**Background**

In 2013-2014, the Washoe County School District adopted a new balanced calendar. Public opinion data was collected about the adoption of the calendar to determine whether the new calendar was meeting the needs of staff, students, families, and community members. In response to this input, WCSD is now reviewing some changes to when the October intersession should occur beginning with the 2016-2017 school year. An online and phone-based survey was made available to staff, parents, students, and community members outlining two options for the timing of the October intersession beginning in SY 2016-2017. Respondents were asked to select their preferred option, and the results of these two surveys are summarized in this report.

**Survey Method**

Feedback from staff, parents, students, and the community about the October intersession was gathered through two surveys administered in October 2014, after the October intersession had occurred. Parents and WCSD staff were notified about the surveys through a ConnectEd call, a series of local and school district media announcements, and posts on Infinite Campus. A ConnectEd phone survey was also sent out to all parents who listed Spanish as their primary language on Infinite Campus.

**A total of 4,937 online surveys were collected.** Seventy-two percent of respondents indicated that they were a parent/family member of a WCSD student (*n* = 3,571), 35.6% were WCSD staff members (*n* = 1,759) 6% were Community Members (*n* = 297), and 2.9% were students (*n* = 142) at a WCSD school. Some respondents selected more than one option, with 14.8% (*n* = 528) of parents indicating they were also a WCSD staff member and 6.1% (*n* = 219) of parents indicating they were also a community member.

**A total of 528 ConnectEd Spanish language phone surveys (6.0% response rate)** were collected of the 8,489 ConnectEd phone surveys that were successfully sent on October 16th, 2014.

Respondents of the online survey were asked two questions about the October intersession. First, they were asked a single question about whether they preferred to hold the October intersession:

* The first full week in October (October 3-7 for the 2016-2017 school year);
* The same week as Nevada Day (October 24 – 27 for the 2016-2017 school year).

On the online survey, both pros and cons of each option were provided to help respondents select an answer. Respondents of the phone survey received a similar question, in which they were asked to use their phone to select their preferred option, with 1 = Holding intersession the first full week in October and 2 = Holding the intersession the same week as Nevada Day. Respondents of the online survey were also asked a single open-ended question, “Is there anything else you would like to add about the October intersession or the WCSD school calendar?” This question was not asked on the phone survey.

**Survey Results**

**Combining the results of the online and phone survey, 58.4% (*n* = 2,999) of the 5,134 respondents were in favor of having the October intersession the first week in October** beginning in the 2016-2017 school year. Respondents of the online survey were overwhelmingly in favor of holding the October intersession the first week in October (60.1% vs. 39.9%). Respondents of the phone survey were more in favor of having the October intersession the last week of October (56.6% in favor). Table 1 reports the results of respondents’ preferences by their role. Although all respondent groups except for the Spanish Language phone survey parents supported having the October intersession the first week in October, WCSD staff were the most in favor (71.7% preferred), followed by community, students, and parents.

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| --- | --- | --- |
| Table 1.  Which week do you prefer to have the October intersession (by role; N = 5,929)? | | |
|  | *First Week* | *Last Week* |
| Staff (*n* = 1663) | **71.7%** | 28.3% |
| Parent (online only; *n* = 3326) | **55.6%** | 44.4% |
| Parents (phone only; *n* = 528) | 43.4% | **56.6%** |
| Student (*n* = 133) | **63.2%** | 36.8% |
| Community (*n* = 279) | **63.4%** | 36.6% |

When online survey respondents were asked, “*Is there anything else you would like to add about the October intersession or the WCSD school calendar?*”, a total of 1,625 (32.9%) responded with an open-ended comment. These comments are briefly summarized in the call-out box on the next page.

***“Is there anything else you would like to add about the October intersession or the WCSD school calendar?” (N = 1,625)***

**Positive Comments about New Balanced Calendar**

* Breaks refreshing for families
* Breaks refreshing for staff
* Breaks are better for student achievement
* Nice “breather” for students
* Frequent breaks help reduce student boredom and burnout
* Like the breaks as they help with off-peak vacation scheduling

**Negative Comments about New Balanced Calendar**

* October break should be eliminated
* Sports practices/homework during break interfere with time off
* Prefer longer summer
* Longer breaks difficult for childcare
* Prefer more balanced semesters
* Prefer October break to be during Thanksgiving week or same week as Veterans Day
* Prefer October break occur after first quarter complete
* Intersession not long enough to be effective in remediating students
* Prefer year-round calendar

**Other Comments/Questions**

* Do not want any more changes to calendar
* Want to see data indicating balanced calendar is effective
* Want earlier notice about changes to calendar to allow families to prepare
* Want information about how and which kids are selected for intersession
* When would parent-teacher conferences occur if 2nd October break is selected?
* Does October break during first week violate NRS 236.073 – Week of Respect?