

1400 School Road  
Port Alsworth, AK 99653

Lake and Peninsula School District  
PO box 498  
King Salmon, AK 99613

December 8, 2023

Dear LPSD Administration,

My name is Erik McGee. I am a freshman at Tanalian School, and this is my 12th year as a student in the district, since pre-school. The purpose of this letter is to highlight the benefits of the Subsistence Calendar and give reasoning on why we should keep it.

In the Lake and Peninsula School District, we have had the Subsistence Calendar for around 6 years. With this calendar, we have 150 student days. I know that there has not been an official movement to get rid of it, but I know that there has been talk about this. This would be a problem for many people in this district. It would take away days that students have to do subsistence activities and even their jobs. Subsistence activities give students cultural experience. They are learning how to provide for their families. Working jobs give students invaluable experience that they will use for the rest of their lives. Most students during the summer take advantage of the shortened year and without it their schedules would be thrown off.

When school ends for the year, I take a few days as a break and then I immediately start working. My father directs a summer camp that begins at the end of May. It takes a very long time to get ready for the camp season, so we work a lot in May to be prepared. We also do other activities such as subsistence hunting, we go fishing, and also travel to see family. This is the only time we really get to do these things without missing school because of our camp season. Taking away the subsistence calendar would mean taking away these benefits. I know that this is true for many other students as well.

A solution that I would like to recommend is to add 5-7 days to the calendar. Adding extra days would solve the subsistence calendar problem by giving students a few extra days to get last minute assignments turned in and not feel as stressed, while also not taking away time from the summer. The

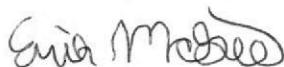
solution would be a great compromise for everyone. Matthew Grossmann, a teacher that has been teaching in LPSD for 15 ½ years, said that this solution would ultimately be the best way to go. He also suggested adding 5 extra inservice days. Adding days would give new teachers more time to prepare for their lessons. Rachel Grossmann, who has had three children in enrollment over the course of 10 years, said, "I think going back to the traditional calendar, cold turkey, would be really difficult." If the school board decided at the end of the year to go back to 170 days, it would be very hard for the students, parents, and even teachers to do the change. This makes only adding 5 days to the year even more beneficial. Adding days would change the calendar enough to make a difference but not change our entire schedule.

Mr. Grossmann explained that one of the biggest problems that the subsistence calendar brings is that it is harder for new teachers in the district to teach all their material in 150 days. Right here is where he suggested adding a few extra inservice days. Adding inservice days would give the teachers time to collaborate with more experienced teachers, and more lesson planning time. Adding inservice days, along with student days, is the best way to go.

Some people might say that not all students want the subsistence calendar. This claim is simply not true. In a recent survey sent out to all the Tanalian Jr. High and high school students, 92.9% of them said the subsistence calendar is beneficial to them. 0% said they want to go back to 170 days. This data clearly shows that many students do want the calendar to stick around.

If the school board chooses to get rid of the subsistence calendar, the students would not have enough time to do our subsistence activities and do our jobs. Transmuting the calendar would also be a very hard change to make over one year. I would love to have further discussions in the future. My email is emcgee@students.lpsd.com. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,



Erik McGee