassured that there would be upgrades to HVAC systems, regional adoption, guaranteed supports during breaks for students with disabilities, and a reasonable timeline that gives families plenty of notice to adjust their calendars.

I would recommend that the board approve taking further steps, including communication with other districts, getting estimates for hvac upgrades and potentially pursuing a tax levy to fund them, and to have the Family Liaisons, McKinney Vento Liaison, and Bilingual Family Engagement Specialists do a comprehensive deep dive into how marginalized families will be impacted and how they can be supported.

## **Closing Thoughts**

Ms. Riche thanked participants for their reports and commented that the interest the groups demonstrated in their discussions made it more helpful to ask for participants to express anything unsaid or reflections rather than seek area of common ground and disagreement. Participants shared the following:

- I discovered through this process that I don't know as much as I think. It has been interesting to hear everyone's ideas. There is lots of "brain" walking around out there.

- We need to define the problem we're trying to solve. That will inform our decision. We need a different perspective.
- We have seen lots of change; it is hard to think about this without others in the region involved. Timing is everything; this is a tough ask right now.
- It would have been helpful to have an evidence-based research group and experts looking into the bargaining groups. This is a tough task for us without expertise.
- It would be helpful to know if there is a specific population we are trying to serve. Can we target them with a balanced calendar?
- This is like a school assignment with one big question and lots of smaller questions inside. You have to solve the smaller ones to get to the answer for the big question. It might be the balanced calendar won't solve it all.
- There is evidence supporting this; this is why we are here. Part of the reason we are thinking about a balanced calendar is learning loss – how to solve it. As a counselor, this feels like a no-brainer. Elementary school is more like a community center. Long breaks are hard and not pleasant.
- A couple of groups said there is no actual problem we're trying to solve. For me, it helps with mental health crisis, the idea of teacher burnout, the feeling that the educational field is overwhelming for staff, students, administration. This is not solved by taking one step, but noting the step is not helpful. The problem could be helped. Maybe being a little different could attract teachers. We need to do something different – intersessions with no childcare could help families. It is hard to define a single problem to put this around.

### **Next Steps**

Ms. Riche outlined the steps ahead for the BCEC process. The Facilitation team will draft a final report and work with the Steering Committee to refine the structure and content of the report. The report will be sent out to BCEC participants before being finalized. At this point BCEC participants will be asked not to wordsmith but to see if the report catches the important ideas and represents the process honestly and accurately. “Did we get it right?” There will be roughly ten days to review the report and give feedback, in early January. Once it is finalized, the report will be given to the superintendent to share with the school board. She thanked all the attendees at the fifth and final meeting for participating fully through to the end.

### **Closing Remarks**

Dr. Murphy especially thanked the students who participated and expressed appreciation for their thoughtful comments. He drew attention to one student's closing comment about the big question containing many smaller questions. He noted the idea of trying to swat a fly with a sledge hammer, but commented perhaps we are trying to break up concrete barriers, and a sledgehammer is needed.

To the question that was raised by a number of participants in this meeting, he stated that he sees “the problem we're trying to solve” as being broadly defined in two parts: to support struggling learners and to improve mental health. But we don't yet know exactly how the calendar might affect these issues. There is a need to dig deeper.

Dr. Murphy reminded participants that the BCEC is not a decision-making body, and assured participants that everything will be taken to the school board. He closed by reiterating sincere thanks to all participants and the Facilitation Team.

The meeting adjourned at 7:30 pm

**BCEC Participants Attending:**

Jade Austin  
Jennifer Cole  
Scott Cushing (Zoom)  
Quinn Dickason  
Tad Earley (Zoom)  
Jayme Fierro  
Kaylin Furry  
Sandy Hallstrom  
John Hanby (Zoom)  
Bonnie Haushka (Zoom)  
Leslie Huff (Zoom)  
Robbi Kesler  
Ava Miller (Zoom)  
Suzanne Miller (Zoom)  
Abby Neumiller-Hanell (Zoom)  
Jeff Pearson  
Sarah Pearson  
Steve Roth  
Allison Weide  
Frank Wilson  
Chris Woods  
Heather Slater (Zoom)  
Condee Wood (Zoom)  
Dana Woods (Zoom)  
Karen Zarate (Zoom)