

School District 48, Howe Sound Preparing for 2010, School Calendar

It is the School Board's responsibility to make practical and timely arrangements for the school calendar for 2009/2010, including the periods in which the Olympic and Paralympic Games occur. After a process of consultation and meeting with parents and our partners in education we are conducting a survey which will be an important part of our decision making process.

These pages are provided to show some of the questions and possible solutions that surround the 2010 calendar together with some of the compromises they entail. There may be other factors affecting individual families or groups that we can not show. If you have particular concerns that are not addressed in our survey there is a space at the end for you to write them in.

School Calendar Options for 2009/2010

The school act allows school districts and even individual schools, with School District approval, to create their own calendars. While it is usually more convenient to have the same calendar throughout our district, in the special circumstances of 2010 we may be better able to serve our students' and communities' needs by having local or school calendars.

The District 48 Committee for 2010 has been researching the options for February 2010 and listening to our partners' concerns through an information and brainstorming day and public meetings. . Now it is your turn to let us know in more detail how the different options would affect your students and family. We ask you to read the information carefully and remember when you are filling out the survey that the attractiveness and excitement of being part of the Olympic celebrations will increase as we get nearer to 2010.

The Standard School Calendar.

The Ministry of Education has now published their Standard Calendar for 2009/2010 but not the exam schedule. If the semesters and exams fall into the usual pattern the Olympics will occur in the second and third weeks of the second (high school) semester.

Grade 10 and 12 Exams	1 st to 5 th February
Second Semester starts	8 th February
Olympic games	12 th to 28 th February

Olympic Related programs

While there will be opportunities for students to work and volunteer in activities related in various ways to the Olympics, School District 48 is considering several programs for secondary students some of which may lead to academic credits or offer opportunities to interact with visitors. We are also hoping to offer relevant curriculum and, particularly for

those elementary students still at school, to create an experience that they will enjoy and remember.

Maintaining Instruction Time for All Students

Current senior students and teachers have said that grade 10, 11 and 12 courses require all the periods they now have and they do not feel that they could willingly give up lesson time, however some students have also said that even if school was open for a regular full program they would not attend as they wished to be part of the Olympic experience. Clearly if a significant number of students are not in school then time will have to be made up and for each way of making up time there are different considerations. While the periods are perhaps not quite so important for elementary students, some parents are naturally committed to work during the Olympics and expect their children to be at school.

Clearly the ability to provide opportunities for students varies by grade and geography and we must look for ways of maximizing them for all our students. A description of the possible variables might take a booklet and is beyond the scope of this survey so we have confined our information to consideration of calendar options. While our partners, administrators, teachers, support staff, parents and students need a degree of certainty about the school calendar as soon as possible it will be quite some while before we know what level of participation VANOC themselves can provide so School District decisions will inevitably be subject to change.

Possible Closure Options

Option 1. Two weeks, 12th to 28th February.

FOR. 1) Minimum disruption

AGAINST 1) Leaves an orphan' 1st week of second semester.
2) Most volunteer jobs will require preparation and training during week from 5th February.

Option 2. Three weeks, 5th to 28th February.

FOR 1) Covers final preparation for the Olympics.

AGAINST 2) 3 weeks of schooling will have to be made up.

Option 3. School stays open, regular curriculum continues.

FOR 1) Standard calendar, no alteration to instruction or bussing.

AGAINST 2) No make up time for students absent for volunteering or watching Olympics.
3) Olympics will be a serious distraction for students.
4) Private transport may difficult at times in some areas.

Make up time required.

Option 1. Closed two weeks, 12th to 28th February.

Make up time required:

- A) 11 days of instruction during second semester, OR
- B) 45 minutes per day (or approx 12 minutes a block) added for second semester OR
- C) A combination of both.

Option 2. Closed three weeks, 5th to 28th February.

Make up time required.

- A) 16 days of instruction during second semester, OR
- B) Approx 70 minutes every day for second semester (or 18 minutes per block,) OR
- C) A combination of both.

Option 3. No make up time.

Considerations for make up time.

All the various ways of making up instructional time, (if schools should be closed,) have drawbacks and limitations. Here are a few of the ways that these compromises may affect either instruction, holidays, activities or staff, parents and others involved in schools. It is by no means comprehensive but may just act as a guide for further thought and discussion.

- 1) Make up time must occur in the (high school) semester within which it is lost (second semester.) Added time in the first semester will leave instruction time short before second semester exams.
- 2) Make up time added as a few minutes to each day or each period seriously affects learning plans.
- 3) When a significant proportion of students are absent lesson plans are seriously disrupted no matter what provision is made for them to use work sheets outside of school.
- 4) Considerably extended days every day for a whole semester may leave both teachers and students over tired and reduce opportunities for important tutorials, counseling etc.
- 5) Adding days at the beginning of the school year would be in the wrong semester. Added days in July would be after the Provincial exams for which students are being prepared. Time taken from Summer holidays would also affect camps and holiday plans. Many families in SD48 work in businesses where it is very difficult for them to move their holidays.
- 6) Time added after the regular school day may affect after school activities.
- 7) Longer periods out of school may affect how quickly students 'get back to work.'
- 8) Local calendars in each town may require some adjustment of administration and extra costs in staff and bussing.
- 9) School based calendars which are different within communities; say between secondary and elementary schools may dislocate bussing and incur considerable extra expense.
- 10) If schools are open regular curriculum would have to continue as there would be no make up time.