



Frequently Asked Questions: School Calendar

Who sets the school calendar for each school year?

Local school boards establish the school calendar. In 2012, changes to the provincial school calendar regulations eliminated the standard school calendar which was previously published by the Ministry of Education. Boards of Education now establish local calendars for their school districts.

Why does SD 79 do three-years of calendars at a time, instead of one?

The [School Act](#) and the [School Calendar Regulation](#) allows school districts to develop school calendars for up to three years if they choose to do so. Developing school calendars takes a lot of work and consultation, so our district chose to move to a three-year cycle for operational efficiency and to facilitate better long-term planning for the district, families, and independent schools in the Cowichan Valley. This is the second time the district is consulting on a three-year calendar cycle.

What happens if the calendar has to change?

If a school calendar requires any kind of change, the Board of Education must follow the amendment process outlined in the *School Calendar Regulation*. Basically, any proposed change would be made publicly available before the change is made.

Does the *School Act* require a set number of days for each school year?

No, the *School Act* only sets a minimum number of hours for instruction that must be offered to students. It is up to the school district to determine how those hours are achieved throughout the school year. Currently, the minimum required hours are:

- Kindergarten: 858 hours
- Elementary: 883 hours
- Secondary: 952 hours

How are non-instructional days determined?

Three of the six non-instructional days are determined by our local teachers' union, as outlined in the collective agreement. Historically, these have taken place in October, February and May each year. The final dates for the following school year are not confirmed until their Spring Annual General Meetings, so scheduled dates for these proposed calendars are subject to change.

The school district determines the dates for the remaining three days in consultation with education partners and parents. We do our best to ensure all non-instructional days are spread evenly in each semester.



Why are there non-instructional days to begin with?

Aside from non-instructional days being required through provincial regulations, these days provide our teachers and staff with important opportunities to continue their own professional learning and stay current in their practice.

They also provide important opportunities for staff to meet, discuss and plan, collaborate on learning practices, and work together as we all continue our journey towards being excellent educators, and having a world-class public education system.

Who decides when holiday breaks are?

The dates for our school district's winter and spring break are determined by our local collective agreement. These are determined during bargaining, and are not subject to change.

Are parents consulted before the proposed calendar is created?

Parents have an opportunity to provide feedback on proposed calendars during open consultation periods. When a new calendar is being created, consideration to past feedback is given, and we also incorporate feedback received throughout the year.