

October 2024 - Report on Vale School District #84 Public Records

Vale School District has produced 290 pdfs in response to my public records request. After reviewing it is concluded that Superintendent Alisha McBride and Vale Education Association President Andy Hally made a verbal agreement that violates the First Amendment by agreeing to censor the word “Christmas” from the district calendar when labeling Christmas Break.

Their agreement violates the free speech right of students, parents, and stake holders in the district because public education must be free from government censorship. In this case a government employee made an agreement to advance an opinion of a special interest group suppressing a reality they don’t approve of. While the school has a right to adopt the value of inclusion, the way Mrs. McBride applied it to the label of Christmas Break violates the First Amendment by suppressing speech Mr. Hally doesn’t like.^a

After three years of secretly banning a certain word regarding a certain break, their agreement is now public. The superintendent and union president are trying to run interference, claiming their agreement is about being “*more inclusive*”.^b They have left their written explanation vague to avoid accountability. Their agreement is to label Christmas Break with any other word except the word Christmas.

The Secret Agreement

During the Vale School Board meeting on March 13, 2024, school board director Ryan Bates made a motion to label Christmas Break as “Christmas/Winter/Holiday Break” so as to be as inclusive as possible.^c

If the secret agreement made between McBride and Hally was only about being inclusive, this motion could have been considered. Instead, Director Darlene McConnell told Bates that she could not vote for a label that included the word Christmas. McConnell said the Superintendent made an agreement with the teacher’s union not to use the word Christmas and the board needed to obey that. Bates said that he was not part of that agreement and asked what the teacher’s union would do if the school used the word Christmas. There was no response from the superintendent or the union president, who were attending the meeting.

Since this was a secret, verbal agreement made a few years ago, it is important to note how school board members have applied the agreement to figure out what the agreement actually is. Since the agreement, Christmas Break has been renamed. When McConnell said “*the superintendent made an agreement not to use the word Christmas,*” nobody tried to correct her. If this was an inaccurate description of the agreement, McBride or Hally could have set the record straight. They did not, indicating she had truthfully described the agreement and precisely applied the agreement. According to McBride, the whole school board also knows about her agreement.^d Director Jason Chamberlain and Michael McGourty could have corrected McConnell at the meeting if her description wasn’t right, they did not. To date, no one, including the speaker herself, has ever claimed the agreement

^a See Public Records pdf #0000107

^b See Public Records pdf #0000110

^c See Public Records pdf #0005257

^d See Public Records pdf #0000107 pg 2 and #0000139

was described or applied incorrectly. McBride's vague and misleading written explanation of her verbal agreement is an attempt to avoid responsibility for her actions.

The Problem

This agreement is problematic because government officials, like the superintendent of a public school, do not have the power to censor what we can say, hear, or even read on the school calendar. It violates our free speech rights. Policies that discriminate on the basis of content and viewpoint are almost always impermissible.^e

This censorship is further proved in an email McConnell wrote to McBride on February 16, 2024, asking "*So if we went back and named the breaks or off days as they truly are would that cause the Union to file a grievance against the Board?*"^f

McConnell is asking McBride if the Union will throw a fit if they use the label Christmas Break. This is a condemning email as it shows school leadership knows full well that Christmas Break is truly a break taken for the federal holiday Christmas, though they have refused to say that for the last 3 years.

Our right to free speech in public schools is protected by the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. In America, the courts have said schools do not have unrestricted authority to subjectively censor the written word, for example by arbitrarily banning books in the library.^g The First Amendment is implicated when speech is banned arbitrarily. This agreement bans one word in one instance based on one person's opinion: Mr. Hally. It was wrong of the superintendent to enter into such an agreement.

Teacher's Union Response

McConnell got an answer to her question. Union President Andy Hally has signed two letters, one written by OEA and one written by himself, threatening to "*file a grievance at Level 4... and a complaint KL, KL-AR, with the process moving directly to step 4*" if the school uses the word Christmas to label Christmas Break.^h

Hally has deemed himself the language police in the district. He would like a stigma placed on the phrase Christmas Break as dirty, unacceptable, and intolerant. In his letter Hally urges VSD to "*consider the implications of using descriptors that restrict inclusion*" meaning in order to be inclusive, he wants the school to exclude the phrase Christmas Break.

If the inclusive language argument doesn't get him what he wants, Hally also claims that if the school uses the label Christmas Break it is "*endorsing a specific religious holiday,*" and "*favoring one religious holiday over others*".ⁱ This shows a lack of understanding of the separation of church and state. This is concerning as Mr. Hally is the social studies teacher at the middle school.

^e See Reed v. Town of Gilbert 576 U.S. 155, 163 (2015); Simon & Schuster, Inc. v. Members of the N.Y. State Crime Victims Bd., 502 U.S. 105, 116 (1991)

^f See Public Records pdf #0000155

^g See Board of Education, Island Trees Union Free School District No. 26 v. Pico, 457 U.S. 853, 102 S.Ct. 2799, 73 L.Ed.2d 435 (1982)

^h See Public Records pdf #0016801 pgs 6-9

ⁱ See Public Records pdf #0016801 pgs 6-9

The Establishment Clause and the Free Exercise Clause are two provisions in the First Amendment that concern religion. They work in tandem. They define the delicate balance between religious freedom and government neutrality.

The Establishment Clause prevents government entities, like public schools, from endorsing, promoting, or establishing a state religion. The clause requires that public institutions remain neutral. The label Christmas Break does not establish a state religion, or even promote or endorse a religion as the school does not track, grade, or care what students do during the break.

These clauses also do not require religion to be left out of public school, as Hally would have you believe. The union wants to eradicate all mention of religious expression in public schools starting with Christian religious expression. This approach does not meet the three-part test set forth by the Supreme Court in the 1970s as Hally is actively trying to inhibit religion. They call this approach neutral. But favoring a non-religious existence over a world where religion exists (and religious holidays exist) is not neutral. It is clear bias for the secular over the spiritual, inhibiting religious expression.

Public schools remain neutral by not mandating religious activity, not by censoring the mere mention of religion. Vale teachers don't grade student's according to their observance of Christmas, they don't keep a list of students who celebrate, and they don't treat students differently depending on their activities over the Christmas Break. Conversely, censoring a religious label inhibits the expression of religion.

I encourage members of the teacher's union to rethink their leadership.

Inclusivity

Feeling included and being included are not the same thing. In this case, the school schedules a break based on the federal Christmas holiday to facilitate school attendance for students and teachers. The break is for everyone, thus being inclusive.

Claiming a certain word isn't inclusive is a false premise and part of the ideology being sold by Hally. Words do not include or exclude people.

The union doesn't have a problem with taking Christmas Break. They know teachers work harder if half of their class is absent. They know teachers agree with common sense practices to avoid absenteeism. Mr. Hally has not asked the school to end the practice of scheduling a Christmas Break. Instead, he has demanded the name change to further his ideology of victimhood. The union is of the opinion that students who do not observe Christmas have been harmed by the mere mention of its existence; that their feelings are hurt by its existence. Hally claims feelings are something he can control and by excluding the phrase Christmas Break he can "*ensure that everyone feels respected and included*".¹

This ideology is wrong. Andy Hally's claim to make everyone feel included has failed. Instead, folks feel excluded by the censorship of Christmas Break. It took less than a week to raise \$1,000 to pay for these public records about his inclusive agreement – these people don't feel included when the word Christmas is banned. Where is Andy Hally defending these feelings? Don't their feelings count? Apparently, feelings are only valid if they fit into the union's agenda of removing the mention of Christianity from schools.

The union, as a private organization, has a right to their opinion. I think their stance is deplorable and anti-American, but in America the teacher's union has a right to deplorable

¹ See Public Records pdf #0016801 pgs 6-9

opinions. The union doesn't have the right to make an agreement with the government to carry out their agenda by censoring words they say are not inclusive.

Understanding Free Speech

The First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution allows a school to limit speech that (1) causes a "substantial disruption" at school (meaning it interrupts school activities in a serious way), or (2) interferes with the rights of others at the school. A school can't limit speech just because it's controversial, disrespectful, or upsets people, this includes feeling of not being included. Speech that interferes with the rights of others means speech that seriously threatens or harasses other people, or if it spreads false information about someone. In addition, the First Amendment allows a school to restrict student speech when it's vulgar or obscene. None of these limitations apply to the label Christmas Break.

Feelings are not protected by the First Amendment. Feeling "included" is not a right, nor is it something a government official or union can make you feel. Andy Hally and Alisha McBride would like to violate your right to free speech in favor of people's feelings. This threatens freedom at its very core. If they can control language, they control people. They want inclusivity to be the determining factor for words allowed in school and have deemed the label Christmas Break as not inclusive and therefore censorable. The superintendent and union president do not have the authority to decide what is inclusive,^k which is completely arbitrary.

Free speech allows multiple voices and perspectives. In this case, our right to free speech includes the right to label a break on a calendar for what it actually is. But to suppress speech in the name of inclusivity is harmful as it prohibits reality for the advancement of an opinion.

In a society governed by free speech, bad/wrong ideas are not to be censored by the government, just as good/true ideas are not to be compelled by the government. To do so would put the government in the driver's seat of deciding what is good or bad, right or wrong. Instead, people counter bad ideas with robust debate using positive and truthful ones. When more people speak up for the truth, false and worthless statements are recognized for what they are. In this case, it is false to label Christmas Break as something else. It is also worthless because it pretends an accurate label has victimized someone. Who has been harmed by the reality that is Christmas Break? There are no victims here. Everyone in the school district is included in taking Christmas Break. You can't be more inclusive than that.

Conclusion

This agreement between the superintendent and the union that bans labels they deem as not inclusive enough unconstitutionally restricts speech on the district calendar.

Those in government who ban words they find offensive threaten a lot more than our right to free speech. They menace the freedom to think and function. This kind of education will not prepare students for life. It teaches them that people are victims if they hear something they don't like. The important part of free speech is not protecting speech that everyone agrees with; it is protecting speech that people find objectionable.

^k See Public Records pdf #0000139

NitPicky Details

To make matters worse, the superintendent and union are claiming that the staff approve this censorship by 87%.^l This is a falsehood. Yes, 87% of the 60 teachers who voted on the proposed calendars approved it. No, naming it Christmas Break was not part of the vote.^m The teachers have never been polled, asked for their opinion, or educated on the issue. It is outrageous to claim otherwise.

But more importantly, neither have the parents. The school is violating their own policy IC/ICA School Year/School Calendar. It states that the calendar will be adopted after “input from staff, parents and the community.”ⁿ Input from staff? Yes. Input from parents or the community? No. In all the 290 public records produced, there wasn’t one piece of input from parents about the 2022-23 calendar when the agreement took effect. Nothing for the 23-24 calendar either. Last year’s calendar had input from me and two other community members asking for the censorship to stop.

The superintendent claims that since the calendar is discussed at public board meetings, the *opportunity* for parent/community input is all that is required.^o This is also false. The policy clearly states “input”, not “opportunity for input.” With as many Remind notifications I get in a week from our local schools, it wouldn’t take much to send the draft calendars to parents asking for their input. Currently, the superintendent has done nothing to get the input required by district policy.

I call on the Vale School District to (1) publicly revoke their agreement with the teacher’s union, (2) apologize to students, parents and stakeholders for violating their constitutional rights, (3) end the violation of policy IC/ICA School Year/School Calendar by taking steps to gain calendar input from parents and the community, (4) restore the name of Christmas Break on the 24-25 district calendar; and (5) inform staff that religious expression on the school calendar, in the music program, and in the classroom, etc. can be educational, appropriate and legal.

Sincerely,



April Johnson

^l See Public Records pdf #0000110 and #0016801 pg 6

^m See Public Records pdf #0003984 pg 124

ⁿ See https://policy.osba.org/vale/search.asp?si=75853865&pid=r&nsb=1&n=0&_charset_=windows-1252&bcd=%F7&s=vale&query=calendar

^o See Public Records pdf #0000107 pg 2

To: Steven Mitchell[steven@malheurenterprise.com]
From: Alisha McBride
Sent: Mon 7/1/2024 6:46:02 PM
Subject: Re: Fact-check email for accuracy and one quick question

Steven,

Please see my responses below in red.

Alisha McBride, Ed.D.

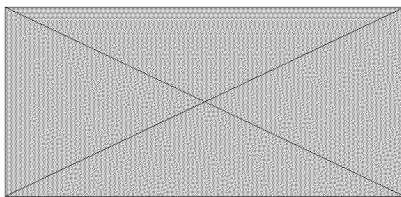
Superintendent

Vale School District #84

(541) 473-0201, ext. 9

alisha.mcbride@valesd.org

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On Mon, Jul 1, 2024 at 4:55 PM Steven Mitchell <steven@malheurenterprise.com> wrote:

Hi, Ms. McBride,

It was good to talk to you.

As promised, here is what we have in the story from you in story. I also had one question at the bottom.

- In an email on Thursday, June 13, you said the district and the board informally agreed with the local teachers union in 2021 to remove the word Christmas from the calendar to be more “inclusive.” For clarification, Christmas Day is still identified on the calendar. The verbal agreement only applied to the name of the break.
- You said the district’s informal 2021 pact with the local teachers union dovetails with Vale’s non-discrimination policies for staff and students.
- Regarding the public records request, you said a keyword search identified nearly 17,000 emails that could be relevant to Johnson’s request. You said district officials don’t know if those emails contain sensitive information such as student names or other personal information that would be exempt from public disclosure. That’s why outside legal help has been retained. Counsel will help the District ensure that any documents produced are first, within the scope of the requests, and second, redacted or excluded to ensure compliance with all laws.
- “The district will need to ensure that any documents produced are, first, within the scope of the requests, and second, redacted or excluded to ensure compliance with all laws,” you said.

One thing I wanted to give you an opportunity to respond to is April's statement that she was not told about the 2021 informal agreement. Is that correct? Did you want to comment on that?

On March 14, 2024, Mrs. Johnson contacted me and requested information about the agreement that was made with the Association. Here is the information that was provided to Mrs. Johnson about the agreement:

- A written record of the agreement does not exist. An informal, good-faith agreement was made with Vale Education Association leadership when the 2022-2023 calendar was being developed.
- The Directors reviewed calendar drafts and discussed the 2024-2025 calendar at length at the January 10, 2024 regular meeting. During the discussion, I communicated the request you made on October 9, 2023 for the Directors to consider labeling the break in December/January as Christmas Break instead of Winter Break on the 2024-2025 calendar. Following discussion, the Directors requested that the labels for all breaks in the calendar be modified to simply read "Break". There was an opportunity to provide public comment during the meeting. Calendar drafts were then distributed to all staff for feedback. Prior to the adoption of the calendar at last night's meeting, a second opportunity for public comment was offered. Each month, the preliminary board meeting agenda is posted on the District's website at least three days prior to the meeting. This provides the public with the opportunity to view the items that will be discussed and considered for action by the board at the regular meeting and determine whether they would like to attend the meeting and offer public comment on any of the agenda items.
- The informal, good-faith agreement was made to change the name of the break on the District calendar from Christmas to a title that was more inclusive. The Board members are aware of the agreement that was made.
- The good-faith agreement was made with Vale Education Association leadership; therefore, the discussion regarding reinstating the phrase Christmas Break in the calendar would need to be routed back through Vale Education Association leadership.
- The processes that were used to develop the district calendar aligned with applicable policies and laws. If you believe a policy or law has been violated, the procedures for filing a complaint are outlined in Board Policy KL found here: <https://policy.osba.org/vale/KL/KL%20D1.PDF>.

Thank you,

Steven Mitchell
Reporter
Malheur Enterprise
971-263-3444

To: Steven Mitchell[steven@malheurenterprise.com]
From: Alisha McBride
Sent: Sun 6/16/2024 1:50:09 PM
Subject: Re: Collective bargaining agreement

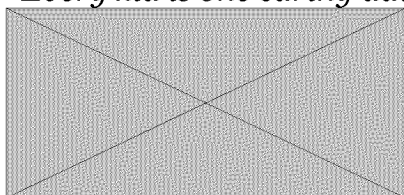
Steven,

According to the Collective Bargaining Agreement between the Vale School District and Vale Education Association, "The Board shall set the school calendar after it is submitted to the staff for review and recommendation" (p. 14). When the 2022-2023 calendar was being developed, the Vale Education Association, which represents certified and classified staff, made a request that the District utilize a more inclusive title, when referring to the break. As a result of the request, an informal, good-faith agreement was made with the Vale Education Association to use a more inclusive term when identifying the break on the calendar. As noted in the March 13, 2024 meeting minutes, 87% of staff who offered feedback related to the 2024-2025 calendar were in favor of the calendar that was adopted by the Board of Directors.

District policies and laws prohibit discrimination based on a number of factors. Vale School District strives to create learning and working environments that are welcoming and inclusive of all cultures, beliefs, and backgrounds. The shift that was made in 2022 to use a more neutral term when referring to the break was made in response to a request made by the Vale Education Association to ensure that all students, staff, and families felt represented when they viewed the District calendar. Of note, Christmas Day, and other school holidays identified under ORS 336.010, that fall within the school year, are identified on the calendar.

Alisha McBride
 Superintendent
 Vale School District #84
 (541) 473-0201, ext. 9
alisha.mcbride@valesd.org

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On Fri, Jun 14, 2024 at 2:15 PM Steven Mitchell <steven@malheurenterprise.com> wrote:

Ms. McBride,

Was taking out the word Christmas from the calendars aligned with collective bargaining agreement? If so, can you tell us how? Les said it's crucial to the story if that's the case.

Also, how does removing the word align with the non-discrimination policy and the policy you referenced earlier?

To: Ryan Bates[ryan.bates@valesd.org]
From: Steven Mitchell
Sent: Thur 6/27/2024 9:29:51 AM
Subject: Re: Following up - calendar labels

Thanks, Mr. Bates.

Steven Mitchell
Reporter
Malheur Enterprise
971-263-3444

From: Ryan Bates <ryan.bates@valesd.org>
Sent: Wednesday, June 26, 2024 8:51 PM
To: Steven Mitchell <steven@malheurenterprise.com>
Subject: Re: Following up - calendar labels

Mr. Mitchell,

Thank you for the question regarding our March 13, 2024 Vale School Board meeting minutes. My decision to request adding labels to specific dates on the 2024-2025 school calendar was an attempt to improve clarity of all identified breaks in the school year and include a naming convention that was as inclusive as possible. While attaining complete and total inclusivity for all people/groups is infeasible, it seemed reasonable to add one or more names to specific breaks allowing community members to choose how to interpret the school calendar for themselves. My dissenting vote for the school calendar as presented was nothing more than a reflection of my stance as stated above.

v/r,

Ryan Bates

On Monday, June 24, 2024, Steven Mitchell <steven@malheurenterprise.com> wrote:

Ryan,

Thanks for calling. Below is what we're looking for you to comment on.

According to the attached meeting minutes, you made a motion to add labels to the calendar breaks. The motion didn't get a second and it died. Then, Darlene McConnell moved to approve the calendar as presented (without any labels). It appears that you were the lone

dissenting vote, per the minutes.

Can you tell us why you moved to add the labels to the calendar and voted against it as presented?

Thanks,

Steven Mitchell
Reporter
Malheur Enterprise
971-263-3444

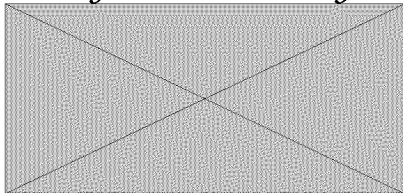
To: April Johnson[apriltime@hotmail.com]
From: Alisha McBride
Sent: Fri 3/15/2024 6:01:05 AM
Subject: Re: School Board meeting 3.13.24

Mrs. Johnson,

1. The informal, good-faith agreement was made to change the name of the break on the District calendar from Christmas to a title that was more inclusive. The Board members are aware of the agreement that was made.
2. If you believe a policy has been violated, the procedures for filing a complaint are outlined in Board Policy KL found here: <https://policy.osba.org/vale/KL/KL%20D1.PDF>.
3. The Public Employee Collective Bargaining Act guides these interactions. If you have questions pertaining to the Vale Education Association, they will need to be directed to Mr. Hally.

Alisha McBride
Superintendent
Vale School District #84
(541) 473-0201, ext. 9
alisha.mcbride@valesd.org

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On Thu, Mar 14, 2024 at 3:05 PM April Johnson <apriltime@hotmail.com> wrote:

Mrs. McBride,

Thank you for your responses. I have some additional questions.

1. As a written record of the agreement does not exist, please advise what the agreement is. If this is not a written agreement how do the board members know about it? What is the scope? How long is the agreement to last?
2. Thank you for communicating my request to label it Christmas Break at the January 10, 2024 meeting. However, if you already had an agreement not to do so, would it have been appropriate for you to communicate that to me at any time after my initial request on October 9, 2023? Also, the policy requires "input" but what you have described is "opportunity" for input. They are not the same thing. Have you taken any actions to obtain "input" from parents and the community about the calendar?
3. What policy are you referencing that directs the need to route a discussion of phrases through Vale Education Association leadership? Who else is the Vale Education Association leadership other than Andy Hally?

Thank you,
April Johnson

From: Alisha McBride <alisha.mcbride@valesd.org>
Sent: Thursday, March 14, 2024 4:47 PM
To: April Johnson <apriltime@hotmail.com>
Subject: Re: School Board meeting 3.13.24

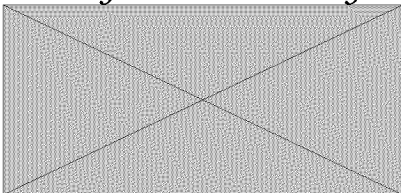
Mrs. Johnson,

Please see my responses below:

1. A written record of the agreement does not exist. An informal, good-faith agreement was made with Vale Education Association leadership when the 2022-2023 calendar was being developed.
2. The Directors reviewed calendar drafts and discussed the 2024-2025 calendar at length at the January 10, 2024 regular meeting. During the discussion, I communicated the request you made on October 9, 2023 for the Directors to consider labeling the break in December/January as Christmas Break instead of Winter Break on the 2024-2025 calendar. Following discussion, the Directors requested that the labels for all breaks in the calendar be modified to simply read "Break". There was an opportunity to provide public comment during the meeting. Calendar drafts were then distributed to all staff for feedback. Prior to the adoption of the calendar at last night's meeting, a second opportunity for public comment was offered. Each month, the preliminary board meeting agenda is posted on the District's website at least three days prior to the meeting. This provides the public with the opportunity to view the items that will be discussed and considered for action by the board at the regular meeting and determine whether they would like to attend the meeting and offer public comment on any of the agenda items.
3. The good-faith agreement was made with Vale Education Association leadership; therefore, the discussion regarding reinstating the phrase Christmas Break in the calendar would need to be routed back through Vale Education Association leadership.

Alisha McBride
Superintendent
Vale School District #84
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On Thu, Mar 14, 2024 at 9:38 AM April Johnson <apriltime@hotmail.com> wrote:

Hello Mrs. McBride,

I was glad to catch the last half of the school board meeting last night. It brought up some questions.

1. Darlene based her motion to adopt the calendar as-is on an agreement between you and the union to replace the word "Christmas" with "Winter". When was this agreement made? Is the agreement public? Can I have a copy of the agreement?
2. Please advise how last night's vote by the board to adopt the calendar complies with policy IC/ICA requiring "input from staff, parents, and the community".
3. You gave direction to Jason that his request to poll the teachers for their opinion on what to call Christmas Break needs to go through the union to be "proper". But you just took a similar poll of the teachers' opinions on the proposed calendars without going through the union. Why is it proper in one case and not the other?

Thank you,
April Johnson

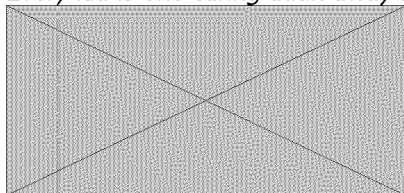
To: Darlene McConnell[darmcconnell@gmail.com]
From: Alisha McBride
Sent: Sun 2/18/2024 8:46:27 AM
Subject: Re: Calendar questions

Darlene,

Thank you so much for submitting a question. I will send it to the District's legal counsel for review.

Alisha McBride
Superintendent
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alisha.mcbride@valesd.org

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On Fri, Feb 16, 2024 at 12:50 PM Darlene McConnell <darmcconnell@gmail.com> wrote:

Alisha

I think my questions for the attorney would be around naming the week of Christmas as "Christmas Break". I read in the bargaining agreement that staff have seven paid holidays and each of the holidays are named. And the Union ratified the contract. So if we went back and named the breaks or off days as they truly are would that cause the Union to file a grievance against the Board?

Thank you

Darlene

Spark interest. Ignite curiosity. Fuel dreams.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

SUBJ: 2021-2022 District Calendar

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Attached are three draft calendars for the 2021-2022 school year for your review. The Board is responsible for adopting a calendar for the upcoming school year no later than the May meeting. According to the Collective Bargaining Agreement, "The Board shall set the school calendar after it is submitted to the staff for review and recommendation." I would like to gain your feedback regarding the three drafts at the March meeting. Following the meeting, the draft calendars will be presented to staff for input. Below are the highlights from each draft:

Draft #1

- First day of school - August 19
- Last day of school - May 26
- Five full Fridays
- One 12:30 dismissal Friday (homecoming)
- Graduation - May 22

*avoided
full Fridays - student/staff
attendance data*

Draft #2

- First day of school - August 23
- Last day of school - May 27
- Four full Fridays
- Two 12:30 dismissal Fridays (homecoming/last day of school)
- Graduation - May 22

Draft #3

- First day of school - August 19
- Last day of school - June 2
- One full Friday
- One 12:30 dismissal Friday (homecoming)
- Graduation - May 29

VALE SCHOOL DISTRICT #84
2021-2022 - Draft #1

AUG

S	M	T	W	TH	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

Teacher Inservice
Student (Full Day)
Off Friday
1st Day of School

SEPT

S	M	T	W	TH	F	S
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	

Student (Full Day)
Off Friday
Student Part Friday
12:30 Dismissal/ Homecoming
Holiday - Labor Day

OCT

S	M	T	W	TH	F	S
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

Teacher Inservice
Student (Full Day)
Off Friday
Student Part Friday
No School - P/T Conferences
October 14 - End of Quarter 1

NOV

S	M	T	W	TH	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30			

Student (Full Day)
Off Friday
Student Part Friday
Holiday - Veteran's Day
Thanksgiving Break

DEC

S	M	T	W	TH	F	S
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

Student (Full Day)
Off Friday
Student Part Friday
Holiday - Christmas
Christmas Break
12:30 Dismissal/End of Quarter 2

JAN

S	M	T	W	TH	F	S
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

Teacher Inservice
Student (Full Day)
Off Friday
Student Part Friday
Holiday - New Year's/MLK Jr. Day

FEB

S	M	T	W	TH	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28					

Student (Full Day)
Off Friday
Student Part Friday

MAR

S	M	T	W	TH	F	S
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

Student (Full Day)
Off Friday
Student Part Friday
No School - P/T Conferences
March 10 - End of Quarter 3

APR

S	M	T	W	TH	F	S
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30

Teacher Inservice
Student (Full Day)
Off Friday

MAY

S	M	T	W	TH	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

Teacher Inservice
Student (Full Day)
Off Friday
Student Part Friday
12:30 Dismissal
Holiday - Labor Day
Graduation
May 26 - End of Quarter 4

1st=35
2nd=35
3rd=40
4th=39
Total=149

VALE SCHOOL DISTRICT #84
2021-2022 - Draft #3

AUG

S	M	T	W	TH	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26		28
29	30	31				

Teacher Inservice
Student (Full Day)
Off Friday
1st Day of School

SEPT

S	M	T	W	TH	F	S
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		

Student (Full Day)
Off Friday
Student Part Friday
12:30 Dismissal/Afternoon
Holiday - Labor Day

OCT

S	M	T	W	TH	F	S
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7		9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

Teacher Inservice
Student (Full Day)
Off Friday
Student Part Friday
No School - P/T Conferences
October 14 - End of Quarter 1

NOV

S	M	T	W	TH	F	S
	1	2	3	4		6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30				

Student (Full Day)
Off Friday
Student Part Friday
Holiday - Veteran's Day
Thanksgiving Break

DEC

S	M	T	W	TH	F	S
			1	2		4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

Student (Full Day)
Off Friday
Student Part Friday
Holiday - Christmas
Christmas Break
12:30 Dismissal/End of Quarter 2

JAN

S	M	T	W	TH	F	S
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

Teacher Inservice
Student (Full Day)
Off Friday
Student Part Friday
Holiday - New Year's/MLK Jr. Day

FEB

S	M	T	W	TH	F	S
		1	2	3		5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28					

Student (Full Day)
Off Friday
Student Part Friday

MAR

S	M	T	W	TH	F	S
		1	2	3		5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

Student (Full Day)
Off Friday
Student Part Friday
No School - P/T Conferences
March 10 - End of Quarter 3

APR

S	M	T	W	TH	F	S
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7		9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30

Teacher Inservice
Student (Full Day)
Off Friday

MAY

S	M	T	W	TH	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31	1	2	3	4

Teacher Inservice
Student (Full Day)
Off Friday
Student Part Friday
12:30 Dismissal
Holiday - Labor Day
Graduation
June 2 - End of Quarter 4

1st=34
2nd=34
3rd=38
4th=42
Total=148

FOR ACTION

SUBJ: Approve Revised 2024-2025 District Calendar

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

During the March meeting, the Board requested feedback from the Vale Education Association regarding their position on adding the word “Christmas” back to the title of the break in December and January. Attached are two letters in response to that request.

Additionally, despite hundreds of calendar views, it was not noticed until after the 2024-2025 calendar was finalized that the Martin Luther King, Jr. holiday was on the wrong Monday in January. After consulting with the VEA President, the decision was made to flip the two weeks in January to correct the error. The revised calendar was distributed to staff with an explanation and an opportunity to provide feedback. The revised 2024-2025 District Calendar is being presented for approval to correct the mistake.

Suggested Resolution: I move that the Vale School District #84 Board of Directors approve the Revised 2024-2025 District Calendar, as presented.

Motion by: _____

Supported by: _____

Yes _____

No _____

Dear Vale School Board,

I am writing on behalf of the Vale Education Association to express concerns regarding using the phrasing "Christmas" versus "winter" break for the school calendar. The Oregon Education Association advocates for inclusivity and nondiscrimination, and this issue has potential ramifications of favoring one religious holiday over others.

The term "winter break" is more inclusive as it acknowledges the diverse religious and cultural backgrounds of students and staff within the district. While Christmas is significant for many, it is not universally celebrated by all community members. By adopting a more neutral term such as "winter break," we ensure that everyone feels respected and included, regardless of their beliefs.

Public schools are constitutionally required to remain neutral in matters of religion. Referring to the winter break as "Christmas break" may be perceived as endorsing a specific religious holiday, potentially leading to legal challenges regarding the separation of church and state. Using a secular term like "winter break," the district demonstrates its commitment to upholding this principle and avoids potential legal conflicts. The Oregon School Board Association's recommended policy AC—Nondiscrimination clearly outlines OSBA's expectations for the School District.

Based on my conversation with Mr. Hally, at the previous board meeting it was mentioned that legal counsel was given to the board on this matter. Please also note in our certified bargaining agreement under Article 6 Section 1 C, "The Board shall set the school calendar after it is submitted to the staff for review and recommendation, etc. The staff has already been asked to vote on this issue twice, with 87% approval. The staff has made their decision clear, and any

other action by the board will be viewed as questioning the ability of a Superintendent who has done everything to elevate Vale School District's reputation, and discourage the Association from possibly filing a grievance at Level 4 for interference with Article 6 Section C1 of the CBA and a complaint KL, KL-AR, with the process moving directly to step 4. In a time of disrupted learning issues, lack of qualified staff entering the profession, and budgetary matters at the state and local level, we are appalled that this is an issue that the Board has chosen to focus on.

We urge the Vale School Board Association to consider the implications of using descriptors that restrict inclusion in school policies and to promote inclusive practices that respect the diverse religious beliefs and cultural traditions of all students and families. By embracing a more inclusive approach to language and policy-making, we can create learning environments that celebrate diversity, foster mutual respect, and promote a sense of belonging for all community members.

Thank you for hearing the concerns of the Association on this matter.

Sincerely,

Brita Scott
Eastern Oregon UniServ Consultant
Oregon Education Association

Andy Hally
President
on behalf of the Vale Education Association

Dear Vale School Board,

In reaching out to a community member per their request in regards to the calendar, she questioned why I wouldn't discuss the matter if there wasn't anything wrong or something to hide. She has attacked my integrity and is trying to make something of a non issue due to the failure of the board not supporting the decision making of their superintendent and most importantly the equity of their students. I will attempt to explain why.

To recap, a couple years ago a question was posed on why the calendar showed "Christmas break". I never thought about it much, and a good point was brought up about having students of different backgrounds in the class. I felt a good point was raised so I brought it to the attention of Mrs. McBride and we came to the agreement that it would be more equitable for all students and staff to say winter break.

Much to my surprise last year the board went into executive session only to come out and vote for the calendar presented that evening that showed "winter break". This year there was another discussion at the board meeting and it was mentioned that the board sought council. Despite that, a board member wanted to "weigh the risks." Based on that, I can only assume the board's own council told them to leave "Christmas Break" off the calendar.

So at this time, on these last two calendars the board has had recommendations from the Superintendent with the support of the union, with the opportunity from feedback from staff and community over the last two years with no mention of the issue and overwhelming support for the calendars.

It was mentioned in the board meeting by multiple members that they are "tired of dealing with this issue". I will remind you, the only ones keeping this alive are the members themselves by continuing to give a platform to people over a non issue. It is important for a board to listen to its constituents, and they have. The board has questioned and sought input from the Superintendent on this issue. Based on the previous board meeting it sounds like the board has sought their own council. The board has gone above and beyond to answer any questions or concerns of any patron on this issue. It's time for the board to support and trust their Superintendent. I know the Union supports the Superintendent, staff and ALL students.

On another note, this is based on my own observations so take it as you will . It is a known political tactic to throw multiple unfounded accusations to cause confusion and disagreement on otherwise simple matters in hopes to lead to perceived dysfunction in an organization or institution. I have been attending board meetings for

several years now, and I do not recall a time when a vote by the board wasn't unanimous. With everything that is going on, I feel this happening to the district at this time. Rather than falling victim, the best thing you can do is remain unified and support the decision making of your Superintendent. Let me be clear by what I mean by falling victim. If people don't feel supported, why would they remain at any organization or institution. This issue on hand is not a name on a calendar, it's the support of the decision making of your Superintendent.

If this is a matter that some still think needs to be discussed I am going to pose a few questions to think about:

1. Is Vale School District a public school institution?
2. Is the Vale School District a religious institution?
3. If Vale School District is not a religious institution and instead a public one, why has this taken so much of the board's time?

Sincerely,
Andy Hally

FOR ACTION

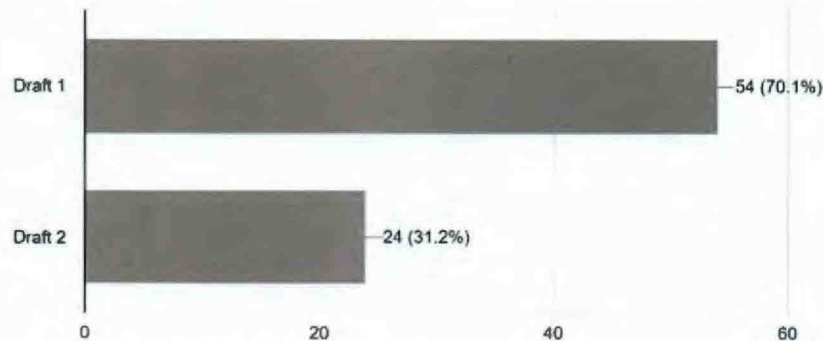
SUBJ: Approve 2024-2025 District Calendar

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Following the discussion regarding the 2024-2025 calendar at the January meeting, the revisions were made to use the term “Break” throughout the calendar and the two calendars were distributed to staff for review and feedback. Staff were able to vote for one or both calendar options. Seventy-seven staff members provided a response, with 54 staff members preferring Draft 1. During the feedback period, multiple staff members suggested scheduling the in-service days at the beginning of the school year on Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday instead of Wednesday, Thursday, Friday.

Which calendar(s) do you prefer? You are welcome to select more than one.

77 responses



Based on the suggestions, Draft 1.1 was created and staff were asked to vote again between Draft 1 and Draft 1.1. The only difference between the two calendars is the placement of the in-service days at the beginning of the school year. Of the 60 staff members who provided feedback during round two, 52 staff (87%) preferred Draft 1.1. There was an opportunity for members of the public to provide input during the public comment portion of the January Board Meeting. As such, I recommend that the Board approve Draft 1.1.