



MEMORANDUM

To: Board of Directors

From: Dr. Greg Baker, Superintendent

Date: April 27, 2023

Subject: **Monitoring Report for EL-8, District Calendar**

I certify that the following is accurate as of April 27, 2023. The reporting period is from April 21, 2022 through April 27, 2023.

Policy Type: Executive Limitation

Policy: [EL-8 District Calendar](#)

“The Superintendent, in preparing the district calendar, shall not fail to appropriately involve stakeholder groups and timely communicate the calendar and any changes.”

Adopted: September 10, 2009

Reviewed/Revised: January 10, 2013; April 21, 2016, April 20, 2017

Interpretation of Items: None in question.

Background Information: This report is about Executive Limitation 8 – District Calendar (EL-8). It was formerly known as EL-16 District Calendar. Information indicating compliance for each of the areas is presented below.

*Some of the information in this report has not changed from previous reports but provides needed context for each area. **Bolded words** or phrases within the text of this report have been used to signal new initiatives, strategies and work.*

Prepare a district calendar that optimizes teaching and learning throughout the year, supports whole child learning and considers typical family constraints.

The school calendar is a subject of bargaining and was a significant part of our discussion during our last negotiations with the Bellingham Education Association (BEA) in 2020. Those negotiations with the BEA resulted in a three-year contract and calendars for the years 2020-21, 2021-22 and 2022-23. We are currently negotiating a new BEA contract. In addition to those negotiations, the district meets with other union leaders representing those that are most affected by the school calendar, such as our paraeducators and administrative assistants who work the school calendar schedule.

As shared in last year's report, the common components of these calendars that are included in contract language with BEA are:

- Parameters for school start date, winter and spring breaks.
- Two staff learning days (purple days) prior to the first day of school.
- Staff learning days embedded into the calendar. One in each month of September, October, November and March.
- Semester break day in January to allow staff to finalize grading and prepare for second semester.
- Eight all district early dismissal days including the day before Thanksgiving and the last day of school.
- Specific time for conferencing and family engagement in November.
- Built-in designated snow make-up day in May.

On March 1 of this year, our annual calendar committee met to discuss the 2024-25 calendar. Our goal was to determine key dates such as the first day of school, winter and spring breaks and a tentative last day of school. The committee's recommendations were recently reviewed and finalized by the superintendent and BEA president. Key dates have been posted so families and staff will be able to best plan their schedules.

The 2022-23 school year will be the final year of our BEA contract and we are currently in negotiations. Many of the other calendar components such as the number of and specific dates for staff learning days (purple days) and early releases will be determined. Staff learning days and districtwide early release days continue to provide valuable time for staff professional development to improve teaching and learning and engage with families.

As reported last year, one new calendar component for the 2021-22 calendar was the addition of snow make-up days in March and May. Our contract language with BEA states that if needed due to inclement weather, the May date would be the first make-up day used followed by the conversion of the March staff learning day into a school day. The purpose of “building in” snow make-up days is to allow the last day of school to be more consistent instead of adding days to the last projected day of the year. **This year, the school calendar has not been impacted by weather. Staff were able to engage in professional learning on March 10.**

The 2023-24 and 2024-25 key dates have been communicated to staff and families and can be viewed on our [calendars webpage on our website](#). We will post and communicate with staff and families once the full calendar has been finalized.

Prepare a district calendar that provides adequate collaborative and professional development time for staff in the pursuit of effective instruction.

We began the year with a focus on improving inclusive educational strategies and school teams planned their work for the year at the August 10-11 leadership team retreat. We brought together leadership teams from each school for a day and one-half retreat in early August that centered our professional learning work around inclusive instructional strategies. Teams were provided with initial training experiences in culturally responsive teaching, universal design for learning, student conduct and rethinking behavior, co-teaching, and high leverage practices for inclusion. During the latter portion of the retreat, teams worked together to establish their learning focus for the year using a template for inquiry-based learning provided by the Department of Teaching and Learning (see below).

Department of Teaching and Learning Team’s Draft PD Plan 2022-23

Central Idea		
Central Idea: Inclusive practices create belonging and engagement.		
Lines of Inquiry (a focus on . . .)		
Collaborative structures that support co-planning and co-teaching	Culturally Responsive Teaching and Universal Design for Learning	Flexible Learning Environments and Staffing
What are the different models of co-teaching? What are the purposes of each?	What are the intersections between CRT and UDL?	What are the roles and responsibilities for all adults in the school (special education, general education, paraprofessionals, <u>specialists</u> , related services personnel)
How can we use our time resources to build in co-planning and coteaching opportunities?	How do we ensure learning that is culturally responsive, differentiated, and based on the principles of Universal Design for Learning?	What are tools that support engagement and reengagement that should be provided in the general education classroom environment? How do all students receive instruction on using those tools in the general environment?
Measuring Impact		
Resources/Support		

Using this template, each school created a set of focused questions, and began to plan their work for the year. As the year progressed, teams captured some of their learning in a centralized One Note document, sharing PowerPoint decks and other resources that could be accessed by all schools. See an example of some of the work from Cordata Elementary School below:

Cordata Elementary Example

Date	Content/Topics	Slide Deck/Resources
8/25/22	Yearlong Central Idea Focus: SEL/Inclusion/IB Intro	Beginning of year 8-26-22 building time.pptx
9/9/22	Reviewing Tier 1 SEL/Scheduling	Slide Deck
9/15/22	CST/SST	Slide Deck
9/23/22	Sound Discipline: Rooted Relationships	Sound-Disipline-Pacing-Guide-2022-2023.pdf Rooted Relationship Workbook Fillable.pdf Self-Regulation-Toolcards-SPANISH (1).pdf SelfRegFirst12CardsandInstructions04202020.pdf
1/12/22	IB-sharing learning from our teacher visit to Alderwood	IB Visit to Alderwood 12-7-22.pptx
1/13/22	MLK Assembly	MLK2023.pptx

Our annual calendar includes built-in time for job-alike professional learning opportunities. We have a pattern of weekly early release opportunities every Thursday for elementary schools that includes time for elementary teacher planning and professional learning. Thursdays are also included through the year for secondary teacher planning and professional learning. Topics for elementary professional learning this year included a focus on the roll out of the new comprehensive sexual health curriculum and the K-3 literacy work in foundational skills. An example of all the agendas for one of the secondary job-alike days is provided on the next page.

Monitoring Report for EL-8

MIDDLE	DTL Lead	Session Facilitator	Content/brief	ProDev # if applicable	Location
Art	Mike	Mark Heimer	Four content sessions led by teachers	8984	SHS
Counselors	Keith/Chris	Keith Schacht	-Share Learning from WSCA, -5030 next steps (Inapprop/Approp, Admin/Couns Convo form, time/task forms -Registration process updates -504 Updates -Shared Problems of practice	8990	Parkview
CTE	Jeff	Jeff Molly Heather	Work Based Learning inclusion	8987	BHS Commons
ELA/SS/ Core	Charisse/ Jenny	Charisse	Newsela demo; TCI: sharing inclusionary practices. Via Zoom and at school site: https://bellinghamschools.zoom.us/j/86216272712	FMS 8969 KMS 8970 SMS 8971 WMS 8972	FMS TBD KMS TBD SMS TBD WMS TBD
Health/PE	Kim/Charisse	Tanya Peckler	CSHE lesson updates/debriefs	9005	FMS gym
Library team	Bill	CJ Fisher	Join middle level ELA		
Math	Rey	Rey Ramos/ John Hoogestraat Desmos Classroom Coach	Desmos/updates and then by course		BHS library and classrooms
Multilingual Learner team (if separate)	Amy	(see High School MLL)		NA	
Music/Drama	Mike	Kirstin Doud/Jenny Rothnie	HS Recruiting video and grade alike planning time	NA	Sehome orchestra room
Science	Bill	Lynnelle Larson, Ella Moench, Randy Holmes	Developing 3D Assessments	8932	Kulshan
Life Skills teachers	Bethany	Bethany/ Connor H.	Inclusionary practices	8949	BHS 131
BRIDGES teachers	Ryan/Bethany		Conflict cycle related to inclusive practices in general ed		
Resource	Bethany		Transition to next level		
Reading Intervention (READ 180)	Jenny	Jenny, Deb and Team	One hour together- zoom		
World Language	Amy	(See High School WL)			
Art	Mike	Mark Heimer	Four content sessions led by teachers	8984	Sehome
Counselors	Chris		-Share Learning from WSCA, -5030 next steps (Inapprop/Approp, Admin/Couns Convo form, time/task forms -Registration process updates -504 Updates -Shared Problems of practice	8990	Parkview
CTE	Jeff	Athletic Trainers		8987	BHS Commons
English	Jenny and Jay	Dept leads- Jenny	AI presentation and job alike time	8989	BHS
Health/PE with CTE	Jeff	Darin Nolan	CHSE lessons; PBL for general health	8987 (CTE)	BHS Commons

Monitoring Report for EL-8

MIDDLE	DTL Lead	Session Facilitator	Content/brief	ProDev # if applicable	Location
Library team	Bill		Join HS English on AI	8989	BHS
Math	Rey	Teacher leaders coordinated by Rey Ramos/ with John Hoogestraat, Desmos coach	Course alike work on critical areas of focus and course alignment. Desmos support for Algebra 1		BHS library and classrooms
Multilingual Learner team (if separate)	Amy	Becky Donnino	Solidify MLL course offerings for next year-- common expectations for course names, curriculum used, students each course is intended for. (Trying to get ahead of master scheduling at HS)	NA	Donnino's classroom at Sehome
Music/Drama	Mike	Kirstin Doud			
Science	Bill	Joe Balsiger, Bill	Laboratory safety, updates on science curriculum development and OER, reviewing course connections to climate science	8975	BHS 216
Social Studies	Charisse/Janis	Inst Leaders USH (Kirk) World (XX) Civics (Reidel) AP Human Geo (Wright) AP Psychology (O'Malley)	Course alike alignment including where STI fits and where Holocaust is taught. Opening prompts: 1. Acknowledges stress re: staffing/budget 2. Share UDL successes challenges Course alike best practices- instruction and assessment	9003 US History Sehome 9004 World, Civics, AP Psych and AP Human BHS	USH Sehome TBD <i>Civics BHS 304</i> <i>AP Psych BHS 308</i> <i>AP Human BHS 309</i> <i>World History BHS 310</i>
Life skills	Bethany	Connor H.	Inclusionary practices	8949	BHS 131
BRIDGES teachers	Ryan	Ryan/Bethany	Conflict Cycle related to inclusion in gen ed		
Resource	Varied	Varied			
Community Transitions	Analisa	Analisa	CT: Curriculum Development and Scaffolding	7698	CT
World Language	Amy	Hooker, Dulion, French, Morrison	Revisiting post-COVID vertical alignment of WL Courses' Key Concepts and assessments.		BHS Second Floor
School Psychologists		Kayla Hartman		9000	District Office

We have worked hard to return to a more “normal” pattern of professional development opportunities built into the school day, but still experienced some challenges. Early in the school year, we continued to struggle with substitute coverage and with this our ability to free up teachers and others for additional professional development embedded in the school day. Our human resources department has made significant progress on enlarging our substitute pool, and we are experiencing far fewer “unfilled” absences. We once again sent instructional coaches and district office personnel into our schools for support where needed.

▪ **Reduce time that teachers are out of the classroom for professional development**

A goal when our calendar was created several years ago with embedded staff learning days was to significantly reduce the time that teachers are out of the classroom for professional development. Our goal was a 50 percent reduction in absences related to professional development. **Based on the final data for the 2021-22 school year, it shows an overall decrease of 76 percent.** As you can see in the chart below, absences for professional development purposes have continued to reduce each year. This data does not take into account that the number of certificated staff has continued to increase significantly over the same time period.

School districts continue to be challenged to cover all substitute needs. For this reason, we have only allowed professional development during a school day to occur on very rare occasions.

Certificated Staff Absences by Year for Professional Development and Collaboration									
	2013-14 Baseline Year	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20 Prior to COVID School Closure	2020-21 COVID School Closure	2021-22
No. of Certificated Absences	4,958	4,495	3,799	3,287	3,060	2,818	1,650		1,211
Percent of Decrease from Baseline Year		9.3%	23.4%	34%	38%	43%	49%		76%

▪ **Develop intentional time for student and family engagement**

The previous couple of years family engagement efforts were greatly impacted by the COVID pandemic. The innovative efforts to connect and support families during the pandemic informed how we approach family engagement now and into the future. We returned to some more traditional conferencing opportunities for families while also offering new ways for families to interact with staff. For some, virtual conferencing and meetings proved to be a more convenient option.

The family engagement team continues to increase the effort to connect with all families and remove barriers to make communication as open and frequent as possible. Our BIPOC families and families who speak languages other than English have been historically marginalized, but we can confidently say this is not the case in Bellingham Public Schools. As the number of languages grows, we continue to increase the number of World Language interpreters and provide ways for school and district staff to receive the support needed to engage all families. We have over fifty interpreters, contracts with several language agencies and access to phone

and video interpretation services which allow us to support the nearly seventy languages spoken in our district.

A few years back, we started Conexiones Latinx (Latinx Connections). We now have between sixty-five and seventy parents at every Zoom session. These sessions engage parents in conversations about returning to school, mental health, drug, alcohol and suicide prevention. This unprecedented level of engagement has given families the opportunity to express their opinion on many different matters pertaining to our district.

Our Family Resource Centers (FRC) at Carl Cozier and Shuksan are open to the public Monday through Friday and are available to assist families with varying support needs. Families may also call the Multi-Language Message Line (360-647-6816) any time in any language. The line is checked several times a day and an interpreter responds to the family as quickly as possible. This system provides families with another opportunity to connect with our schools and district.

Timely communication of calendar and calendar changes to all stakeholders and the board.

We work diligently to share calendar updates as quickly as possible with the board, staff, students and other stakeholders.

During this reporting period, our school year calendar and daily schedule were routine and not impacted by weather or a pandemic.

Our typical communications protocol is to send reminders about planned days off and early dismissals via email and social media, such as this [announcement](#). We continue this practice throughout the school year and reporting period.

In spring 2022, we were considering adjusting early dismissal bell times, among other proposals ahead of the 2022-23 school year. We shared a [message in May explaining the proposed changes and asked for community feedback](#); we then [provided an update in June](#), which said bell times would not change for the 2022-23 school year.

The first day of school and back-to-school events and orientations are sent in a multitude of ways, including [email](#), text, school-based communication and within the annual [Family Handbook](#), which is mailed to all families. The handbook includes both a long form calendar and the “[bubble calendar](#).” We update and maintain our [calendar webpage](#) regularly.

In early 2023, we noticed an error in our family handbook calendar regarding the A/B designation starting in March 2023. Some families may have this printed calendar hanging and use it as a reference, so we pointed out [the error in calendar reminders](#) and asked our middle and high schools to include this information in their newsletters.

Below: Sample of a calendar page from the Family Handbook and the one-page “bubble calendar.”



We shared a [calendar update in March](#) with finalized graduation dates, including Community Transitions program graduation, the last day of school for seniors and the last day of school for all other students.

■ Inclement weather impact on calendar

The inclement weather and snow we experienced this winter mostly occurred when school was not in session with one exception. [We saw snow on Feb. 28 and ran buses on snow routes that day.](#)

Below: Only one weather-related social media post needed in this reporting period on Feb. 28, 2023. Updated in the afternoon before schools dismissed.



The transportation director, assistant superintendent of teaching and learning, assistant superintendent of human resources, executive director of operations, the superintendent, and executive director of communications and community relations work closely to ensure staff, students, families and community members are notified of any changes to bus routes or our school schedule in a timely manner in a variety of ways, including multiple languages (depending on home language). **Early morning texts and emails are sent through ParentSquare, our district's new notification platform.** Schedule information is shared via our district reception line in English and four other languages through the multi-language message line, broadcasted by local media, posted on our website and posted on social media.

Statement of compliance:

The superintendent is **in compliance** with EL-8 District Calendar.