

Albemarle County 2012-13 Calendar Work Session

February 24, 2011

Breakout Session Summary

Group 1 – Start of School/End of Semester

- There was strong consensus among participants to start school 2 weeks earlier.
- Starting earlier might provide more time for professional development for teachers.
- First semester exams could be completed before winter break.
- Community summer programs (e.g. Jefferson Swim League, ACAC Summer Camp) stressed need to announce earlier start 12-14 months in advance.
- The summer break in the transition year would be short.
- There may be a need to expand summer programs (as intersession).
- What might a year-round schedule look like?
- Would a year-round schedule help eliminate achievement gaps?
- Ending the semester prior to winter break would provide staff time to prepare for the next semester.
- We need more input from elementary teachers.
- Starting earlier would be beneficial to students taking AP courses.

Group 2 – Professional Development and Teacher Work Days

- There is a need to identify teacher work days vs. professional days in the calendar.
- There should be a teacher work day at the end of the semester.
- Professional development days provide time for follow up, follow through, and the sharing of best practices.
- Teachers need time to collaborate with their colleagues, within and across schools.
- We should use technology to increase professional development delivery models (e.g. virtual).
- These days should be consistent and protected.
- Perhaps we should consider early closings or delayed openings.
- Level-specific (elementary, middle, and high school) professional development opportunities should be provided.
- Professional development need not be division-wide.
- Training/professional development should not be optional.
- The division should consider hiring a pool of professional development substitutes.

Group 3 – Holidays, Breaks, and Making Up Missed Days

- Snow days could become virtual days (All students will need access to technology.).
- We need elementary input on virtual days.
- Part of the winter break (a day or two) could become teacher work day(s).
- Spring break should remain one week long and have a predictable start date.
- Snow makeup days should occur earlier in the year (rather than added on at the end).
- It would be better to end the first semester prior to winter break because of the gap before exams.
- Holidays are not good times for all students.
- Maintaining a two-week winter break would be good if the semester ended before the break.