

Last session the Legislature revised the school calendar bill with regard to professional development. As schools now plan their calendars for next year, there have been a number of questions. We have conferred with attorneys from the Legislative Council and from the Attorney General's office, as well as reviewing the transcripts of the discussions of the committee.

The section of the statute in question (NDCC 15.1-06-04) provides that "...a school district shall provide for a school calendar of at least one hundred eighty days, apportioned as follows: ...

NDCC 15.1-06-04

1. ... d. *Two days for professional development activities.*

2.

a. *In meeting the requirements for two days of professional development activities under subsection 1, a school district may require that its teachers attend the North Dakota education association instructional conference and may pay teachers for attending the conference, provided attendance is verified.*

b. *In meeting the requirements for two days of professional development activities under subsection 1, a school district may consider attendance at the North Dakota education association instructional conference to be optional, elect not to pay teachers for attending the instructional conference, and instead direct any resulting savings toward providing alternate professional development opportunities.*

3. *A school district may not require the attendance of teachers in school or at any school-sponsored, school-directed, school sanctioned, or school related activities and may not schedule classroom instruction time nor alternate professional development activities on any day that conflicts with the North Dakota education association instructional conference.*

In response to questions we have received from schools, professional development activities must be:

- ◆ based on the needs of each district as determined by school administration and/or elected school boards
- ◆ an eight-hour day
- ◆ workshop time, not travel time or meal time
- ◆ collective, group activities—not teachers working in individual classrooms
- ◆ attended by all licensed staff