



# **SCHOOL BOARD ACTION REPORT**

**DATE:** January 10, 2019  
**FROM:** Ms. Denise Juneau, Superintendent  
**LEAD STAFF:** Dr. Diane DeBacker, Chief Academic Officer, 206-252-0180, [dmdebacker@seattleschools.org](mailto:dmdebacker@seattleschools.org); and Ronald Boy, Assistant General Counsel, 206-252-0114, [rdboy@seattleschools.org](mailto:rdboy@seattleschools.org)

**For Introduction:** January 23, 2019  
**For Action:** January 23, 2019

## **1. TITLE**

Resolution No. 2018/19–15, Requesting a Waiver from the 180-Day School Year Requirement for Parent/Guardian/Teacher Conferences

## **2. PURPOSE**

This resolution requests a waiver from the Washington State Board of Education of three days from the 180-day school year requirement to allow District elementary schools and K-8 schools to have full-day parent/guardian/teacher conferences on three days that school is not in session and a waiver of one day from the 180-day school year requirement to allow District middle schools and high schools to have a full-day parent/guardian/teacher conference on a day when school is not in session. School board action in the form of a resolution is required to support district waiver requests under WAC 180-18-050.

## **3. RECOMMENDED MOTION**

I move that the School Board approve Resolution No. 2018/19-15, as attached to this Board Action Report. Immediate approval is in the best interest of the District as this resolution and the related waiver are tied to the approval of the 2019-20 school year calendar.

## **4. BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

### **a. Background**

District elementary schools want to efficiently use school days to improve academic achievement. District elementary principals and teachers are in support of this request so that they can continue to eliminate seven early dismissal days from their school calendar and replace them with three full days of conferences. The 180 days of school is a State educational program requirement. However, the law allows for districts to apply for a waiver accompanied by a board resolution of three days to conduct parent/teacher conferences. Thus, this matter is coming forward at this time so that Resolution No. 2018/19-15 can be timely forwarded to the State Board of Education for review and approval. If this resolution is not approved, elementary schools would be required to go back to having seven early release days to conduct parent/guardian/teacher conferences.

The waiver request also includes a request that middle and high schools have the option of utilizing one school day to schedule and conduct parent/guardian/teacher conferences. Approval of Resolution No. 2018/19-15 will allow District staff to use one full day for this activity, rather than schedule multiple half days.

For the past nine academic years, District elementary schools have utilized the parent/guardian/teacher waiver to hold full-day conferences the three days prior to Thanksgiving break in late November. In addition, a few District middle and high schools have utilized the parent/guardian/teacher waiver to hold full day conferences on one day.

Prior to obtaining the parent/guardian/teacher conference waiver, schools utilized seven early release days for conferences. This disrupted programs, learning, family, and school routines. Many District educators believed that three full days of parent/guardian/teacher conferences, rather than seven early release days for conferences, would produce a more uniform academic environment, which is better for student learning. Consecutive early release days are disruptive to elementary school routines. Schedules need to be revised to create planning time for every teacher and to enable students with disabilities to access the resource room or related service providers, which can diminish the time devoted to core academics. Parents need to alter work schedules and/or find childcare. Teachers are often overwhelmed by the requirements of planning for teaching while conducting conferences. Predictable routines are essential for all students.

When the three full-day conference schedule is used, parent/guardian/teacher conferences took on a new meaning and focus for schools and parents. Teachers were able to teach for five full days and maintain their focus on instruction, after which they were able to conference for three full days. A critical component of the alternative model has been more time for conferences themselves. At some schools, students participate in conferences enabling them to receive the benefit of being in the conversation regarding their academic progress. This helps with getting families truly involved in their students' education, with more time for questions and answers directly related to their students.

The District's commitment to best practice fuels the passion for the alternative conference schedule. Instructional time and efficacy can be measured in a number of ways. Importantly, program hours are virtually unchanged. The use of seven early release days only gains approximately two hours of instruction over the three full-day conference model. However, focused learning time receives a significant negative impact with the seven-day model because students are focused on early dismissal and their normal routine is disrupted for two weeks.

#### **b. Alternatives**

Not apply for the waiver and have schools utilize the seven consecutive early release days to accomplish parent/guardian/teacher conferences. This alternative is not recommended because full-day parent/guardian/teacher conferences produce a more uniform academic environment and are less disruptive.

**c. Research**

District elementary principals previously listed the following as benefits to the full day conference schedule:

1. Conversion to a three-day conference schedule protects instructional time.
2. Conversion to a three-day conference schedule eliminates schedule changes and disruption (e.g., changes in Preparation Conference Planning (PCP) and Specialists schedules) for teacher and students.
3. Conversion to a three-day conference schedule allows teachers to focus on teaching when teaching and conferencing when conferencing.
4. Conversion to a three-day conference schedule protects vulnerable children including those on Individualized Educational Plans (IEP's) and those receiving tutoring and other supplemental services. A schedule of seven half days can disrupt services for students (for example, if a student receives special education services in the afternoon, the student's schedule could be impacted for the seven half days).
5. Conversion to a three-day conference schedule maintains the focus on teaching and learning for an additional week each year.
6. Conversion to a three-day conference schedule allows for more meaningful parent/teacher dialogue with more time available for longer conferences, typically 35-40 minutes rather than a 20-25-minute schedule during early dismissal.
7. Conversion to a three-day conference schedule provides for an option to truly include students in conferences.
8. Conversion to a three-day conference schedule reduces the burden on families to provide alternative childcare arrangements in odd increments and for a greater number of days, mitigating financial impact and disruption of family routines and work schedules.

**5. FISCAL IMPACT/REVENUE SOURCE**

Upon approval by the State Board of Education, state funding is provided for the three waiver days. The waiver is requested for school years 2019-20, 2020-21 and 2021-22 with an estimated savings of \$155,000.00 per year. There are expected transportation savings to the District for not operating buses to elementary schools on those three days (preliminary estimate \$155,000.00 per year)

The revenue source for this motion is N/A.

Expenditure:  One-time  Annual  Multi-Year  N/A

Revenue:  One-time  Annual  Multi-Year  N/A - Savings

**6. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

With guidance from the District's Community Engagement tool, this action was determined to merit the following tier of community engagement:

Not applicable

Tier 1: Inform

Tier 2: Consult/Involve

Tier 3: Collaborate

The matter of the academic year calendar is primarily a subject of negotiations with the Seattle Education Association. Therefore, there is limited direct community engagement on the subject.

The Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) with the Seattle School District and Seattle Education Association specifies how the normal student calendar shall be developed using a formula for key dates. The formula for key dates includes conferences and states that they should be scheduled immediately preceding Thanksgiving Day. As such, any community engagement with parents over when the conferences shall be scheduled could be considered misleading. The CBA would supersede community preference.

In 2013, District staff conducted a parent survey on whether parents preferred the three full-days or seven one-half conference schedule for parent/teacher conferences. 3,550 parents/guardians participated in the survey. 93.5% of those who participated indicated that they preferred the three full-day conference model over the seven half-day conference model. Previously, parents and staff at schools were surveyed by the District in November 2011 to assess support for full-day parent/guardian/teacher conferences. At that time, 1,611 parents participated in the survey and 93.3% of those supported full-day conferences.

## **7. EQUITY ANALYSIS**

This resolution/waiver works to encourage and increase personalized connections between students, families and school staff so we can create a more welcoming environment for families and strengthen supports for students' academic success. When families have information on students' progress and accessible contacts at our schools, we are more effectively partnering to eliminate opportunity gaps.

## **8. STUDENT BENEFIT**

Parent/guardian/teacher conferences lay the groundwork for a productive relationship that will benefit the best interest of our students. The conferences help encourage parental/guardian involvement, which is an important factor in a student's success in school. Some of our schools are having student-led conferences, which help students take responsibility for their own learning, reflect on what they have learned, and set goals for themselves.

Adoption of the calendar for the 2019-20 school year, through a separate Board action that is dependent on the approval of this Resolution and waiver, will allow for the development of individual school schedules for students and families, and to plan for and schedule family activities outside of school time.

## **9. WHY BOARD ACTION IS NECESSARY**

Amount of contract initial value or contract amendment exceeds \$250,000 (Policy No. 6220)

- Amount of grant exceeds \$250,000 in a single fiscal year (Policy No. 6114)
- Adopting, amending, or repealing a Board policy
- Formally accepting the completion of a public works project and closing out the contract
- Legal requirement for the School Board to take action on this matter  
Under WAC 180-18-050(3) a district seeking to obtain a waiver from the provision of the minimum one hundred eighty-day school year requirements, must have an adopted resolution by the school district board of directors.
- Board Policy No. \_\_\_\_\_, [TITLE], provides the Board shall approve this item
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**10. POLICY IMPLICATION**

The State Board of Educations’ authority to grant waivers from the basic education program requirement is RCW 28A.305.150 and RCW 28A.655.180(1).

**11. BOARD COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION**

This waiver request was discussed at the Executive Committee meeting on January 17, 2019. The Committee reviewed the waiver request and moved it forward to the full Board with a recommendation for approval.

**12. TIMELINE FOR IMPLEMENTATION**

The SPS School Board Resolution No. 2018/19-15 and the State Board of Education Waiver Application are submitted to the State Board of Education for review at least 30 days prior to implementation of the waiver plan. If approved by the State Board of Education, the conferences may be scheduled and take place during the 2019-20, 2020-21 and 2021-22 school years.

**13. ATTACHMENTS**

- Resolution No. 2018/19-15 (for approval)
- State Board of Education Waiver Application (for reference)

**Seattle School District #1  
Board Resolution**

**Resolution No. 2018/19-15**



**A RESOLUTION** of the Board of Directors of Seattle School District No. 1 (“Seattle Public Schools”), King County, Seattle, Washington to request a waiver for the 2019-20 and 2020-21 academic years from the 180-day school year requirement (RCW 28A.150.220) from the State Board of Education pursuant to RCW 28A.305.140, as provided for in WAC 180-18-030, WAC 180-18-040, and WAC 180-40-050.

**WHEREAS**, Seattle Public Schools seeks a three (3) day waiver from the 180-day calendar for elementary schools and K-8 schools within the District for the purpose of implementing full-day parent/guardian/teacher conferences;

**WHEREAS**, Seattle Public Schools seeks a one (1) day waiver from the 180-day calendar for middle schools and high schools within the District for the purpose of implementing a full-day parent/guardian/teacher/student conference or classroom visitation schedule;

**WHEREAS**, the parents and staff have supported a three full-day parent/guardian/teacher conference schedule over the more traditional seven half-day schedule with early dismissals;

**WHEREAS**, the total impact on program hours between seven half-days and three full-days is not significantly different, with only two hours of educational instruction lost with the three full-day schedule;

**WHEREAS**, Seattle Public Schools’ educators believe that the extra full week of school without early dismissal disruptions, allowed by the three full-day schedule, creates a more productive teaching and learning environment;

**WHEREAS**, the Washington State Board of Education has recognized the importance of and has established waivers for restructuring purposes to permit schools to have schedules and programs that provide an effective educational system for all students or for individual schools in a school system (WAC 180-18);

**WHEREAS**, the waiver and conversion to a three-day conference for elementary schools supports increased academic achievement by: (1) eliminating seven days of schedule changes in favor of three days (less disruption for teachers and students and it protects instructional time); (2) allowing teachers to focus on teaching when teaching and conferencing when conferencing; (3) protecting schedules for vulnerable children, including those on IEPs and those receiving tutoring and supplemental services; (4) maintaining the focus on teaching and learning for an additional week each year; (5) allowing for longer and more meaningful parent/guardian/teacher/student dialogue and conferences; (6) permitting the inclusion or partial inclusion of students in conferences; and (7) reducing the burden of families to provide

alternative childcare arrangements in odd increments and for a greater number of days, mitigating financial impact and disruption of family routines and work schedules; and

**WHEREAS**, the waiver and one full-day conference for middle and high school students supports increased academic achievement by: (1) allowing teachers to focus on teaching when teaching and conferencing when conferencing; (2) permitting the inclusion or partial inclusion of students in conferences; and (3) reducing the burden of families to provide alternative childcare arrangements in odd increments and for a greater number of days, mitigating financial impact and disruption of family routines and work schedules.

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT,**

**RESOLVED**, that the Seattle Public Schools' Board of Directors requests that three days from the 180-day school year requirement be waived for elementary school and K-8 schools of Seattle Public Schools for the 2019-20, 2020-21 and 2021-22 school years to permit these schools to have three full-day parent/guardian/teacher conferences and that students are not required to attend school on those days and that the dates for these full-day conferences be negotiated with the unions when the school calendar is negotiated; and provides assurances that the District will comply with the annual average requirement for instructional hours; and

**RESOLVED**, that the Seattle Public Schools' Board of Directors requests that one day from the 180-day school year requirement be waived for each middle school and high school of Seattle Public Schools for the 2019-20, 2020-21 and 2021-22 school years to permit these schools to have one full-day parent/guardian/teacher conference and that students are not required to attend school on that day; that the date for this waiver day be negotiated with the unions when the school calendar is negotiated; and provides assurances that the District will comply with the annual average requirement for instructional hours.

ADOPTED this \_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_ 2019

\_\_\_\_\_  
Leslie Harris, President

\_\_\_\_\_  
Rick Burke, Vice-President

\_\_\_\_\_  
Zachary DeWolf, Member-at-Large

\_\_\_\_\_  
Jill Geary, Member

\_\_\_\_\_  
Eden Mack, Member

\_\_\_\_\_  
Betty Patu, Member

\_\_\_\_\_  
Scott Pinkham, Member

ATTEST: \_\_\_\_\_  
Ms. Denise Juneau, Superintendent  
Secretary, Board of Directors  
Seattle School District No. 1  
King County, WA



# THE WASHINGTON STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

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*A high-quality education system that prepares all students for college, career, and life.*

## **Application for Waiver from the 180-Day School Year Requirement for the Purpose of Parent-Teacher Conferences**

Under WAC 180-18-050, adopted by the State Board of Education (SBE) in November 2012, a district seeking a waiver of not more than five days, solely for the purpose of parent-teacher conferences, from the basic education requirement of a minimum 180-day school year shall provide notification of the request to SBE. Notification must be made at least 30 days prior to implementation of the waiver plan. It must include:

- An adopted resolution by the school district board of directors stating, at a minimum, the number of school days and school years for which the waiver is requested, and attesting that the district will meet the minimum instructional hours requirement of RCW 28A.150.220(2) under the waiver plan.
- Information and documentation as specified in WAC 180-18-050(3).

On a determination that all required information and documentation has been received, SBE will, within 30 days of receipt, notify the requesting district by letter that the requirements of the rule have been satisfied and the waiver has been granted.

A district seeking to obtain a waiver of more than five days for the purpose of parent-teacher conferences must request the waiver through the regular Option One process under WAC 180-18-050(1) and (2).

Waivers under this section may include those requested by districts operating state-funded, full-day Kindergarten that are required to implement the Washington Kindergarten Inventory of Developing Skills (WaKIDS) program under RCW 28A.655.080. Under RCW 28A.150.220(5), schools administering WaKIDS may use up to three school days at the beginning of the school year to meet with parents and families as required in the parent involvement component of the inventory, while counting those days toward the 180-day school year requirement. Any additional days to be used for implementation of WaKIDS require a waiver from the SBE.

Completed application materials for a parent-teacher conference waiver must be submitted by e-mail no later than 30 days before implementation of the waiver plan to:

Parker Teed  
State Board of Education  
PO Box 47206  
Olympia, Washington 98504  
360-725-6047; Fax 360-586-2357  
[Parker.teed@k12.wa.us](mailto:Parker.teed@k12.wa.us)



Applications must include all information and documentation as provided in WAC 180-18-1050(3) to be considered complete and for the waiver to be granted.

**Application for Waiver from 180-day Requirement  
for the Purpose of Parent-Teacher Conferences**

1. Contact Information (Please complete all information below)

Name	Dr. Diane DeBacker
Title	Chief Academic Officer
School District	Seattle School District
Phone	206.252-0180
Email	dmdebacker@seattleschools.org
Mailing Address	2445 3 <sup>rd</sup> Ave South, Seattle WA 98134 MS 32-518, PO Box 34165

2. Date application submitted to the SBE.

February 1, 2019

3. Does the district currently have any 180-day waivers? If yes, please explain.

Yes	If yes, please explain: The District received waivers of the 180 Day School Schedule for conducting Parent-Teacher Conferences granted January 7, 2016, for the 2016-17, 2017-18, 2018-19 school years.
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4. Is the request for all schools in the district? If no, which schools or grades are included in the request?

Yes	If no:	Schools	Grades
		The request is for all schools in the Seattle School District	K-12

5. Number of waiver days requested (may not exceed five):

School Years	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22
Number of Days	3 days for elementary and K-8 schools and one day for middle and high schools.	3 days for elementary and K-8 schools and one day for middle and high schools.	3 days for elementary and K-8 schools and one day for middle and high schools.

6. If the request is granted, will the district meet the minimum instructional hour requirement of RCW 28A.150.220(2) and WAC 180.16.200 in each of the school years for which the waiver is granted?

Yes

7. Explain in detail how the parent-teacher conferences conducted under the waiver plan will be used to improve student achievement.

Prior to obtaining the parent/guardian/teacher conference waivers, schools utilized seven early release days for conferences. This disrupted programs, learning, family and school routines for thousands of our students. Seattle Public Schools District educators believe that three full days of parent/guardian/teacher conferences, rather than seven early release days for conferences produce a more uniform academic environment that is better for student learning.

When the three full-day conference schedule is used, parent/guardian/teacher conferences take on a new meaning and focus for schools and parents. Teachers are able to teach for five full days and maintain their focus on instruction, after which they were able to conference for three full days.

The District also found that the engagement with families in their children's education was an important component to improve student achievement. The conferences encourage and increase personalized connections between students, families and school staff so we can create a more welcoming environment for families and strengthen supports for students' academic success. When families have information on students' progress and accessible contacts at our schools, we are more effectively partnering to eliminate opportunity gaps. Some of our schools are having student-led conferences, which help students take responsibility for their own learning, reflect on what they have learned and to set goals for themselves.

Therefore, a three-day conference schedule for elementary schools supports increased academic achievement by: (1) eliminating seven days of schedule changes in favor of three days (less disruption for teachers and students and it protects instructional time); (2) allowing teachers to focus on teaching when teaching, and conferencing when conferencing; (3) protecting schedules for vulnerable children, including those on IEPs and those receiving tutoring and other supplemental services. A schedule of 7 half days can disrupt services for students (for example, if a student receives special education services in the afternoon, the student's schedule could be impacted for the 7 half days); (4) maintaining the focus on teaching and learning for an additional week each year; (5) allowing for longer and more meaningful parent/guardian/teacher/student dialogue and conferences; (6) permitting the inclusion or partial inclusion of students in conferences; and (7) reducing the burden of families to provide alternative childcare arrangement in odd increments and for a greater number of days, mitigating financial impact and disruption of family routines and work schedules.

The one full-day conference for middle and high school students supports increased academic achievement by: (1) eliminating two days of schedule changes in favor of one day of conferences (less disruption for teachers and students and it protects instructional time); (2) allowing teachers to focus on teaching when teaching, and conferencing when conferencing; (3) protecting schedules for vulnerable children, including those on IEPs and those receiving tutoring and other supplemental services. A schedule of 7 half days can disrupt services for students (for example, if a student receives special education services in the afternoon, the student's schedule could be impacted for the 7 half days); (4) allowing for conferences to take place at night, with the goal of getting parents involved in the education of their child; (5) permitting the inclusion or partial inclusion of students in conferences; and (6) reducing the burden of families to provide alternative childcare arrangements in odd increments and for a greater of number of days, mitigating financial impact and disruption of family routines and work schedules.

8. Explain the district's reasons for electing to conduct parent-teacher conferences through full days rather than partial days.

Consecutive early release days are disruptive to elementary school routines. Schedules need to be revised to create planning time for every teacher and to enable students with disabilities to access the resource room or related service providers, which can diminish the time devoted to core academics. The three full days were less disruptive to students, families, and teachers.

9. State the number of partial days (half days, early releases, late starts) that will be reduced as a result of implementing the waiver plan.

Instead of 7 early release days for elementary and K-8 students we would have three full days of parent/guardian/teacher conferences. The District would have one day for middle and high school students.

10. Describe how administrators, teachers, other school and district staff, and parents have participated in the development of the waiver request.

Seattle School District principals and teachers requested that this conference schedule continue. District elementary principals support this request so they can continue to eliminate seven early dismissal days from their school calendar and replace them with three full days of conferences.

A few District secondary schools have experimented with parent/guardian/teacher conferences. The waiver request includes a request that middle and high schools have the option of utilizing one school day to schedule and conduct parent/guardian/teacher conferences. Approval will allow District staff to use full days for this activity, rather than scheduling multiple half days.

The matter of the academic year calendar is primarily a subject of negotiations with the Seattle Education Association. Therefore, there is limited direct community engagement on the subject. The Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) with the Seattle School District and Seattle Education Association specifies how the normal student calendar shall be developed using a formula for key dates. The formula for key dates includes conferences and states that they should be scheduled immediately preceding Thanksgiving Day. As such, any community engagement with parents over when the conferences shall be scheduled could be considered misleading. The CBA would supersede community preference.

In 2013, District staff conducted a parent survey on whether parents preferred the three full-days or seven one-half day conference schedule for parent/teacher conferences. 3,550 parents/guardians participated in the survey. 93.5% of those who participated indicated that they preferred the three full-day conferences model over the seven one-half day conference model. Previously, parents and staff at schools were surveyed by the District in November, 2011 to assess support for full-day parent/guardian/teacher conferences. At that time, 1611 parents participated in the survey and 93.3% of those supported full day conferences.

11. In the space below provide an electronic link to the district's collective bargaining agreement with the local education association.

[https://www.seattlewea.org/file\\_viewer.php?id=17851](https://www.seattlewea.org/file_viewer.php?id=17851)