

BALANCED SCHOOL YEAR INFORMATION

"Embracing success through education by building strong identities as Chippewas of the Thames members by living our traditions and empowering student success!"

During the recent Community Engagement sessions held on May 5, 2018 and June 2, 2018, the Board of Education gathered information to gain insight and direction in the educational services that are provided to the community.

As a result, the Board of Education heard from the Community that they were interested in Year-Round Schooling or Balanced School Year. Therefore, based on the information gathered at the Community Engagement sessions, the Board of Education's first method is to provide an information Brochure on Balanced School Year.

The second method is to gather input through the Balanced School Year Survey, which can be completed and returned to the Education Office by October 2, 2018.

We look forward to your responses.

Chi-Miigwech,

COTTFN Board of Education

What is a BALANCED SCHOOL YEAR CALENDAR?

A balanced school year calendar evenly distributes the total number of school days that students attend school and vacation times across the 12-month calendar year. Students still attend school at the same time and go on vacation at the same time.

Pros:

- breaks often land near traditional holidays when parents get time off from work
- eliminates need for summer enrichment or remediation programs
- more vacation options available for families
- other community programming given at different times in academic year.
- teacher and student stress lessened with regular breaks throughout the year
- may benefit achievement of disadvantaged students
- no learning loss during summer months.

Cons:

- longer year and more demanding for custodians, cafeteria, maintenance, and administration
- parents may have difficulty scheduling childcare or other activities, such as athletics for multiple children.
- limits time for teachers to update skills and earn advanced degrees
- May improve attendance and behaviour

What is the current SCHOOL YEAR CALENDAR?

The school year operates between September and June, a 10-month cycle with July and August for summer vacation. Currently, that is how the school year is planned and organized where there are traditional breaks at Christmas and March Break.

Pros:

- it's what most of us grew up with and know.
- allows time for children to have authentic experiences outside of the classroom
- more summer camps and summer activities available to students
- more family time away from demands of school teachers and students get a longer break from school

Cons:

- research suggests that there is 2.6 months of learning lost during summer months.
- finding appropriate childcare can be difficult with many people going on vacation
- more time spent on review of previous year's material at beginning of school year
- teachers get less time to reflect on teaching and students' best learning Styles.
- remediation has been offered in summer, but it may be too late and not all families take advantage.

Things to Consider

The Chippewas of the Thames Board of Education would like parents, employees, and community members to consider the merits of a balanced education calendar.

These include:

Instruction - The key to quality instruction is planning and evaluation. Depending on the number of days in a term, it would provide teachers with manageable blocks of time for effective unit planning, and the time needed to reflect on student progress and to prepare for the next term. Also, a shortened summer break could result in less summer learning loss among students.

Stress and burnout – We are in an era of high expectations and accountability for student and teacher performance. The consistent cycle of breaks throughout the school year would enable students and teachers to rest, re-energize, and re-focus so that they can perform their best work.

Student achievement – The benefits stated above have the potential for improving student achievement. Some research studies indicate that students who attend school on a balanced calendar demonstrate improvement in school attendance, behavior, and achievement.

Other Community Programming- This will allow for community programming for the youth and families to be more involved, for instance, culture, language, and leadership camps.