
CHIMACUM SCHOOL CALENDAR

Dec. 4, 2022

Staff Survey – Full Report

Survey administered by:

**Chimacum School District's
School Calendar Survey Group (SCWG)**

Respondents:

**Chimacum's
Classified and Certificated Staff (Staff)**

Survey Open Dates:

November 22nd – December 3rd, 2022

OVERVIEW

The Chimacum School Calendar Working Group (SCWG) launched an engagement process for the 2023-24 school calendar with a presentation at the November Staff meetings with the Primary, CJSHS (middle school?) and High school staff. SCWG members presented summary information gleaned from the Regional Balanced Calendar Conference held in Yakima in October, 2022. A post-staff meeting survey was distributed to the Chimacum School Staff to gather their feedback, insights, and considerations for the 2024 Chimacum School Calendar.

The Chimacum Staff survey had a 23.45% response rate with a total of 34 respondents who completed the survey out of 145 total possible Chimacum School District Staff. This included responses from:

- 7 out of 85 possible classified staff
- 27 out of a possible 60 certificated staff

Themes from this survey's responses will be identified by the SCWG. These themes will be employed to anchor discussions at an upcoming Staff Meeting around improving student learning with a modified or balanced calendar.

This school calendar exploration is part of a greater initiative from the Washington State Legislature about learning recovery. We will continue this process of engaging our students, staff, and community prior to finalizing the 2023-24 calendar by April 2023, and beyond, into upcoming school years.



Survey Question 1 Responses - "Strengths or weaknesses of the current Calendar?"

Theme	Survey Question 1 – Feedback – Certificated Staff
<p>Current Calendar Strengths</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ I like how long our winter break is. ▪ Tradition ▪ Better for teachers! ▪ Strengths: Familiarity, alignment with PT. ▪ Strengths: we have families in this community who are farming, ranching, commercial fishing and working in the tourism industries and appreciate summers off. ▪ Strength: Consistency, already have planned for. ▪ The current calendar is one in which society is familiar with. ▪ Strength, August is our best month in the PNW, not having school then is perfect. ▪ Consistency and meets expectations ▪ I think it will be harder for our families to get childcare for the time off in the middle of the year and children might be left in unsafe situations. ▪ Strength - Full summer off, time to fully recharge; more focus time to go back to school to further degree.
<p>Current Calendar Weaknesses</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ I do wish we had a longer break before the end of December. I think that having more breaks for staff throughout the year would be helpful to schedule appointments, etc. I haven't experienced a summer break yet, though I will enjoy the time off... but I don't think I would mind having a shorter summer break. I've never in my life had more than a week off work at a time, so I honestly think it'll be hard for me to have so much down time! ▪ There needs to be some interspersed longer breaks (min. 5 days versus 1). These would benefit students and staff. I was part of a district in CA for 20 years that did the week off for Thanksgiving and Presidents' Week in February. Both were great timing for stress relief and recouping. I absolutely loved them. It also allows families more time together at Thanksgiving. My daughter is home from college, but time is very limited until Wed. afternoon. Attendance has never been very good for the 2 and 1/2 days before Thanksgiving since I started 7 years ago. An additional break in the fall would encourage rest, but also encourage the hunting families to use that time versus take time out of school. They definitely don't just use the weekends. I have experienced many students each year that miss up to 5 days (rare extreme examples of 2 weeks) for hunting trips. Often the family calls them in sick. The student later tells me about the trip and shows me pictures of their buck, etc. Starting a week or so earlier in August is really no big deal. Completely worth every day. I understand some might be concerned, but that usually ends after experiencing the additional breaks. I never experienced anyone in my CA district that bemoaned the fact of getting the breaks and starting a little earlier for the school year. ▪ *The only problem I had was when my calendar did not match my children's school calendar, which fortunately was only spring break. Would be very beneficial for schools to match calendars for the families. ▪ Students are taking way too much time off during the school year for vacations. ▪ Thanksgiving break is too short.



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Lack of staff input ▪ Not enough time for the holidays during winter break ▪ Weaknesses include too much time off for students. ▪ too many PD days before beginning of school year ▪ Often not updated on the district website. ▪ It does have long periods of time where both students and staff have no time to rest. ▪ Many breaks between Sept and Jan, but fewer from Jan-June. Would be nice to have a couple more breaks before the end of year instead of that long push. ▪ Weakness = Tremendous regression for students who live in poverty. It is sad to see the gap between them and middle-class students widen every year. ▪ Weakness - Students regress over long summer break; teachers and students experience burnout; my family can't get away to visit warmer climate states/countries as easily during the school year (district low on substitutes). ▪ 2 half days mid-week in the middle of October was disruptive for student behavior ▪ Communication ▪ Weaknesses: Zero bargaining units approved the current calendar—an absolutely unacceptable & unconscionable, unmistakable sign of district's contempt for staff ▪ Weakness, too many long stretches that seem to burn out students and teachers. ▪ Weaknesses: shortening summer makes it harder for families to count on seasonal income.
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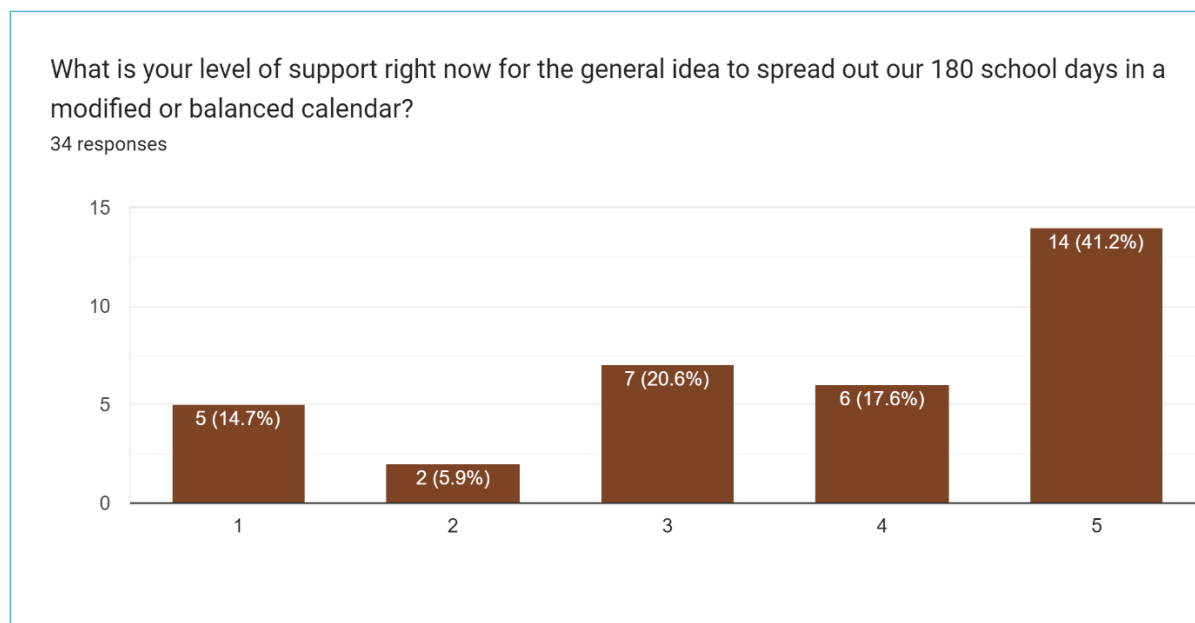
Theme	Survey Question 1 – Feedback – Classified Staff
Strengths of Current Calendar	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Allows time for teachers and staff to continue their education over the summer and a break from the high demand of the short-staffed district. ▪ Our current calendar provides families with flexibility during summer break. Kids can attend summer camps, go visit relatives and go on family vacations. It all provides a nice long break for kids to re-energize and just be kids. Nice for staff to re-energize as well.
Weaknesses of Current Calendar	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ I see many weaknesses. Children forget so much of what they learned over the long summer months. With a balanced calendar I can see it helping working parents and daycares with many of the difficulties they face at this time. ▪ The current calendar is something the local families are used to, but it is a weakness in giving all children from all income levels more opportunity to learn and retain learning throughout the year. ▪ Too long summer break, then a long stretch before a nice break to relax ▪ The summer break is too long and I get out of shape...can't keep up to the kids once school starts.



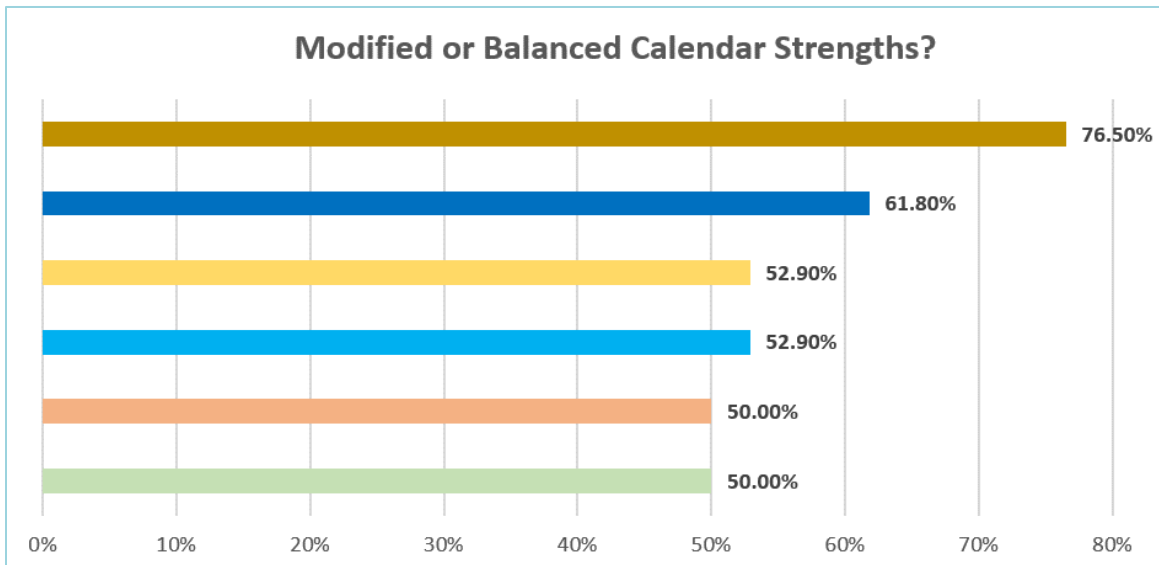
Survey Question 2 Responses - “What is your level of support right now for the general idea to spread out our 180 school days in a modified or balanced calendar?”

Support Level by Staff Designation

	% Not in Favor	% Neutral	% High Support
Certificated Staff	14.29%	42.86%	42.86%
Classified Staff	16.67%	50.00%	33.33%



Survey Question 3 Responses - What are possible strengths of spreading out our 180 school days in a modified or balanced calendar? Shown below in voted order from highest to lowest.



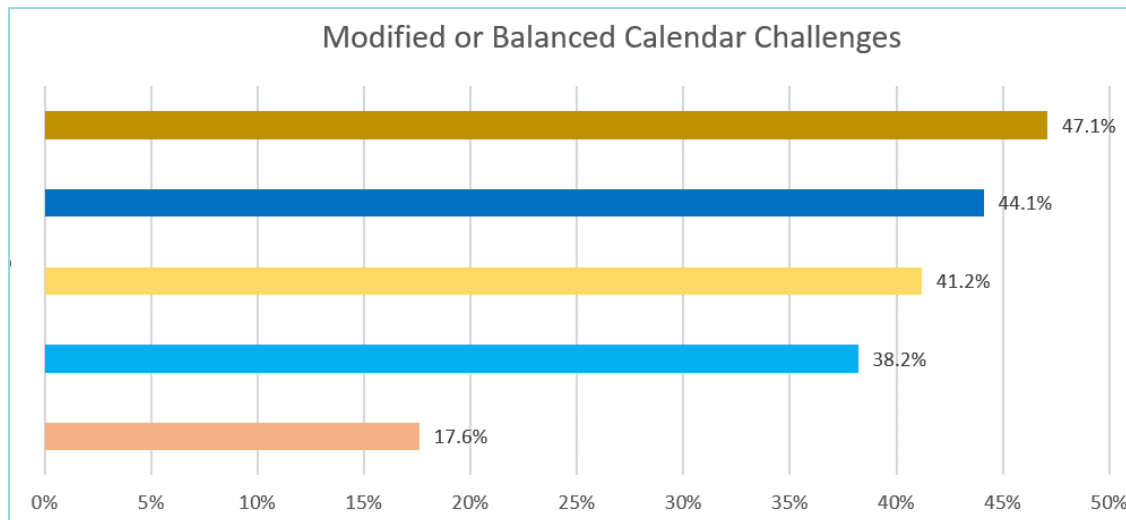
- 67.4% - Positive impact on student learning (prevent summer learning loss, less re-teaching)
- 61.8% - Prevent staff burn out and/or increase staff retention
- 52.9% - Improve student attendance (e.g. appointments, family vacations can shift to breaks)
- 52.9% - Student access to resources/care are more continuous
- 50.0% - Ability to travel at non-peak times
- 50.0% - Possibility of enrichment, intervention & credit recovery during intersessions

Additional Survey Question #3 feedback regarding “strengths”.

Opposed	Pro	Non-Committal
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Any positive impact on learning and access should be first remedied with appropriate push in and academic supports, which we have not mastered at the high school, peak times will become our days off if surrounding districts are also adopting "balanced" calendars, staff can make higher salaries elsewhere if they want to work year-round, especially in the sciences and trades. ▪ None of these seem viable without a major shift in funding and staff recruiting practices. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Other school districts appear to want to make this beneficial change. ▪ Scheduling my own or families appts! ▪ Benefit to parents in not having to find a 10 week chunk of day care. ▪ Benefit for Maintenance crews and repairs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ability to travel does not work unless Chimacum and PT work out the same schedule with combined sports and other activities.



Survey Question 4 Responses - What are possible challenges of spreading out our 180 school days in a modified or balanced calendar? Check all that apply for you.



- 47.1% - Funding for intersession activities
- 44.1% - Alignment of calendar with neighboring districts
- 41.2% - Shorter summer break
- 38.2% - Athletics scheduling
- 17.6% - Alignment with my own children's district

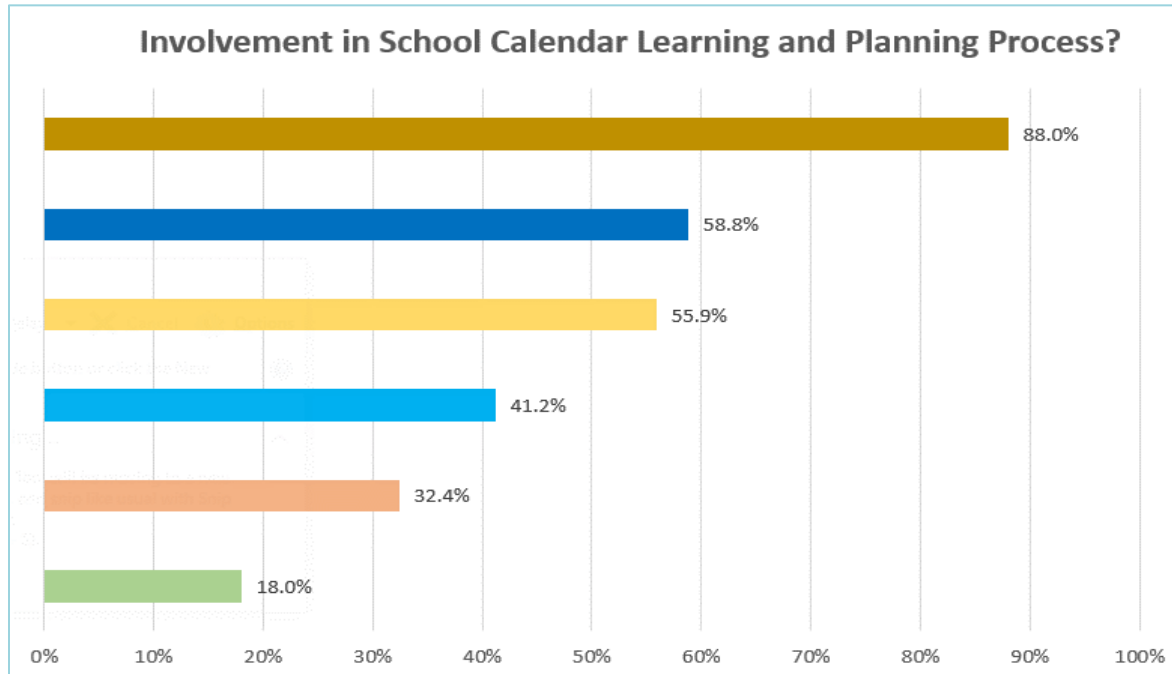
The fourteen "Other Comments" re: challenges are shown below.

- Lack of childcare availability in our area for working parents
- Families not having access to daycare during breaks and having to take unpaid time off from their own jobs
- Families may struggle to find childcare for shorter break periods
- Parenting plans would have to be redone causing stress on families.
- Students not having free food during breaks
- I work at another place in the summer months, but I can be flexible.
- Conflicts with farming, commercial fishing, regional tourism and seasonal park ranger work
- Teachers working through short breaks, not taking a true break
- August gets eaten up by PD before an Aug 29th start date
- We rarely have enough staff to cover summer school. Will staff really volunteer to teach over the breaks. With SPED students there are only a few teachers to volunteer versus gen ed teachers.
- Recruiting staff to work the lower pay support jobs on a very spotty schedule
- This will require we find new money to do it.
- Community backing
- I don't think any of these issues are even close to insurmountable.



Survey Question 5 Responses

In what capacity would you like to be involved in the learning and planning process about a changed calendar? Check all that apply for you.



- 88.0% - No personal involvement - trust the process
- 58.8% - Read district and union communication about this
- 55.9% - Give feedback to working group members
- 41.2% - Attend informational meetings and provide feedback/input
- 32.4% - Be part of a book study (more details to come)
- 18.0% - Complete surveys

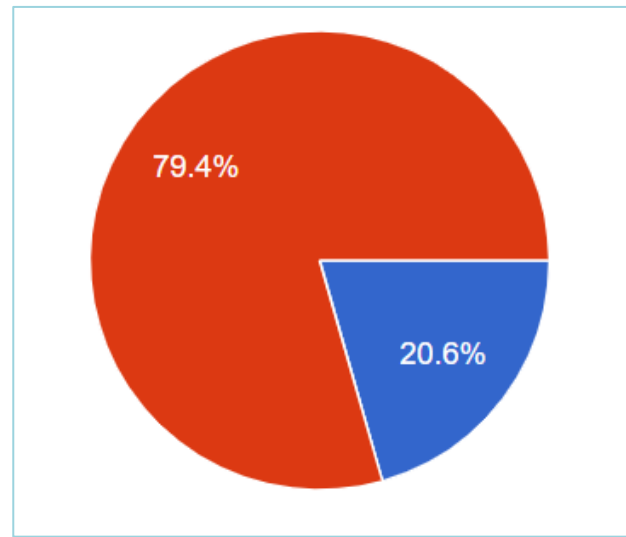
Below are 3 “Other Comments” re: involvement capacity.

- I would be open to communicating with neighboring districts. Any misalignment would be a non-starter, in my opinion, since there is a lot of crossover between our districts.
- Participate in discussions about the calendar
- Read and stay well informed.



Survey Question 7 Response - Are You Classified Staff or Certificated Staff?

- Classified Staff
- Certificated Staff



The 34 respondents consisted of 79.4% Certificated Staff and 20.6% Classified Staff.

Survey response rate compared to the total number of staff who received the survey.

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Survey Question 8 Responses - Is there anything else you would like us to know?

There were 15 pieces of feedback re: thoughts the staff wanted to share.

- I think that easing into this with a modified schedule would be great. I'd really enjoy shorter breaks than the 45-15 balanced calendar has, though (i.e. a 1 week break in October and a 1 week break in February, plus our regular winter break in December and spring break in April).
- Most important is aligning with other districts.
- It is useful for children who have families in the PT district to align schedules for vacation or sport purposes.
- If we want to balance calendar to help with student success, we should start first with improving our MTSS, PBIS, SPED collaboration and ESL collaboration, increase support staff, create stability in staffing and work on making families feel welcome and part of the school community.
- We should put more effort into helping low-income families at the national level. We should get AmeriCorps aids in all of our buildings; we need to implement more student supports. We also need to hire more teachers so that teachers are not burnt out on teaching three new subjects every year at the High School level.
- I think we are putting the cart ahead of the horse with this topic. I think it is a waste of everyone's time to discuss this when we are not yet applying MTSS and PBIS and appropriate SPED/ESL supports in our school.
- July and August are 2 months during which good, rain-free weather is usually guaranteed in Chimacum. It is the only time of the year for swimming outdoors, gardening and other summer activities. Time off in the Fall or in February, while nice, is often not going to be very pleasant weather-wise.
- Also, as a teacher, my students, planning lessons and assessments, are present throughout the school year. Short breaks would not allow me to truly step away from teaching. The long summer break is the only time of the year I ever forget about teaching and get the break that I need to show up full of energy the next year.
- I grew up going to a year-round school (9 weeks on, 3weeks off).
- Very interested in hearing more about this. I think it could be great for students who may not have access to academic resources outside of school or may not have a stable and secure environment at home.
- I already stated it up above. Thank you for looking into this. This would not be starting something new, so there are plenty of successful examples.
- Please try to keep August sacred, for the most part. Like, if we start school ON the 29th please don't have a whole week of training before that, on top of trying to get classrooms ready.
- I would be concerned that the burden of "enrichment, intervention" during intersessions would fall on a narrow range of staff, even if it is volunteer.
- I would prefer modified- i.e. week off at Thanksgiving, a mid-winter break in Feb, and a little break in mid-May.
- If anything, Quilcene has the best schedule



Survey Question 9 Responses - Is there anything else you would like to ask?

There were 7 pieces of feedback re: questions the staff wanted to ask.

- Can we provide things like food bags for families during breaks? Right now our backpack program doesn't deliver bags during breaks or when we have Fridays off from school (no bags president's day weekend, Thanksgiving weekend, PTC weekend, etc.
- I am curious about the intersection of the balanced calendar and trauma informed practices. I would like to have more training and opportunities to explore this change from this perspective.
- If students attended enrichment days/ activities, would they still have access to food services while on campus?
- Can we have a frank conversation about what it would really take in terms of staff and funding to increase continuity and access to critical services like food on a balanced calendar? The last meeting brushed over this stuff
- Will our calendar align with Sunfield, Port Townsend, Swan, and others in the area?
- Will this be pushed through, without community backing?
- How will this impact split families with parenting plans? How will this effect sports? Will union contracts have to be renegotiated?

