



# BULLETIN April 20, 2010

## RETURN TO THE STANDARD CALENDAR

Last evening, in a 4 to 3 decision, the trustees voted to abandon the existing two-week spring break in favour of the one-week break standard calendar.

In favour of a two-week spring break:

John Sutherland  
Joanne Field  
Preet Rai

Opposed to a two-week spring break:

Korky Neufeld  
Uultse deJong  
Shirley Wilson  
Cindy Schafer

Trustee Sutherland initiated the process by moving the resolution for a two-week break alternate calendar, which was followed by debate, testy at times, that engaged all of the trustees. In general, arguments in favour of a two-week break referred to potential cost savings, creating valuable family time, and aligning the district schedule with that of the community. Arguments against a two-week break tended to emphasize the loss of instructional time with Trustee Schafer, at one point, stating that she would eliminate other days off if she could. Trustee Sutherland, in closing debate, reminded the board that the original number of days removed from the schedule had been reduced from 9 to 5 and stated that he believed it important to listen to parents, referring to the survey conducted by the district in which the large majority of parent responses favoured a two-week break. While Trustee Sutherland's comments were supposedly to close debate, Chair Schafer allowed debate to continue. In response to Trustee Sutherland, Trustee deJong opined that there is a "huge silent majority that don't speak", adding further that he must "listen to the silent majority". Trustee Rai offered that one cannot assume what silence means, to which Trustee Wilson retorted that the "public doesn't get to weigh in" and "we get to vote." It may be worth noting that further on in the agenda, on the topic of setting dates for board meetings, Trustee Wilson voiced the importance of asking for public opinion.

### **School Act excerpts**

**77 (1)** On or before May 31 of each school year, a board must, in accordance with the regulations and for each school in its school district, make a school calendar for the following school year available to every parent of a student in the school.

**78 (3)** A board may adopt, in accordance with the regulations, a school calendar that differs from the standard school calendar for one or more

(a) schools in its school district, or

(b) groups of students in a school in its school district.

(3.1) A board may not adopt a school calendar under subsection (3) unless, in accordance with the regulations, parents of the students enrolled in the school and representatives of employees of the board assigned to the school have been consulted.