

## HILLSBOROUGH CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT

## MULTI-YEAR PLAN

## 3.0 School Calendar K-8

1991-92

3.1 Objective: Develop a 181 student day school calendar recommendation and present it to the Board of Trustees by the June 3, 1992 Board Meeting

## 3.2 Activities:

Board appoints School Calendar Committee consisting of certificated (4), classified (1), and administrative staff (1), and parents (6)

Calendar Committee answers these questions:

What proposed calendar model(s) best meet(s) the instructional needs of children? (Consider length of summer vacation, grading periods, vacation breaks or intersessions during year)

What proposed model(s) best meet(s) staff and community preferences?

What are the personnel, budget, and maintenance implications of the proposed model(s)?

What steps need to be taken to implement the proposed model(s)? (Consider staff and community education, role of professional associations)

Committee reviews findings and staff and community input given to 1990-91

Instructional Time and Grouping Practices Committee and 1991-92 SB 1274

Crocker School Time and Intersession Committee

Committee determines need for further input on proposed model(s) - then secures input needed

Committee makes report and recommendations to Board by June 3, 1992

3.3 Resources: Instructional Time and Grouping Practices Committee findings  
SB 1274 Crocker Time and Intersession Committee findings  
District Staff/Parents

Oct.(1991)	To	Feb. (1992)	Mar.(1992)	April	May	June (first week)	Sept. (1992) to May (1993)
Crocker Site Committee meets and develops site level calendar planning framework		Crocker Site Committee makes SB 1274 report to the Board	Board Appoints Committee/Chairperson- Committee begins meeting	Committee continues meeting ——— Secures input (Possible report to Board re: charge/timeline)		Committee makes report and recommendation to Board	Committee prepares recommendation for 1993-94 school calendar consistent with Board defined direction

## THE CALENDAR COMMITTEE'S PROPOSAL CONCERNING ACADEMIC CALENDARS

The Calendar Committee was created by the Board of Trustees in March 1992 and asked to review the academic calendar and to recommend what calendar would best meet the instructional needs of our children and the preferences of our community and staff (working within the limits of 181 instructional days and 183 total teacher days). The Committee, made up of parents, administrators, teachers and classified staff has reviewed the current calendar and a number of alternatives and has received input from wider groups of staff (through a questionnaire and the needs assessment process) and from parents (through the needs assessment). The attached calendar represents the Committee's proposed recommendation.

In preparing this proposed calendar, we sought to provide blocks of instructional time to provide for the development of a good academic "flow"; vacation breaks of sufficient frequency and duration to allow students, their families and staff to recharge and placed so as to allow the celebration of traditional holidays; and the addition of a period of time for an intersession program of special, short-term educational experiences at those grades where it is appropriate. The intersession courses would be entirely voluntary and on a fee-paid basis. (The development of this intersession program is already underway at Crocker where it is part of the SB 1274 Grant which Crocker recently received.)

As the Committee's proposed calendar largely follows the format of our academic calendars of the past few years, it is easier to describe in terms of the changes it contains. In line with the community's strong preference expressed in the needs assessment survey, we have retained a school starting date of the day after Labor Day. For the fall of 1994 we have moved the starting date to the Wednesday after Labor Day because Tuesday, September 6, 1994, is the first day of Rosh Hashanah. The holidays and recess periods through New Year's Day remain the same as in the past few years.

The first change in the calendar comes at the President's Day holiday where we have added three recess days to the two holiday days to make this a full week break. During the past few years this has been a four or five-day weekend, although there were earlier periods in which it was a full week. The addition of these three days is to allow the intersession program to occur during that period. By expanding this break to a full week, families would have the option of taking a vacation period similar to that offered over the past few years and enrolling their children in intersession programs, without having to choose between those activities.

The second change comes at the Spring Recess. In the past the Spring Recess has been tied to the date of Easter so that the period during which the recess occurs can vary by several weeks. While the Committee recognizes the benefits of having this break occur at the holiday, both to accommodate family travel and to coordinate with the vacation schedules of other schools, it also sees a significant benefit in having the recess come at about the mid-point of the period between the Winter Break and the end of school. This allows the break to occur at the end of the second trimester for students on the trimester system (which includes Crocker students),

the most effective break time from the standpoint of the academic calendar. It also ensures that the break is not so early that it crowds the Presidents' week break or leaves an uncomfortably long period until the end of school. To try to balance these competing considerations, the Committee recommends placing the Spring Break at Easter when Easter occurs approximately at this mid-point (as in the spring of 1994) and at about the mid-point, without regard to Easter, when the holiday occurs earlier or later (as in the spring of 1995). When the break does not occur at Easter, we recommend that the Friday before Easter be a recess day. In reaching this recommendation the Committee has taken into account the preferences of the community and staff as expressed in the needs assessment survey.

As a result of these changes, the end of school occurs three days later than under our present calendar -- Wednesday, June 22, 1994 and Thursday, June 22, 1995. While the Committee realizes that will involve some additional planning for the schedule of eighth graders and graduation, we are confident that the combined efforts of the Crocker staff, students and parents can work to accommodate this change.

In arriving at this proposal we have considered a number of other alternatives. One alternative was to go forward without any change to the current academic calendar. This would result in the intersession program being placed in an existing break period, most likely the Spring Recess. The Committee rejected this alternative because we feel that the existing vacation periods are needed to give students, families and staff a break from school-related activities. We believe that to give up current vacation time is not the right choice educationally and would not serve to give a fair trial to the intersession concept.

A second alternative considered was to place the three additional days of recess/intersession at the Spring Break. We rejected that alternative as likely to lead to excessive absenteeism during the two day school week which results. The third alternative examined was to add five recess/intersession days to the calendar, making Spring Break a two-week period. On balance the Committee felt that a three day addition allows for a full exploration of the benefits of intersession activities with the least change to the existing calendar.

Having solicited general input from parents and staff through the needs assessment process, we would now like to encourage you to give us your specific feedback on this proposal. Written comments can be left at your school office, in a box provided for them, at any time up until noon on February 16. The Committee will review this additional input and reach a final recommendation for the Board's consideration. We look forward to hearing from you.

The Calendar Committee  
Paula H. Powers, Chairman

September 14, 1992

Dear Staff,

The School Calendar Committee would like your help. Our charge is to create the best possible schedule for our district based on 181 student days (183 teacher days), and the constraints of legal holidays.

Please take a few minutes to "dream" a little about the *perfect* schedule for you and your students. Answer the survey questions, write us a letter, and, if you're feeling creative, show us what the perfect calendar would look like for the 1993-1994\* school year. A form is provided. Thank you for taking the time to be part of the decision-making process. Your input is both critical and appreciated.

Sincerely,

The School Calendar Committee

## SURVEY QUESTIONS

As you answer the following questions, keep in mind the grade level(s) you are teaching, and how you would place breaks to maximize learning and minimize stress for everyone. If the answer is different for you than for your students, please note.

1. When would you like the school year to begin?
  - a. traditionally, the first Tuesday after Labor Day
  - b. before Labor Day, about \_\_\_\_\_
  - c. after Labor Day, about \_\_\_\_\_
  - d. vary, depending on when Labor Day falls
  - e. always begin the same time, regardless of when labor day is  
(ex: 1<sup>st</sup> Tuesday in September, 3<sup>rd</sup> Monday in September)  
suggested start date: \_\_\_\_\_
2. Should the Thanksgiving break
  - a. remain as is (four days beginning with Thanksgiving)
  - b. be changed to \_\_\_\_\_
3. Would you like winter break
  - a. tied to the holidays as it is now?
  - b. placed after a specific number of weeks in school?  
number of weeks: \_\_\_\_\_
  - c. How long should it be? \_\_\_\_\_
  - d. What days should it span? \_\_\_\_\_
  - e. other: \_\_\_\_\_
4. How do you feel about our current Presidents' vacation? Should it be
  - a. as is (a four day weekend, Friday, Saturday, Sunday, Monday)
  - b. longer by \_\_\_\_\_
  - c. shorter by \_\_\_\_\_
  - d. two separate three day weekends
  - e. other: \_\_\_\_\_

5. Where would you place Spring break?

a. with Easter as it is now (which fluctuates from year to year)

If so, should the major portion come before or after Easter

Sunday\_\_\_\_\_

b. a certain set number of weeks between winter vacation and the end of school?

c. If so, how many weeks after winter vacation?\_\_\_\_\_

d. If this does not coincide with Easter, should there also be time off at Easter?

1. no

2. yes

a. the Monday after Easter

b. Good Friday and Monday

c. other

e. How long should Spring Vacation be?

1. one week

2. one week plus the next Monday

3. two weeks

4. other\_\_\_\_\_

f. Should there be any other vacation time before or after Spring break? If so, describe.\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

6. Consider summer vacation. What is the latest you would like it to start?

a. traditional time

b. no later than the end of June

c. no later than July 4th

d. What is the minimum number of weeks for summer vacation?

\_\_\_\_\_

e. What is the maximum number of weeks it should span?

\_\_\_\_\_



7. What "outside" constraints do you think we should consider, and how important is each one?

not important	of some importance match when possible	very important consider a priority
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- a. San Mateo Union (or other) high school calendar .....
- b. other elementary districts .....
- c. college schedules .....
- d. summer programs .....
- e. camps .....

8. Discuss the importance of other calendar issues in your thinking.

- a. minimum days \_\_\_\_\_
- b. conference days \_\_\_\_\_
- c. in-service days \_\_\_\_\_
- d. blocks of time \_\_\_\_\_
- e. other \_\_\_\_\_

9. Should the calendar and the grading periods be tied together in any way? \_\_\_\_\_

10. Should the elementary and middle schools operate on the same calendar or, if educationally appropriate, could they operate on slightly different calendars? \_\_\_\_\_

11. Are these the right questions, or should we be more radical in our thinking?

- a. What about NO breaks except for legal holidays? ( the get it done quickly approach) . \_\_\_\_\_
- b. What about four day weeks with three day weekends *all during the school year* instead of scattered breaks? \_\_\_\_\_
- c. How about 45 days on and 15 days off? \_\_\_\_\_

12. Although it is not economically feasible now, how would you feel about shifting the calendar at a later date to:

a. create intersessions? If so how would you like them to be done?

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b. create additional paid teacher planning or in-service days? Where would you place them? \_\_\_\_\_

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13. Please give your feelings about anything we forgot to ask.

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QUESTIONNAIRE ITEM							COMMENTS Please place the item number before each comment.
17. If your response to item (16) was "yes", please select the choice which most accurately represents why assistance is being given: Rank	*						
a) s/he needs more practice/reinforcement in the area of (specify) _____ _____	1	90					
b) s/he has gaps in learning in the area of (specify) _____ _____	3	59					
c) s/he needs help completing assigned homework in the area of (specify) _____ _____	4	46					
d) s/he needs enrichment in the area of (specify) _____ _____	2	68					
FOR EACH OF ITEMS 18-25, CHECK ONE RESPONSE.							
18. When would you like the school year to begin? A) The week before Labor Day    B) The day after Labor Day C) One week after labor Day    D) Two weeks after Labor Day E) No preference	% A	% B	% C	% D	% E		
	13	58	12	2	15		
19. The winter break which occurs around Christmas and New Year's Days is currently two weeks long. How long would you like this break to be? A) One week    B) Two weeks    C) Three weeks    D) No preference	% A	% B	% C	% D			
	9	71	12	8			
20. In February, the district currently provides a four or five day holiday weekend around Lincoln's/Washington's birthdays. How long would you like this break to be? A) Three day weekend    B) Four day weekend C) Five day weekend    D) One week    E) Two weeks F) No preference	% A	% B	% C	% D	% E	% F	
	19	30	11	23	1	16	

\* Actual number of responses

QUESTIONNAIRE ITEM						COMMENTS Please place the item number before each comment.	
21. When would you like the spring recess to occur? (Note: Easter Day can vary from approximately March 23rd to April 24th.) A) The week before Easter B) The week after Easter C) Mid-way between winter break and the end of the school year (regardless of when Easter occurs and coincident with the end of Crocker's second trimester) D) No preference	% A	% B	% C	% D			
	27	24	27	22			
22. How long should spring recess be? A) no recess B) one week C) one week plus the Monday of the following week D) two weeks E) three weeks	% A	% B	% C	% D			E
	5	59	21	13			2
23. If there were long vacation breaks during the school year, should the district offer fee-based intersession programs (e.g. optional mini-session courses which would occur during a portion of the vacation period?) A) Yes B) No C) No preference	% A	% B	% C				
	57	17	26				
24. If there were fee-based intersession programs, they should focus on: A) remedial programs only B) enrichment programs only C) both remedial and enrichment programs	% A	% B	% C				
	4	18	78				
25. The school year should end no later than A) mid-June B) end of June C) No preference	% A	% B	% C				
	50	37	13				

K-8 Total

QUESTIONNAIRE ITEM			COMMENTS Please place the item number before each comment.
26. A variety of factors influence family preferences about school calendars. Select the three which have the most impact on your family.			
	Rank	%	
a) high school calendars	4	35	
b) other elementary school district calendars	6	17	
c) college schedules	7	15	
d) summer camps/recreation programs	3	56	
e) traditional holidays	2	73	
f) child care	5	24	
g) family vacations	1	75	
h) other (specify) _____	8	6	

## 1992-93 Needs Assessment : Calendar

- 10.2 On average over 27% of K-8 parents lack information about the effectiveness of technology in assisting instruction in core subject areas. (Survey item 44)

Chart 17

### INFORMED ABOUT COMPUTER ASSISTED INSTRUCTION

Core Subject Area	Lack Information
Reading	24.0%
Writing	21.0%
Mathematics	25.0%
History/Geography	33.0%
Science	33.0%

- 10.3 Nearly one-half of K-8 parents provide their children with access to computers at home, with Apple and IBM systems being dominant and nearly equal in popularity. (Survey item 45)

Chart 18

### COMPUTERS IN HOMES

Type of Computer	Percent of Homes
Apple/Macintosh	48%
IBM/IBM Compatible	42%

## F. ORGANIZATION

The topics in this section include the school calendar, school-and-home communication, school facilities, and fiscal resources.

- 11.0 K-8 PARENTS PREFER A SCHOOL CALENDAR BEGINNING NEAR LABOR DAY AND ENDING IN JUNE, A TWO-WEEK WINTER VACATION AND BREAKS IN FEBRUARY AND DURING THE SPRING.
- 11.1. Fifty-eight percent of K-8 parents would like the school year to begin the day after Labor Day; eighty-seven percent would like the year to end during the month of June. (Survey items 18 and 25)
- 11.2 Over 70% of K-8 parents prefer a two-week winter break from mid-December to early January. (Survey item 19)

- 11.3 K-8 parents have differing preferences about the length of the Presidents' birthday break in February. (Survey item 20)

Chart 19

LENGTH OF PRESIDENTS' BIRTHDAY HOLIDAY

Options	Agree
Three day weekend	19%
Four day weekend	30%
Five day weekend	11%
One week	23%
Two weeks	1%
No preference	16%

- 11.4 Fifty-nine percent of K-8 parents prefer a one-week spring break and have differing preferences about its placement regardless of when Easter occurs. (Survey items 21 and 22)

Chart 20

PLACEMENT OF SPRING BREAK

Options	Agree
Week before Easter	27%
Week after Easter	24%
Midway between winter break and end of school year	27%
No preference	22%

- 11.5 Fifty-seven percent of K-8 parents prefer the district offer fee-based intersessions during long vacation breaks; seventy-eight percent of K-8 parents would like both remedial and enrichment programs. (Survey items 23 and 24)

- 11.6 K-8 parents rank family vacations, traditional holidays, and summer camps and recreation programs as the three factors which most influence preferences about the configuration of the school calendar. (Survey item 26)

Chart 21

FACTORS WHICH INFLUENCE CALENDAR PREFERENCE

Factors	Rank	
	K-5	6-8
Family vacations	1	2
Traditional holidays	2	1
Summer camps	4	3
High school calendars	5	4
Child care	3	7
College	7	5

- 12.0 GRADE K-8 PARENTS OVERWHELMINGLY AGREE ON THE IMPORTANCE AND EFFECTIVENESS OF ORAL AND WRITTEN COMMUNICATION FROM TEACHERS, ADMINISTRATORS, AND BOARD MEMBERS ABOUT SCHOOL DISTRICT OBJECTIVES AND PROGRAMS.

- 12.1 Over 90% of K-8 parents on average agree on the importance and effectiveness of the four areas shown below. (Survey item 38)

Chart 22

IMPORTANCE/EFFECTIVENESS OF COMMUNICATION

Means	Importance	Effectiveness
Parent-Teacher Conferences	99.0%	94.0%
School Newsletters	99.0%	96.0%
What-To-Expect Nights	97.0%	95.0%
School Board Meetings	93.0%	86.0%

- 13.0 PARENTS WITH CHILDREN AT CROCKER, NORTH AND WEST SCHOOLS AGREE THAT THE SCHOOL FACILITIES EFFECTIVELY SUPPORT LEARNING; SOUTH SCHOOL PARENTS EXPRESS SOME CONCERN ABOUT THEIR FACILITY.