



Calendar Committee Meeting Minutes
Thursday, December 8, 2022; 4:00 p.m.
Professional Learning Lab

Members present: Superintendent Dr. Marcus Lewton, Assistant Superintendent Keith Harris, Director of Instruction Melanie Kathrein, Mrs. Heidi Haugen-Smith (Classified Leadership representative), Mrs. Barbara Shockey (District-Wide PAC representative), Mrs. Diana Stroud (Roughrider Academies), Mrs. Lisa Nauman (Berg Elementary), Mrs. Paris Hill (Heart River Elementary), Mrs. Kandace King (Lincoln Elementary), Mrs. Tammy Meschke (Roosevelt Elementary), Mrs. Shawna Knipp (Dickinson Education Association President), Ms. Cassie Francis (Dickinson Middle School Principal), Mr. Jeffrey Brandt (Dickinson High School Principal), Mrs. Sara Streeeter (Jefferson Elementary Principal), Ms. Brenda Loney (Dickinson High School), and Mrs. Ashley O'Brien (Dickinson Middle School).

The meeting was called to order by Superintendent Lewton at 4:00 p.m. Individuals introduced themselves and the building or committee they represented.

Superintendent Lewton asked committee members when drafting the calendar if they had any input before drafting the calendar regarding potential conflicts or Century Code that they question. There were no concerns noted.

Storm Day/Virtual Day – Ms. Loney referenced the November 10, 2022, Virtual Day and inquired how many students participated in the virtual learning. Dr. Lewton responded a survey of the staff was not done from the November 10 virtual day. Students were surveyed asking how much they had participated in the virtual learning. It asked if they did none of the work, some of the work, or all of the work virtually. A majority of the responses indicated they had done some or all of the work. Mrs. King said from a teacher's perspective, she preferred the virtual day instead of making up the snow day. Mrs. Kathrein felt the staggering virtual starting times helped. Mrs. Shockey concurred adding as a parent it helped tremendously having several kids in virtual meetings with staggered starting times. Mrs. Paris suggested reiterating that the times are staggered. Dr. Lewton will make sure to include that in the instructions if the District should go virtual again.

Mrs. King inquired if the District had another storm day where it was not possible to have virtual instruction, would there still be enough minutes to satisfy the Century Code requirements for instructional time. Superintendent Lewton said he has been asked by employees why the District does not cancel school on storm days. His response is the District has a responsibility to its taxpayers. The legislators review what options the Districts utilize when there is a storm day. If schools move towards not making up the storm days, the legislators could take away the flexibility currently incorporated into Century Code. Dr. Lewton referenced Mrs. King's question and explained if there were no devices sent home due to circumstances, potentially the high school would need to make up the hours. The elementary and middle school may have a sufficient cushion in those hours/minutes.

Dr. Lewton inquired if any of the committee representatives had any other questions on the Century Code or the traditions. One tradition he mentioned was graduation at the high school falling Memorial Day weekend. Mrs. King was not in favor of this tradition as students participating in state track are out of town on Saturday. Dr. Lewton said a few years ago the school calendar went into June. He did not think the public liked the school year going into June and also wanted to keep graduation Memorial Day weekend.

Dr. Lewton asked if there were any other concerns. Mrs. King inquired if the early release days could be changed/substituted. Mrs. Paris suggested the early release days be changed into a full-day professional development day with the mornings having building-level planning meetings and the afternoons dedicated to District meetings. Dr. Lewton said he would make note of that when going into the draft of the calendar.

Dr. Lewton said he has a draft calendar that rolled all days forward from 2022-2023 into the draft 2023-2024 calendar. He did not wish to offend anyone and asked if the committee was interested in using it as the beginning stages. He also said the committee could use a blank calendar. The consensus was to use the draft 2023-2024 with the dates rolled over.

The educators appreciated the flexibility for the teacher workday from the 2022-2023 calendar. Dr. Lewton noted it was up to the building principal to monitor. Educators need to check in with the building principal and make sure their end-of-the-year duties are completed before leaving on May 24.

Ms. Francis inquired if there could be two professional development days at the beginning of the school year on August 21 and 22nd with the August 23 professional development date becoming a flexible half-day workday. The other flexible half-day workday would be May 24. The August 23 professional development day could be moved to another date in the calendar. Mrs. O'Brien shared that having three professional development days and then the following day in the classroom with students can be overwhelming. There was a lot of information during the professional development regarding PLC and RTI. There was little time to plan for the implementation of the new information. Mrs. King suggested more team time before being in the classroom with students.

Ms. Loney recalled years ago when there were two professional development days in August and another professional development day in September or October. There was interest from committee members in having this as an option. If using this option, Mrs. Kathrein recommended not placing the professional development day on a Friday. There were several suggestions on where the professional development day could be moved.

Mrs. King asked if there needed to be four professional development days, or if that number could be decreased. Superintendent Lewton responded that Dickinson Public Schools had fewer professional development days in comparison to most other Class A school districts. Mrs. Kathrein added the administrative Cabinet feels the District should provide as much training as possible. The requirement for mental health and literacy trainings is a full day for just those two requirements. Ms. Francis inquired if some of those trainings could be done online the week before school starts.

Dr. Lewton asked if it was important enough for this group not to have three professional development dates at the beginning of the school year and have two instead. Then transition an instructional day to a professional development day and identify the instructional day as December 21. There was input from educators that this will be difficult to keep students engaged and focused

for four days before a Christmas break. Mrs. Shockey also felt parents would be pulling their children from school on December 21.

There was a suggestion to transition some of the early release days into instructional days and then have full-day professional development instead of two or three early release days. Based on an earlier suggestion, Mr. Harris inquired if the full-day professional development day could be flexible where the morning was spent in the building and the afternoon would be District time. Mrs. Meschke inquired if the Professional Negotiated Agreement had language regarding the professional development days built into the school calendar.

After additional discussion, the consensus was to propose the following revisions in the 2023-2024 DPS School Calendar draft A. This will become option draft B.

- Move the Wednesday, August 23, 2023, professional development/professional development day to Monday, September 25, 2022.
- Change Wednesday, August 23, 2023, to a flexible teacher half-day workday
- Remove the Friday, September 29, 2023, early release day and make it a full instructional day.
- Change Thursday, December 21, 2023, to an instructional day.
- Remove the Friday, January 26, 2024, early release day and make it a full instructional day.
- Remove the Friday, February 16, 2024, early release day and make it a full instructional day.
- Remove the Tuesday, February 20, 2024, instructional day. The instructional day is not moved to another date in the calendar.
- Make Tuesday, February 20, 2024, a full-day professional development day.

Dr. Lewton said the two draft calendars would be emailed to the committee members early next week. Committee members were asked to share the calendar with the other employees in their building. A follow-up meeting would be scheduled in early January to receive input on the two calendars.

The meeting adjourned at 5:00 p.m.