

Public Hearing on a School Calendar

Legal Considerations:

Iowa Code §§ 279.10, School year — beginning date — exemption, places the school calendar in the sole authority of the board of directors of a school district but requires the board to hold a public hearing. It states, “the board of directors of a school district shall hold a public hearing on any proposed school calendar prior to adopting the school calendar.”

The agenda for tonight's meeting stated:

“The School Board will conduct a public hearing at the above-noted location and time on a proposed calendar for the 2021 – 2022 school year. At the hearing, any resident or taxpayer may present objections to, or arguments in favor of, any part of the proposal.”

Review of Research:

Research on school calendars is limited. The latest research simply says that students learn and retain better if they have breaks between their instructional terms. This may suggest some days off for students between each quarter.

Background:

Each year, it is the responsibility of the school board to approve a school calendar for the next year. The superintendent holds the responsibility to make recommendations to the board for calendar adoption. School board policy 601.1, School Calendar (which needs to be updated), reads in part, “It is the responsibility of the superintendent to develop the school calendar for recommendation, approval, and adoption by the board annually.”

Draft C of the Calendar:

Draft C is the preferred calendar of 68% of teachers and support staff who shared their opinion on a survey. According to the survey, here is what the majority of teachers would like to see in their calendar for next year:

- a. 72% would prefer a week and a half break at Christmas over two full weeks.
- b. 45% want to see the semesters even in length and breaking in January; 21% prefer the split at the holiday break, with 35% with no preference.
- c. 57% like to see Presidents' Day as a professional development day.
- d. 62% like to see spring break in March; 35% want to see it connected to Good Friday.
- e. 52% would like to see a full week of spring break next year.