



M E M O R A N D U M

To: Dr. Albert Roberts, Superintendent
Members of the Board of Education

From: Steve Cummins, Senior Director of Human Resources

Re: **2015-16 & 2016-17 School Year Calendar Committee Recommendations**

Date: February 24, 2015

The Calendar Committee is recommending the following proposed calendars for the 2015-16 & 2016-17 school years. Individuals representing the Board, Administration, and members from several bargaining groups provided input at several meetings on the calendar committee. Community and instructional needs were both taken into account when determining student attendance dates. The proposed calendars abide by the number of student and staff attendance days relative to IL School Code requirements and existing collective bargaining agreements.

A summary of the important elements within the final proposed calendars are as follows:

- The student start dates will continue to begin on a Monday (August 31, 2015 and August 29, 2016 respectively). There will be a full week of student attendance prior to the Labor Day holiday.
- Winter and Spring Breaks have been coordinated to the District 200 calendar as a result of joint conversations with associates from D200 (OPRFHS) and D90 (River Forest).
- Thanksgiving Break will continue to occur Wednesday through Friday. The Wednesday before Thanksgiving continues to be a non-attendance day for both students and staff.
- Trimester end dates have been designated to create balance in regards to the number of student attendance days within each trimester. Trimester 2 has the greatest number of days, but is also the trimester most likely to have days cancelled due to extreme weather.
- 2nd trimester conference dates continue to be scheduled in mid-February. This affords opportunities for data to be shared from the winter MAP assessments at the time of conferences. Winter MAP testing, which occurs following winter break, is sometimes not concluded until late January.
- Students will be in attendance on the Veterans Day and Casimir Pulaski Day holidays in both school years.
- The last day of school (absent of emergency days) will be on a Wednesday (June 8, 2016 and June 7, 2017 respectively). This allows for several additional days during the week should emergency days be utilized for extreme weather (without going into a new a calendar week).

The revised calendars reflect changes responsive to two new topics, which occurred during the 2014-15 school year:

1. **Teacher Institute Days** - the newly ratified OPTA agreement calls for two additional teacher institute dates (increased from 4 to 6) beginning with the 2015-16 school year. The OPTA

contract specifically calls for one teacher institute date in each trimester and two institute dates before the student start date. The contract states the placement of the 6th teacher institute date is at the District's discretion, and there was support from the committee for the administrative recommendation to hold three dates prior to the student start date. The 2015-16 and 2016-17 calendar drafts comply with the new OPTA contract language.

2. **Election Days and ISBE Guidance** - The State of Illinois issued revised language and guidance to all districts during this school year recommending, but not requiring all schools in the State serving as election sites to schedule teacher institute dates on election days. A recent IASB *PRESS release* contained this information:

Policy 6:20 (School Year Calendar and Day) – In accordance with Public Act 98-773, the amendment to 10 ILCS 5/11-4.1 encourages schools that are chosen to be polling places to either close for the day or hold a teachers' institute with students not in attendance.

The consensus from the committee discussion was to comply with the State's recommendation outlined in the IL School Code. The impact on the draft calendars follows below. Every other year the District has greater discretion regarding the teacher institute placement in school calendars.

- 1 election date in 2015-16
 - March Primary Election (2016)
- 3 election dates in 2016-17
 - Nov. General Election (2016)
 - Feb. Primary Election (2017)
 - Apr. Consolidated Election (2017)

As drafted, the teacher institute dates do occur one each trimester, both following the State guidance on election dates and complying with the OPTA contract language. The timing of the November 2016 general election (on Tuesday, November 8, 2016) impacted the committee's recommendation to have students in session on Veterans Day, which occurs on the Friday of the same school week during the 2016-17 school year.

The Calendar Committee recommends additional dialog before finalizing one aspect of the proposed 2016-17 school calendar related to the February primary election date. The discussion will be regarding the placement of the teacher institute date during the second trimester. The 2016-17 draft calendar presented to the Board has the pupil attendance days overstated by one day (177 versus 176) as the final teacher institute date will ultimately replace a student attendance day. The concern lies in the fact that the two election dates in 2017 (last Tuesday in February and first Tuesday in April) are closer together than it would be desired from a professional learning perspective. Alternatives to the February primary election date may be several dates in January (as noted on the draft) to afford more time between teacher institute dates. The committee also wished to confirm whether or not a primary election would occur on February 28, 2017.