

ANCHORAGE SCHOOL DISTRICT
ANCHORAGE, ALASKA

October 24, 2004

TO: CAROL COMEAU, SUPERINTENDENT

FROM: ACTIVITIES TASK FORCE

SUBJECT: PUBLIC PROCESS FOR ADDRESSING CALENDAR CONFLICTS

It was brought to the attention of the High School Education Department that the Region IV Cross Country meet scheduled for the 04-05 school year was being held on Yom Kippur, a holy day for those of the Jewish Faith. Although the school district was unable to reschedule the meet this year, the Superintendent has requested that a committee be formed to examine the issue of available dates for students to compete within the activities arena.

The assignment of the Task Force was to create a process by which an individual or organization could approach the School District regarding non-play days within the School district calendar.

Potential task force members were identified from past task force participants, as well as interested parents, and community members who have expressed an interest in calendar conflicts with cultural/religious events. Dr. Steve Cobb, Glenn Cravez, Ellen Kirchner, Peggy Kugel, Steve Nerland (chairman), Fr. Leo Walsh, Don Winchester accepted the invitation to meet and discuss the issue at hand. Together they represented varied perspectives and professional experiences ranging from university professor and athletic director to local businessperson, attorney, retired coach, Catholic priest and high school administrators. Todd Arndt, High School Supervisor, also participated.

During the first meeting, held September 22nd, 2004, the objectives of the group was explained as:

1. Define the days currently designated as holidays, and non-play days.
2. Justify existing non-play days.
3. Define the process for the establishment or dissolution of a non-play date.

4. Present a resolution of commitment to the Anchorage School Board in support of the committee results to maintain the integrity of the public process.

The group agreed to meet again the following Wednesday, and as-required there after, with a goal of creating a public process.

Much of the discussion centered on the objectives at hand versus, assigning nonplay dates, as well as the definition of a play/nonplay day, and what activities are affected. The committee determined as diverse as the community is culturally, more community input was required, and a public forum was tentatively scheduled.

The next meeting was held September 29th, 2004. It was suggested that rather than a public forum for community input, that the Interfaith Council be contacted, and they could identify significant religious days. The term non-play day, needed to be clarified, and guidelines set for determining applicability. It was also determined there needed to be a position at the Administration Building for the public to contact regarding future conflicts.

October 19, the committee met at 5:00PM. Discussion again centered on the actual purpose of the Task Force. Also on input from the Madison School District in WI. It was decided the process for addressing the School Board, could follow the flow chart below, with the approval/denial for changes the responsibility of the board, rather than the committee.

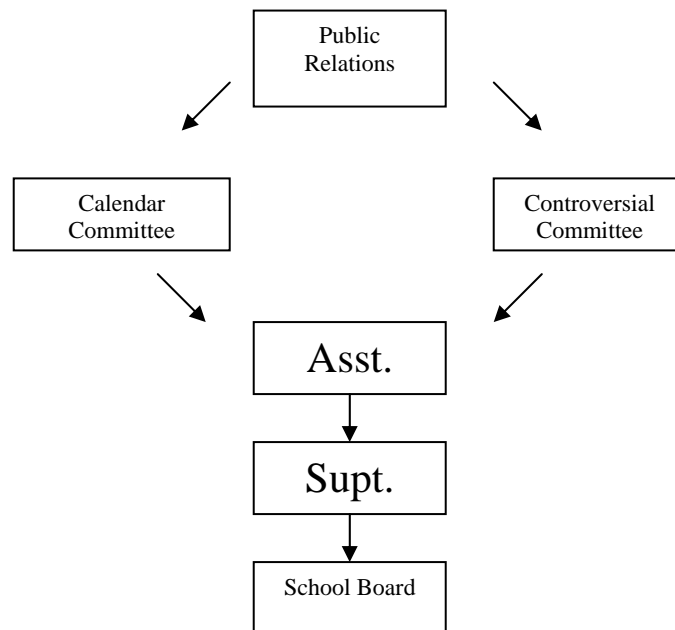
On November 10th, the committee met at 5:00 PM. They were presented a draft form to be used in requesting changes to the calendar. With minor wording changes the form was adopted. The discussion then centered on the five days the current calendar identifies as holidays, and the statement in the handbook ""No school Activities will be held on Sundays or holidays." The meeting adjourned, with the agenda set for the following week to create a Tier I and identify those days, which would fall under such a tiered system.

The committee met on the 17th of November for the final meeting. It was proposed that the restrictions of "no school activities" pertaining to holidays should be changed to:

On Tier I days there will be no scheduled (including but not limited to) contests, practices, exams, field trips or retreats. Attendance will not be required at extra-curricular events.

The five days currently listed as holidays on the Anchorage School District calendar, Labor Day, Thanksgiving, Christmas, New Years Day, and Memorial Day should fall under the new Tier I. Tier II would be those days designated Major Religious Holidays on a memo from the Superintendent dated August 19th, 2004, titled Special Days for the 2004-2005 School Year. These are dates staff should be sensitive to in planning activities.

The committee proposes the following resolution to the School Board. A process be adopted where-by individuals/groups requesting changes be made to the activities calendar could approach the School Board. Public Relations would facilitate the process with the requestor, and to ensure a timely answer, the process would have a time frame of 30 days per level, not to exceed 120 days. This time limit would begin when the **completed** request form is turned in to PR. (See attached form)



Public Relations would assist in completing the form, and ensuring all applicable support documentation was attached. They would then route the request to one of two committees The Calendar or the Controversial Committee. From there the request would go to the Assistant Superintendent, then the Superintendent. The Superintendent would then present the request to the school board. At any time in the process if there was not enough information the request could be sent back. The same process would be followed for removal of a non-play date, with the exception of the requirement of a signature from the individual/group initially requesting the non-play status, if applicable.

The committee further proposes a tiered system for identifying holidays. The wording pertaining to holidays should be changed to:

On Tier I days there will be no scheduled (including but not limited to) contests, practices, exams, field trips or retreats. Attendance will not be required at extra-curricular events.

The five days currently listed as holidays on the Anchorage School District calendar, Labor Day, Thanksgiving, Christmas, New Years Day, and Memorial Day should fall under the new Tier I. Tier II would be those days designated Major Religious Holidays on a memo from the Superintendent dated August 19th, 2004, titled Special Days for the 2004-2005 School Year. These are dates staff should be sensitive to in planning activities.