

**PEIHSF Semi-Annual Meeting**  
**“School Calendar” Discussion Summary – October 15, 2013**

**Professional Development**

1. There is confusion about terminology – “in-service days”, “PD days”, “collaborative PD”, “embedded PD” – which makes talking about the school calendar confusing if everyone doesn’t know the meanings of the terms.
2. Many parents questioned why professional development can’t happen outside of the school day: after school, in the evening, on weekends, during the summer, etc.
3. There was general support for the need for teachers to engage in professional development activities, especially of the “embedded” and “collaborative” type, but equal concern about the classroom time loss this requires.
4. Several parents questions why the PEITF has to take two school days for its annual convention, and asked why this couldn’t happen on the weekend or in the summer.
5. There was general agreement that, no matter the amount of professional development or the format, there needs to be clear communication to parents about the nature of the activities: “if my child is missing an instructional day, tell me why.”

**Storm Days**

1. Can we develop a system to add days to the school calendar to compensate for days lost due to storms?

**Instructional Days**

1. A consistent theme was concern about the low number of “instructional days” (currently 181) vs. “school days” (currently 195 to 197, depending on the year) relative to other jurisdictions.
2. An often-raised issue was the “lost days” in December and June as holidays near and there appears to be a lot of “filler” activity – movies, field trips, etc. – in the school day. It was felt that we need to make maximum use of every instructional day on the calendar.
3. The “grade 10 transition day” pilot project at Bluefield, where grade 10 students start the day before grade 11 and 12 students, was widely regarded as a success and an initiative that should be maintained.
4. There is, we were told, a desire in the Dept. of Education to move to a system where every school week has at least 4 instructional days, avoiding weeks, like this one, where there is Thanksgiving on Monday and two days off for the PEITF convention.
5. There was some discussion about the shorter length of our school day as compared to other jurisdictions.

**Parent-Teacher Interviews**

1. Several parents raised concerns about parent-teacher interviews being all on the same day, and about difficulties with taking a day off work to attend.