



## **Responses to Commonly Shared Questions Regarding Professional Development Proposed Days for the 2008-2009 BVSD Calendar**

**Question: How many days are our students required to be in school and do our children in Boulder Valley meet the requirements?**

**Response:** Boulder Valley School District (BVSD) students currently meet State of Colorado attendance requirements and will continue to under the approved 2008-2009 district calendar.

Attendance requirements are set by the Colorado Department of Education (CDE). The policy states that "a school or schools shall not be in session for fewer than one hundred sixty days" and defines the number of hours required for each school year as "one thousand fifty-six hours if a secondary school pupil, nine hundred sixty-eight hours if an elementary school pupil in a grade other than kindergarten, nine hundred hours if a full-day kindergarten pupil and four hundred fifty hours if a half-day kindergarten pupil."  
*(Colorado School Law 22-33-104. Compulsory school attendance).*

Each year all schools in BVSD must report their hours and show that all schools meet or surpass the requirements. The approved calendar for 2008-2009 provides 171 instructional days for students.

**Question: Our students will miss their Halloween celebration if we don't have school on October 31. Why are we taking this "fun" time away from our students?**

**Response:** Halloween falls on a different day of the week each year. For example, when it falls on a weekend, schools that celebrate this holiday choose another day and make that day their holiday celebration. School communities can think about this day similarly and plan another day for their celebrations.

Please note: This is a one year request only, to allow middle level teachers to attend a national conference being held in Denver.

**Question: Why is Veteran's Day scheduled for a Tuesday and why is it not a Monday holiday?**

**Response:** Veteran's Day is a legal holiday that is designated by the State of Colorado to be celebrated on its actual date, November 11, as are Independence Day, Christmas Day and New Year's Day.

**Question: Why do our students have so many days off?**

**Response:** Through an agreement between the BVSD and the employee groups in the district, all staff members have vacation days, and teachers in BVSD have four and one-half (4.5) teacher preparation days and 6.5 professional development days. Additionally, there are four scheduled parent conference exchange days.

The **teacher preparation days** provide time for teachers to complete the work required of them as professionals. Examples include planning for classroom instruction, the completion of report cards and parent communication.

The 4.5 teacher preparation days are scheduled as follows:

- 1.5 days before school begins in August
- One day after the end of first semester, which is the day they return from Winter Break (January 5<sup>th</sup>)
- One day after the end of second trimester (February 23)
- One day is flexibly scheduled by each building, and takes place during one of the professional development days.

The **professional development days** (6.5 days per school year) provide the avenue for ongoing growth for teachers and administrators. During these days, educators may learn new skills, hone skills they've learned previously, and/or collaborate with colleagues to solve the challenging problems that face them each day as they meet the needs of all students.

The calendar committee's goal was to spread those days out throughout the year to give schools ongoing opportunities for their learning and combine them with longer vacation times and weekends to provide the maximum number of five-day weeks for students and families. Professional development days are scheduled in August before school starts, and in September, October, January, February and April.

The **parent conference exchange days** (November 24 & 25; April 24 & 27) are scheduled days off in exchange for the nights that teachers meet with parents in conferences to discuss student progress. As part of the district's commitment to partnership and communication with parents, all BVSD schools provide opportunities for parent-teacher conferences. Schools have the flexibility to schedule these evening conferences based on what is best for their community while we maintain a common calendar for all schools.

**Question: Our winter break was too long. Why do we have those two extra days at the end of break?**

**Response:** One of the days is negotiated as a teacher preparation day for all schools that are on a semester schedule and is required to be scheduled the day following the end of the first semester (December 19 on the 2008-09 calendar); it is considered a professional development day for schools that are on a trimester schedule. The other day is a professional development day for all teachers. The professional development days are currently spread throughout the year in an effort to provide teachers with ongoing professional learning opportunities and are backed up to a weekend or vacation, when possible.

**Question: Why are there two four-day weeks at the end of February 2009? Wouldn't it make more sense to schedule the days together?**

**Response:** February 16 is President's Day. February 23 is negotiated as a teacher preparation day for all schools that are on a trimester schedule and is required to be scheduled the day following the end of the second trimester (February 20 on the 2008-09 calendar); it is considered a professional development day for schools that are on a semester schedule.