



# **Advancing Student Achievement Through a School Calendar Pilot**

## **Background**

A school calendar pilot project is moving forward, resulting in an additional 10 professional learning days over the school year for a limited number of anglophone schools across the four school districts. The pilot was requested by school districts and the NBTA to support teacher growth, collaboration, and instructional planning. The approach was informed by past success in New Brunswick, a review of other jurisdictions, and strong research linking job-embedded professional learning to improved student outcomes.

Superintendents led consultations with Parent School Support Committees and District Education Councils before proposing a calendar that adds 10 additional staff learning and collaboration days to the school year. A total of 136 schools in the anglophone sector expressed interest in the pilot and 37 schools were selected to participate, each reporting strong parental support. Each school was confirmed through consultation with Parent School Support Committees and supported by letters of endorsement.

The pilot begins in September 2025 and is designed as a temporary, small-scale initiative to test the model's effectiveness. It's a low-risk way to learn, make adjustments, and build confidence before making any long-term decisions.

This approach mirrors a previous initiative in New Brunswick that led to significant gains in Grade 2 literacy rates between 2007 and 2010, during a time when teachers had increased access to professional learning.

## **Questions & Answers**

### **What's going on?**

Beginning September 2025, 37 anglophone will pilot a revised calendar that will allow for up to two days per month, to a maximum of 10 days, for school staff to have time to focus on improvements in literacy, numeracy and meeting the diverse needs of their students. These days will consistently fall on the same day of the week to support routine and minimize disruption for families.

For grades 9–12, these days will always fall on Fridays. For K–8, one day will be scheduled on a Monday, with the remaining days on Fridays. This consistent approach supports routine and helps minimize disruption for families.



## **Why is this happening?**

This pilot responds directly to a request from anglophone school districts and the New Brunswick Teachers' Association. The Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development, who oversees the school calendar, is supporting the pilot as a collaborative step toward improving student learning.

Teachers have been clear that they need more time to plan, assess and respond to student progress, and collaborate with colleagues, including EAs and school counsellors.

Research and experience shows that high-quality, job-embedded professional learning leads to stronger teaching and better student outcomes. When educators have time to work together, the result is stronger instruction and better outcomes for students. Other Canadian jurisdictions show this approach works.

This pilot directly responds to teacher feedback and supports our broader strategy to improve student achievement, retain and recruit dedicated educators, and create more positive and inclusive learning environments across the province.

Parents have provided solid support on the proposed pilot at the 37 anglophone schools that will participate in the pilot.

By investing in teacher growth, we are investing in student success.

## **What are Professional Learning (PL) days? What will school staff be doing?**

Professional Learning (PL) days are designed to ensure that all adults who work in schools have the expertise needed to respond to individual student needs. The days could include a combination of structured training sessions, collaboration with colleagues and independent work. Teachers, administrators and other staff, including EAs and school counsellors, will be working at school on these days. These additional PL days will provide school staff with focused time to plan, assess and respond to student progress, and collaborate with one another, parents and outside agencies.

## **Should I be worried about reduced instructional time?**

Research consistently shows that when teachers engage in more intensive and sustained professional learning, student achievement improves.

We also have tried it here in NB before. Between 2007 and 2010, Grade 2 literacy rates rose significantly from 71.8 to 83.6 percent. During that time, teachers had six additional professional learning days and regularly participated in training beyond these days. We



believe we can achieve those results again, with a strong vision and the courage to do things differently.

An analysis by Yoon et al. (2007) found that professional development programs lasting 49 hours or more had a significant positive impact on student performance, comparable to nearly a full year of academic growth. In contrast, short-term learning opportunities (14 hours or less) had no measurable effect. The most effective professional learning experiences were those that extended over time, encouraged collaboration, provided feedback, and allowed teachers to apply what they learned in their classrooms. This evidence highlights that meaningful, well-supported professional learning is a powerful lever for improving student outcomes.

The reduction in instructional time to increase time for professional learning would keep instructional time in New Brunswick on par with students in Alberta, British Columbia, Ontario and Quebec, all of which scored significantly higher than New Brunswick in reading on the 2022 Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) results in 2022.

**Government has placed an emphasis on improving literacy, numeracy and overall wellbeing of students. What specific evidence can you point to that shows that more professional learning leads to better academic outcomes?**

Research has shown there are significant links between the professional learning of school staff and improved achievement for students. Liang et al. (2015) emphasized the need for sustained subject-specific professional learning to support student success.

Additionally, in its 2024 report on the teaching profession, the United Nations stressed the importance of time for teacher collaboration, planning and reflection to enhance educational outcomes. This was reinforced by Shleifer et al. (2017) which links professional collaboration to improved student results, greater job satisfaction, and reduced teacher turnover.

**How will the success of the pilot program be measured?**

The pilot will be formally evaluated. The evaluation will assess key indicators such as student achievement, student and staff absenteeism, teacher retention, and overall school well-being. These measures will help determine the potential for broader implementation.



## What schools will be involved in the pilot?

A total of 136 schools asked to participate and 37 schools have been selected, listed below.

<b>Anglophone West</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bath Community School</li> <li>• Bristol Elementary School</li> <li>• Carleton North High School</li> <li>• Florenceville Middle School</li> <li>• Florenceville Elementary School</li> <li>• Centreville Community School</li> </ul>	<b>Anglophone North</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Napan Elementary School</li> <li>• Nelson Rural School</li> <li>• King Street Elementary School</li> <li>• Dr. Losier Middle School</li> <li>• James M. Hill High School</li> <li>• Parkwood Heights Elementary School</li> <li>• Terry Fox Elementary School</li> <li>• Superior Middle School</li> <li>• Bathurst High School</li> <li>• Miramichi Rural School</li> </ul>
<b>Anglophone South</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sir James Dunn Academy</li> <li>• Vincent Massey Elementary</li> <li>• Harbour View High School</li> <li>• Saint John High School</li> <li>• St. Malachy's Memorial High School</li> <li>• Simonds High School</li> <li>• Fairvale Elementary School</li> <li>• Rothesay High School</li> <li>• Kennebecasis Valley High School</li> <li>• Quispamsis Middle School</li> </ul>	<b>Anglophone East</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Harrison Trimble High School</li> <li>• Queen Elizabeth School</li> <li>• Beaverbrook School</li> <li>• Magnetic Hill School</li> <li>• Birchmount School</li> <li>• Maplehurst School</li> <li>• Northrop Frye School</li> <li>• Havelock School</li> <li>• Petitcodiac Regional School</li> <li>• Salisbury Elementary School</li> <li>• Salisbury Regional School</li> </ul>

## What if families experience hardship in finding child care/supervision for their children on these PL Days?

Work has already begun to make childcare providers and families aware of the pilot in the selected school communities. This collaboration will be ongoing.

Should there be a change in readiness of a school community previously identified to participate in this pilot, the principal, in consultation with their PSSC, may withdraw from the pilot process.