

## Comments from the School Calendar Breakout Sessions

### Bridgeport Conference Center – January 7, 2014

#### Group #1

- Potential Options for Two-Hour Delays
  - One county plans to add 8 minutes a day to accrue instructional time.
  - Create snow bus routes for instances of bad weather.
  - Either cancel school or go to school – eliminate two-hour delays whenever possible.
  - If all personnel were required to work an 8 hour day, it would help with making up time related to two-hour delays.
- Faculty Senate Meetings – Plan to hold the OS days with an option to hold the meeting the day before.
- Depending on the county, Thanksgiving Break has to be a full week due to attendance issues.

#### Group #2

- One county plans to have split Continuing Education/Faculty Senate Meetings.
- One county plans to move to ending the first semester before Christmas, even if it means having an 87-93 split instead of a 90-90 split.
- It is important to schedule OS days before WESTEST.
- They agree that it is important to put the out-of-calendar days at the end of the calendar.
- One county is considering putting OS days on the day before Thanksgiving and on December 23, 2014 and then move if not needed for make-up.

#### Group #3

- Be proactive with your local paper. Ask them to do a story on the calendar law changes. If you aren't considering a balanced calendar, go ahead and indicate that to them to help with public opinion.
- One county plans to have split Continuing Education/Faculty Senate Meetings.
- Survey parents and employees with some questions regarding the school calendar – ex: Do they want the full week of Thanksgiving off, do they want to add minutes or additional days to make up for two-hour delays/early dismissals, etc.

- One county is considering having professional development one day a week using accrued instructional time.
- Have concerns with handling individual school closures and leaving early for sporting events.

#### **Group #4**

- Hold public hearings early. If doing the survey of parents/employees, get the survey results prior to the hearing so you can have some calendar options to provide at the hearing.
- Public hearings, calendar committee, employee votes, etc. are for input only – the Board has to do what is best.
- Continuing education is very important. Hold “blitz activities” for CE.
- They like the idea of having faculty senate meetings on the two prep days with the three CE days.
- Hold OS days on Fridays or Mondays to help with making up lost time.
- Identify upfront the days that will be taken for make-up.
- Feel that having required 8 hour days and required 24 pays would help with some of the employment issues related to the school calendar. Legislative action in these areas would be helpful.
- Look at how team planning periods are structured. Making changes may allow additional time for instruction.

#### **Group #5**

- Make up days prior to high stakes tests.
- Move standardized testing windows if significant number of make-up days needed.
- Considering having faculty senate meetings on the OS days. Staff would report for the meetings or they could take advantage of compensatory time and stay late the day before.
- Parents need to understand the implications of the new calendar rules. Communication will be key.
- Public hearings can help determine the “sacred” days in the calendar.
- Use flexibility to obtain the 18 required hours of CE.
- On a parent-teacher conference day, work a 10-6 shift and split with a faculty senate or CE day.

- Add additional minutes to the day to help create a cushion of accrued instructional time.
- Create some express bus routes (main routes in key areas) to help eliminate two-hour delays .
- When looking at accrued instructional time, use the school with the lowest number of minutes for the county-wide decisions. If not, you will open a can of worms.
- Try to finish the first semester as much prior to Christmas break as possible.

## **Embassy Suites – January 15, 2014**

### **Group #1**

- One county plans to use accrued instructional time for faculty senate meetings.
- When surveying parents/staff, add a question to the survey to ask if parents prefer two-hour delays or early dismissals for faculty senate meetings and professional development. Both tend to have a negative impact on student attendance, but parents may find child care easier for one of the two options.
- When making the determination as to whether a county should take spring break for make-up days or use out-of-calendar days in June, most counties felt using days in June would be better.

### **Group #2**

- When it comes to accrued instructional time, the psychological impact of adding minutes to the school day may come into play. Adding minutes in the single digits (ex: 5 or 7 minutes) may be easier than adding minutes in the double digits (ex: 10 or 12 minutes).

### **Group #3**

- It is really important to educate both parents and staff about the extensive school calendar changes, particularly the difference between OS and out-of-calendar days.
- Developing a calendar for MCVC counties or those with inter-county schools will be challenging. All counties involved must agree, which is sometimes difficult.
- It is important to hold continuing education opportunities throughout the year. Need ways to imbed them into the school calendar. Some potential ideas are paying for

the opportunities using federal funds for after-school training stipends, utilizing early outs, etc.

### **General Discussion**

- Considering a slightly earlier start date.
- Be sure to develop a county policy on how to handle individual school requirements.
- It would be good if the proposed pay raise was tied to an increase in the contract term (ex: add 4 noninstructional days)