



## CANTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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Louis Daniels  
Chair, Canton Board of Education

April 20, 2009

Dear Parents and Friends:

This past Wednesday (April 15<sup>th</sup>), the Board of Education voted unanimously to modify the 2009 - 2010 school calendar and reduce next year's February vacation by three days. The school calendar has been a topic of BOE discussion for nearly three months. The idea to review the calendar came from parents who voiced their concern regarding a late June year end, which can be further compounded by make-up snow days. The Board agreed to review and asked Superintendent Case to come back with a recommendation. In March, Mr. Case made a proposal to shrink February vacation from a full week to a long weekend that includes Monday and Tuesday.

The public opinion and input phase to our process officially started in March when the proposed calendar was presented to the Board as a first reading. The Board of Education values public input; and, while we hoped for some folks to come to our March or April meetings to discuss this (there were none), we did receive emails and calls. The input we received was mixed. At least 20 teacher emails evidenced a number of teachers were against a shorter February break; but parent input was the opposite, with most supporting the change. In the end, while all the input was valuable, the decision really came down to this key point: Quality instruction time is what we all value most. The Board of Education believes those additional days in February are more valuable and productive than any time spent in the classroom in late June. In addition, the February break comes too close to the state testing window in March. It's really that simple, and while some may argue other facets of the decision, quality instruction time trumps all other rationale.

The Board of Education recognizes this change may disrupt winter plans for some, and we are sorry for the inconvenience. However, we are confident that the new schedule provides ample time off in February to refresh and charge those mental batteries. After all, the only month in our school calendar that does not provide students and teachers with some break is March; notwithstanding the 16 half days or the typical three to five snow days we encounter every year.

The Board of Education realizes that the school calendar is a critical piece to a successful education plan; and to ensure we are providing our children with the right educational pacing, the Board will appoint a study committee to analyze the new calendar's effectiveness and to suggest further modification if needed. Residents of Canton willing to volunteer their time and talents to this committee should contact the Superintendent's office by letter or phone.

On behalf of the Canton Board of Education,

Lou Daniels, Chair