

Administrative Procedure 130

SCHOOL YEAR AND SCHOOL DAY

Background

The school year and school day provide time for student learning and quality instruction. To facilitate busing and other shared services, schools follow a common Division-wide school year calendar. The Board may establish a school year calendar for one, two or three years in order to facilitate long range planning for staff, students and parents. The Board may also consider alternate school year calendars.

Definitions:

Instructional day = students are at school for instructional purposes

Operational day = assigned duties for teachers, but no school for students (teachers may be off site e.g. convention)

Unassigned day = Board's discretion to allocate in-lieu, professional development, holiday, or other purposes including instruction of pupils.

Procedures

1. The Superintendent shall propose school year calendars up to three years in advance. The calendar for the next following school year shall be submitted for Board approval at least six months in advance. In developing school year calendars, the Superintendent will consult with principals.
2. School year calendars shall meet the following criteria:
 - Not to exceed 200 days, of which *at least* 181 shall be full instructional days for students and *at least* 191 full operational days as noted:

School Year	
Total Days in a School Year	200
Minimum Instructional Days for Students	181
Operational Days for Teachers (181+10)	191
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 2 Parent/Teacher Conferences (or in lieu)• 2 Teachers' Convention• 1 Semester Break (day)• 2 Organization (Opening and Closing)• 3 Professional Development	10
Unassigned Days at Board's Discretion	9

- Instructional hours:

Grades	Hours Required	Hours Required
	GHSD	Ministerial Regulation
K	475	475
1-6	960	950
7-9	1010	950
10 – 12	1010	1000

Note: Recesses, breaks, lunch time minutes do not count towards instructional hours.

- Christmas/ winter break of at least 14 consecutive days including Saturday and Sunday
 - An Easter/ spring break beginning on Good Friday and including the following week
 - Equal distribution of instructional days between semesters 1 and 2
 - Accommodates the schedule for Provincial Examinations
 - Following the first semester, a semester break to organize for semester two.
3. When parent/teacher conferences occur primarily in the evening or outside of regular school hours, and require time equivalent to an instructional day, schools may take time in lieu. Conference days shall be coordinated among schools within a common busing zone.
 4. Regular daily instruction shall not begin prior to 8:45 a.m. and classes shall be dismissed no later than 3:40 p.m.
 5. Students in grades 1-6 shall have a minimum of one 15-minute recess per instructional day.
 6. All students should have a noon break of at least 40 minutes.
 7. When Remembrance Day falls on a non-instructional day there will be no additional school holiday.

References: School Act and Ministerial Regulations
 Base Instruction Funding Grades 1-12, Section 1.2, Funding Manual
 ECS Base Instruction Funding, Section 1.1, Funding Manual

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS REGARDING THE SCHOOL YEAR CALENDAR

How is the school year calendar determined?

The Board approves the school year calendar from one to three years in advance. Requirements for a school year calendar are described in *Administrative Procedure 130 School Year and School Day*.

Why are there so many days when students are not at school?

Alberta Education sets the minimum instructional hours that must be offered to students in a school year. Students in grades 1-9 must receive 950 hours, whereas senior high students must receive 1000 hours. Kindergarten is 475 hours. Golden Hills exceeds the requirements at 960 hours for grades 1-6 and 1010 hours 7-12.

Instructional time does not include days or hours assigned for:

- Teachers' convention
- professional development
- parent-teacher interviews
- teacher planning
- staff meetings
- statutory and school authority-declared holidays
- lunch breaks
- breaks between classes
- recesses
- time taken for the registration of students
- extracurricular activities

Why does school begin before Labour Day?

The province sets dates for the Provincial Achievement Tests and Diploma Examinations. The calendar must work backwards from these dates in order to ensure equal instructional days and hours in both semesters. As a result, school begins before Labour Day in order to meet all the instructional requirements as well as the calendar guidelines in the AP.

How is it determined when Easter / Spring Break falls?

Spring Break coincides with Easter each year. Golden Hills and the Catholic Separate jurisdiction which both serve K- 12 students in Strathmore and Drumheller coordinate their calendars as much as possible to accommodate families who may have children in both systems. This helps parents and care-givers coordinate daycare or special holiday programming.

Why does my child seem to have so many days off school?

Required instructional time for students, as set by the Minister of Education, is measured by hours rather than days.

Teachers attend teachers' convention, participate in professional development, have time in lieu of evenings for parent teacher conferences, and complete organizational tasks at semester break, school start up and finish. Teachers are working on the days when students have time away from school.

If parents are unhappy with the school year calendar, what can they do?

First, be familiar with the guidelines in the Administrative Procedure 130. The AP shows that many external factors determine most of the school year calendar.

Second, recognize that the school calendar is a common calendar - designed to meet learning needs rather than individual preferences for holidays.

Third, use your own best judgment to accommodate your family when necessary. For example, if family holidays include the Labour Day weekend, then advise the school your children will register afterwards.

Fourth, express your ideas for policy amendments to feedback@ghsd75.ca or fax to 403 934-5124.