

Modified Balanced Calendar Committee

Meeting #1

11/02/2022 – 3:15PM

Attendees: Bree, Kim, Jessa (via email response), Jessica

Purpose: To research all aspects of Thorp transitioning to a Modified Balanced Calendar. We will present our final recommendations and information in February 2023 to the Thorp School District Board.

Agenda:

1. Homework response – thoughts, questions, ideas that arose as you worked through the website: <https://www.waesd.org/services/calendar/>

Response via Kim: *It seems there is a larger push for an Extended Calendar vs. Modified. It sounds like there is a benefit to having shorter breaks so students retain the classwork/lessons with more ease. Ex: Start when we do, take the current days off for Thanksgiving (Thurs, Fri - maybe add the Monday after), one week at Christmas, One week in Feb(?), then Spring Break week and get out at/near the same time we do now. In our community, extending the year is not really feasible due to farming families and the need for the kids to help with that. I also see a concern with the extended calendar &/or the 4 day/week ones for sports activities (current schedule for games gets kids home at 9/10pm at times) as well as jobs for the older students that may need to help families with income. And if kids have to leave at 2pm (approx) and miss 1 or 2 classes, if we have to extend the school day, they miss more classes. I would not say that benefits the kids with the intent of the modification of the calendar. Conversely for the elementary kids, the younger kids may do ok with the schedule, as long as we were able to incorporate sufficient outdoor play time to let them 'be kids' and work out their energy build up. Would this also add to the food service dept? Would we be required to provide an afternoon snack of some kind?*

Not sure what next steps would likely be for our team....

Bree: Need for strong environmental control if we are dealing with hotter Summer months.

No formal data that backs up benefits.

There is polling data that backs up staff feeling better rested, more supported, and ready to take on extra-curriculars for student benefit.

Thoughts from Jessa via email: *I have read over what a balanced calendar is as well as the article you attached to me.*

My following thoughts/questions are

- *Does a Balanced Calendar impact a student's ability to maintain a summer job? will we get an extended summer break, during which they may choose to work.*
- *What are "intersessions" in a Balanced Calendar?*
- *Will a balanced Calendar schedule impact attendance?*
- *Does it mean more school?*
- *Are we going to get advanced programs, like AP or IB?*
- *Does it affect high school credits and graduation requirements?*
- *What about high school sports?*

Ok those are my questions, I am all for being your representative. I just need to know what I am representing and what I can do as a representing voice.

Our district is its own entity, and needs to move forward with a spirit of pioneering and rigorous collection data to see if the calendar truly improves student learning and way of life.

Interconnectedness of teacher mental well-being and student mental well-being and learning?

Enrichment opportunities would be provided on off weeks (EG moving Tiger Academy to off weeks)

2. Schools in WA that utilize a modified calendar – what does their school year look like? What documented benefits have they seen from the change?
3. Next steps?

Goal 1: Find a rural school similar to ours that is utilizing a modified balanced calendar. What does their calendar look like? What questions can we ask them to gather more data?

Topenish not December 1st, 2nd or 5th aim for 12th-16th

Before Christmas break

Try to get info from Sandra Burley – data, power point

Goal 2: Bring a calendar to our next meeting with your ideas for what our balanced calendar looks like – think about Fall Break, Winter Break, Mid-Winter Break, Spring Break... This might help,

<https://www.waesd.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/Balanced-Calendar-Comparison.pdf>