

# AVS Calendar Committee

## Meeting Minutes - 3/16/2021

### Attendees:

Ami D'Amelio, Parent Representative  
Cara Bronson, Parent Representative  
Deanna Nee, 7<sup>th</sup> Grade Teacher  
Derek Berger, School Board Member  
Janice Baker, School Board Member  
Kerry Boles, Middle School Special Education Teacher  
Lori Collins, AVS Principal  
Marge Pollak, Assistant Superintendent, SAU #15

Lori Collins opened the meeting and the Committee members introduced themselves.

Information on how and why the Committee was formed was provided by several participants. Specifically:

- The Auburn Education Association (AEA) recently wrote a letter to the Auburn School Board requesting that Martin Luther King, Jr. Day be recognized as a day off from school. The letter also questioned why Columbus Day is a day off from school.
- A committee made up of parents, teachers, school administrators, and school board members was formed approximately eight years ago to look at the school calendar. That committee recommended that school be held on Martin Luther King, Jr. Day in order to teach kids about civil rights and the work of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Today, all teachers in all subjects and grade levels develop age-appropriate instructional plans for this day.
- Given that we had a calendar committee in the past and that the letter from the AEA raised questions about a couple holidays, the Auburn School Board asked that a new Calendar Committee convene to take a fresh look at the AVS calendar. The School Board asked that the Committee have two parent representatives, two teacher representatives, two administrators, and two School Board representatives.
- The new Calendar Committee is charged with making a calendar recommendation to the Auburn administration which in turn will make a calendar recommendation to the School Board. The calendar recommendation is not just for the upcoming 2021-2022 school year but as the basis for future school year calendars.

A framework for this Committee to review holidays and other relevant days was provided. The Committee needs to consider:

1. What holidays should Auburn recognize each year?
2. How should they be recognized?
  - a. day off from school
  - b. programming
  - c. other
  - d. any combination of the above
3. How many instructional days are impacted by the recommendations and where in the calendar should any lost instructional days be added in order to meet the minimum number of instructional hours in a school year? For example:

- a. Adding to the beginning of the school calendar
- b. Adding to the end of the school calendar
- c. Finding other days in the school calendar (day before Thanksgiving, December/January vacation, February vacation, April vacation, parent/teacher days (and moving those days to weekends or spreading over evenings), Deerfield Fair day, etc.)
- d. other

Discussion ensued around several topics, including:

- Current student absenteeism rates are high on Martin Luther King, Jr. Day and the Wednesday before Thanksgiving (which is currently a half day).
- It's challenging to have a high value instructional day on days where there is high student absenteeism.
- The Hooksett and Candia school districts have the full day off the Wednesday before Thanksgiving.
- There doesn't appear to be anything in writing that requires which national holidays New Hampshire as a state and New Hampshire schools are required to observe with a day off.
- The AEA is not concerned about Columbus Day being a holiday, but it was mentioned to contrast with not having Martin Luther King, Jr. Day off.
- The current school calendar is based on six instructional hours per day per student in grades 1-8. Also, the current school calendar is based on five built-in snow days. Should Auburn not have any snow days in a year, students receive 30 instructional hours beyond the state minimum and therefore don't have to make up the snow day at the end of the year. If there's one snow day, students receive 24 instructional hours beyond the state minimum and again, don't have to make up the snow day at the end of the year. If there are six snow days in a year, students will be under the instructional hour limit by 6 hours and will have to make up one snow day at the end of the year.
- Having different school calendars between Pinkerton Academy and AVS is challenging for parents with kids in both schools.
- There are four Professional Development (PD) days for teachers in the annual schedule.
  - Two PD days before school starts
  - ~late September/early October – this is well known as Deerfield Fair Day
  - ~early March
- There are two Parent/Teacher Conference days in the annual schedule.
  - November - typically on a voting day
  - April

The Committee inventoried the national holidays and other relevant days that occur between August, the start of the school year, and June, the end of the school year to answer the questions above. The Committee began to review each holiday to understand if and how it was observed today and if and how it should be observed going forward. A series of guiding principles began to emerge from the discussion.

Note that the Committee did not finish the analysis or guiding principles, and the information in the table and pages below is subject to change with subsequent discussion.

Holiday or Other Relevant Day	How do we observe today?		Should we observe going forward?	How?			If we lose an instruction day with the change, when should we make it up?	Comments
	Day Off	Programming		Day Off	Programming	Other		
Labor Day	✓		Yes	✓				Pinkerton holiday
Columbus Day	✓							Pinkerton holiday
Veteran's Day	✓		Yes	✓				
Day before Thanksgiving	½ day		Yes	✓			To be determined	Pinkerton holiday
Christmas Eve	✓		Yes	✓				Pinkerton holiday
Christmas Day	✓		Yes	✓				Pinkerton holiday
New Year's Day	✓		Yes	✓				Pinkerton holiday
MLK Day		✓	Yes	✓			To be determined	Pinkerton holiday
President's Day			No					Not a Pinkerton holiday
Memorial Day	✓	✓	Yes	✓				Pinkerton holiday

Guiding Principles:

1. We should maximize the instructional value of each school day and hour for the most students possible. To this end, we should address the absenteeism rate we're seeing the day before Thanksgiving and on Martin Luther King, Jr. Day.
2. Auburn's school calendar should align with Hooksett's and Candia's school calendars to allow teachers in the three school districts to collaborate on Professional Development (PD) days.
3. Auburn should not schedule instructional days when the school is being used for town voting. This is for student safety and logistical reasons. Professional Development days can be scheduled on town voting days.
4. Pinkerton, Hooksett, and Candia schools have different voting locations or may decide to hold or not hold school on voting days. Therefore, the ability to align Auburn's school calendar with Pinkerton's, Hooksett's, and Candia's each year may prove challenging, especially if there are multiple voting days in a year.
5. Auburn's school calendar should align with Pinkerton Academy's school calendar around vacation weeks and major holidays to facilitate families' schedules.
6. Pinkerton Academy should work collaboratively with sending towns, including Auburn, on setting the Pinkerton Academy calendar and making any subsequent changes to it.

## **AVS Calendar Committee Meeting Minutes - 3/23/2021**

### **Attendees:**

Cara Bronson, Parent Representative

Deanna Nee, 7<sup>th</sup> Grade Teacher

Derek Berger, School Board Member

Janice Baker, School Board Member

Kerry Boles, Middle School Special Education Teacher

Lori Collins, AVS Principal

Marge Pollak, Assistant Superintendent, SAU #15

The Committee resumed discussion of the holidays and other important events in a school year, if and how they are observed today, and if and how they should be observed going forward. Results of the discussion are documented in the chart below.

There was discussion around the programming or lack thereof for each holiday. For example, despite Labor Day being a holiday with a rich history, there is no recognition or programming on this day yet there is some level of programming for all other holidays. Derek noted that every holiday has a story to tell, including Columbus Day which has one story of America's discovery and another of indigenous peoples. It was noted that today, the Auburn School District dedicates a full 6-hour day on Martin Luther King, Jr. Day to teach kids about civil rights, the work of Martin Luther King, Jr., and service to one's community. Deanna noted that kids love to debate topics and it would be beneficial to talk about the various aspects of our holidays.

In the course of discussing the Veteran's Day and Memorial Day holidays, it was determined that students help out and provide service to the community. For example, students set and clear the tables for the Veteran's Day breakfast. Janice noted that the Auburn Education Association (AEA) has a concern with student service as noted in its recent letter to the School Board and read two sentences from the letter that refers to "forced service" not being true service. Janice questioned if the Committee should review the Veteran's Day and Memorial Day events – in addition to the Martin Luther King, Jr. program – since they all involve some type of service conducted by students. Kerry indicated that this was not the intent of the AEA. Since this was the second meeting in which it was noted the intent of the AEA was different than what was written in the letter, Janice recommended that the School Board reach out to the AEA to clarify its intent.

The Committee agreed to meet the following week once the intent of the AEA was clarified.

Holiday or Other Relevant Day	How do we observe today?		Should we observe going forward?	How?			If we lose an instruction day with the change, when should we make it up?	Comments
	Day Off	Programming		Day Off	Programming	Other		
<b>Labor Day</b>	✓	None	Yes	✓	None			Pinkerton holiday
<b>Columbus Day</b>	✓	At the discretion of each teacher, leveraging in some cases material in reading program. More at elementary, not at middle.	Yes	✓	Medium at elementary  Little at middle (focus on developing critical thinking around the holiday)			Pinkerton holiday
<b>Veteran's Day</b>	✓	High - School-wide breakfast, involves all grade levels and community	Yes	✓	Maintain current programming			
<b>Day before Thanksgiving</b>	½ day	None	Yes	Full day			To be determined	Pinkerton holiday
<b>Thanksgiving</b>	✓	High – at elementary level Medium – at middle school More emphasis than Columbus Day	Yes	✓	Maintain current programming			
<b>Christmas Eve</b>	✓	See below	Yes	✓	None			Pinkerton holiday

Holiday or Other Relevant Day	How do we observe today?		Should we observe going forward?	How?			If we lose an instruction day with the change, when should we make it up?	Comments
	Day Off	Programming		Day Off	Programming	Other		
<b>Christmas Day</b>	✓	Medium – at both elementary and middle; focus is on different countries, cultures, traditions	Yes	✓	Maintain current programming			Pinkerton holiday
<b>New Year's Day</b>	✓	None	Yes	✓	None			Pinkerton holiday
<b>MLK Day</b>		High – full day focused on civil rights and service across elementary and middle	Yes	✓	Reduce to partial day (1/2 or less), with potential for longer-term service project		To be determined	Pinkerton holiday
<b>President's Day</b>		Presidents are covered each year, as part of curriculum	No		Maintain current programming			Not a Pinkerton holiday
<b>Memorial Day</b>	✓	High – outdoor ceremonies, involves all grade levels and community	Yes	✓	Maintain current programming			Pinkerton holiday

## **AVS Calendar Committee Meeting Minutes - 3/30/2021**

### **Attendees:**

Ami D'Amelio, Parent Representative  
Cara Bronson, Parent Representative  
Deanna Nee, 7<sup>th</sup> Grade Teacher  
Derek Berger, School Board Member  
Janice Baker, School Board Member  
Kerry Boles, Middle School Special Education Teacher  
Lori Collins, AVS Principal  
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Janice updated the Committee that the Auburn Education Association (AEA) has rescinded its letter of 3/9/2021 questioning which holidays are observed and how they're observed by the Auburn School District and has instead submitted a letter asking for Martin Luther King, Jr. Day off. With this information and given the AEA's clarification, the Committee agreed to not focus on the programming for each holiday and instead focus on finalizing the calendar and guiding principles that should govern the school calendar going forward.

Lori provided the absentee rate for specific days in the year:

- In 2021, 151 of 607 students (25%) were absent on Martin Luther King, Jr. Day.
- In 2020, 97 of 607 students (16%) were absent the day before Thanksgiving.
- On average, there are 23-30 students (3.8-5%) absent on a given day in the winter season.

Over the course of the meeting:

- The Committee agreed to the following school calendar Guiding Principles:
  1. We should maximize the instructional value of each school day and hour for the most students possible.
  2. Auburn's school calendar should align with Hooksett's and Candia's school calendars to allow teachers in the three school districts to collaborate on Professional Development (PD) days.
  3. Auburn should not schedule instructional days when the school is being used for town voting. This is for student safety and logistical reasons. Professional Development days can be scheduled on town voting days.

4. Pinkerton, Hooksett, and Candia schools have different voting locations or may decide to hold or not hold school on voting days. Therefore, the ability to align Auburn's school calendar with Pinkerton's, Hooksett's, and Candia's each year may prove challenging, especially if there are multiple voting days in a year.
  5. Auburn's school calendar should align with Pinkerton Academy's school calendar around vacation weeks and major holidays to facilitate families' schedules.
  6. Pinkerton Academy should work collaboratively with sending towns, including Auburn, on setting the Pinkerton Academy calendar and making any subsequent changes to it.
- The Committee, by a majority vote, agreed to recommend to the superintendent that two additional days be taken off each year:
    - The day before Thanksgiving
    - Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
  - The Committee, by a majority vote, agreed to recommend to the superintendent that the two additional days be added to the end of the calendar year in June. For the 2021-2022 school year, students last day will move from Wednesday, June 15 to Friday, Friday, 6/17. This is the last day for Pinkerton students.
  - The Committee noted there are two errors in the calendar proposed for the 2021-2011 school year:
    - At the start of the 2021-2022 school year, there are either too many, too few, or incorrectly scheduled Professional Development days.
    - Voting day in March should be a Professional Development day