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Perceptions on the 45/15 School Calendar - Should Southland School District Adopt?

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Perceptions on the 45/15 School Calendar - Should Southland School District Adopt?

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Leadership Education Department: Teacher and School Leadership

In Partial Fulfillment of the Masters of Science Degree - Master's Capstone

2017 - Spring

Table of Contents

1. Introduction.....	5
Purpose.....	6
Research Question	6
Methodology.....	6
Limitations	7
Definitions.....	7
2. Literature Review.....	9
The School Calendar	9
Year-Round Education	10
The 45-15 model	11
The 45-10 model.....	11
The 60-20 model	12
The 90-30 model	12
Multi-Track and Single-Track	12
Pro’s to YRE	13
Con’s to YRE	14
3. Research Design	16
Parents	16
Data Collection	16
Sample.....	18
Protocol.....	18
Analysis.....	19

Teachers	19
Data Collection	19
Sample.....	22
Protocol.....	22
Analysis.....	23
School Administrators	23
Data Collection	23
Sample.....	26
Protocol.....	26
Analysis.....	26
4. Data Analysis	28
Parent Interview Analysis	28
Teacher Interview Analysis	32
Administrator Interview Analysis.....	35
5. Conclusion	40
What Did I Learn About 45/15?	40
What Did I Learn About the Research Process?	41
What Would I Do Differently?	42
Are There Any Spin-offs, Or Other Topics That Came Up?	44
References	45
Appendix A: Research Permission Statement	48
Appendix B: Consent Statement	49
Appendix C: Parent/Teacher Conference Survey	50

Appendix D: Teacher Interview Consent	51
Appendix E: Administrator Interview Consent	52
Appendix F: Parent Responses	53
Appendix G: Teacher Responses	72
Appendix H: Administrator Responses	78

Chapter 1: Introduction

Education is always changing. This statement is simple to read and simple to say, but when truly studied this statement becomes extremely complex. The methods in which our society has developed and determined how and what we teach are constantly being looked at. Some of the latest mantras are Achievement Gap, Test Scores, and College Ready. Educational leaders are trying to find ways to improve the test scores, close the achievement gap, and make sure all students are college ready. The reasons behind low test scores are being examined more and more every year, with the hope that we will one day be able to identify the root causes. Former President Obama and Secretary of Education Arne Duncan argued that China and India are in school 25-30% more time than American Students, and that is one of the root causes of US students falling behind (Time in school, 2011). It is then suggested that this places US students at a comparative disadvantage, but does this statement have some/any factual basis to it? The answer is YES and NO. Confusing right? The number of days in school and the number of hours of instructional time per day seem to vary greatly from country to country. This seems to be part of the source to the claims made. When comparing the total number of instructional hours spent in school, it seems to debunk the claims made (Time in school, 2011).

Providing more time might be an effective way to improve student test scores, but more importantly is how the extra time is being used. Maybe exploring scheduling alternatives that use the already existing time should be considered first. An example, school districts that have the traditional 180 school days with a long summer break might look to a year-round calendar. A district might keep roughly the same number of days, but break those 180 days up more. Shortening the traditional 10-week summer to try and offset the summer learning loss.

Schools around the country are being told to increase test scores. Southland ranks in the middle of Minnesota's test scores, and the District must continue to evaluate how it can better serve its population. Research on Year-Round Education (YRE) seems to indicate that there are no negative effects on students in terms of educational achievement. That same research seems to indicate that there are potential positive effects on student achievement, especially when gauged against the socio-economic backdrop of students.

Purpose

School districts around the country are looking at alternative school calendars. How would one alternative school calendar, specifically the 45/15 model, affect Southland Schools? Are parents of the small rural district ready and willing for the change? The purpose of this study is to better understand the perceived advantages and disadvantages of a 45/15 school calendar being adopted at Southland Schools, according to parents, teachers, and administrators. Southland Schools have been running on the "traditional" 180 day school calendar. As school districts around the country are being pushed to improve test scores, should Southland Schools consider a move to an alternative school calendar, in an effort to improve existing test scores?

Research Question

What are the perceived advantages and disadvantages, according to parents, teachers, and administrators, of a 45/15 school calendar being adopted at Southland Schools?

Methodology

I interviewed and surveyed parents, teachers, and administrators of the Southland School District. I asked a series of questions and took notes on each one of the interview/surveys. I asked 19 parents a set of six questions. These 19 parents were chosen because they were the

parents that came to parent/teacher conferences. After the conference, each parent was asked if they would be willing to answer a short set of questions.

I asked six teachers in the Southland School District at set of 6 questions. I chose two teachers from the elementary, two from the middle school, and two from the high school. These teachers were chosen with a couple of things in mind, each is a veteran with at least 5 years teaching experience and each of them live within the Southland School District.

I interviewed all three of the Administrators, the Superintendent, the MS/HS principal, and the Elementary principal, which are employed within the Southland School District. Each will be asked a set of 8 questions relating to a 45/15 school calendar.

Limitations

This study is restricted to the Southland School District. All interviews and surveys were limited to parents with students in the district, and employees of the district.

Definitions

Traditional school calendar: a school year consisting of approximately 180 school days starting in early September and running to late May/early June with approximately 12 weeks of summer vacation

Year-round schooling: a school year in which a single summer break is swapped out for a series of shorter breaks throughout the year

YRE: acronym for year-round education, also known as year-round schooling, school year in which a single summer break is swapped out for a series of shorter breaks throughout the year

Extended school year: a school year that has more than the traditional 180 days of instructional time

EY: acronym for extended year, also known as extended school year, a school year that has more than the traditional 180 days of instructional time

Expanded learning time: adding either hours to the school day, or days to the school calendar, usually as an effort to improve academics

Single-track: a school in which the entire student body is on a single year-round calendar

Multi-tracking: a school in which groups of students at the same school have different academic calendars often to help reduce overcrowding

Intersession: a period of a week or two, during which students take academic courses that are outside their normal course load

45/10: 45 days (9 weeks) of instruction, followed by 10 days (2 weeks) of vacation/intersession

45/15: 45 days (9 weeks) of instruction, followed by 15 days (3 weeks) of vacation/intersession

60/20: 60 days (12 weeks) of instruction, followed by 20 days (4 weeks) of vacation/intersession

90/30: 90 days (18 weeks) of instruction, followed by 30 days (6 weeks) of vacation/intersession

Chapter 2: Literature Review

The School Calendar

Over the last century, the first day of summer break is the beginning of a 3-month long national holiday in the minds of millions of young people across this country. The summer break has been a part of the American Education System for decades, and this pattern is deemed sacrosanct to many Americans. The mind set of most Americans who have gone through our educational system, is “if it ain’t broke don’t fix it.”

The Traditional school calendar consists of approximately 180 school days starting in early September and running into late May/early June with approximately 12 weeks of summer vacation. As Butchart (2013), states, “The traditional calendar has been in place for over a century” (p.9). As formal schooling in America was beginning to take root, school calendars were often designed with the common needs of the community for which the school was to serve, in the forefront. “In agricultural areas it was typical for children to attend school for only 5 or 6 months so that they were free to participate in the farming economy, from planting to harvesting. During the same era, urban schools were operating on 11- or 12-month schedules” (Cooper, Nye, Charlton, Lindsay, and Greathouse, 1996, p. 228). As an example, in 1842 New York City schools were open 248 days, a 38% increase over the approximate 180 days that schools are open today (PBS.org).

The school standardization movement of the late 19th century pushed for the standardization of school calendars, both urban and rural districts. Both Fischel (2003) and Gold (2002) agree on one main reason for summer recess: standardization. For schools to compare, share, and or exchange students on some level of equity, it required schools to have standardized starting and ending dates. “In order for graded instruction to work over a period of years, school

calendars had to be regularized” (Fischel, 2003, p. 8). With a regularized school calendar, a natural break was provided between grade levels, and this break made it much easier for students to transfer between districts.

All of this points to how and why the Traditional school calendar exists today. “Uniformity, standardization, and economic considerations were the driving forces, and, since then, there have been few attempts to create a calendar that is based on educational principles” (Butchart, 2013, p. 18).

The first public school in Adams, MN was built in 1869. In 1916, rural districts 7, 105, 65, and 100 voted to consolidate with the Adams School District. Southland School District, or Independent School District 500, was established in 1971 with the consolidation of three previously separate school districts in Adams, Elkton, and Rose Creek. Per Minnesota Statute, 120A.41, “A school board’s annual calendar must include at least 165 days of instruction for a student in grades 1 through 11 unless a four-day week schedule has been approved by the commissioner under section 124D.126” Southland school district operates with 176 days of student instruction.

Year-Round Education

Year-round education (YRE) is a way to maintain the existing number of days in the school calendar while splitting up the long summer break into smaller parts throughout the year. YRE comes in many different forms, they are often called balanced calendars because they try to put some sort of pattern to the calendar. There is room for some slight variations within YRE. There are generally different patterns that have been used by school districts around the country with different amounts of frequency. Each of these different calendars keeps the 180 days of instruction and 60 days of break (not including holidays and weekends). YRE usually does not

increase the operating costs of schools with extra paid-time for staff, as the staff members are working the same amount of days. "During the 2011-2012 school year, there were 3,700 public schools across the nation operating on a year-round calendar cycle (Skinner, 2014, p.2). A majority of school operating on a year-round calendar were in the South or the West, approximately 65% (Skinner, p.2).

The 45-15 model.

This is the most common form of YRE. It is 45 days of instruction followed by a 15 day break. This is a quarter system based YRE, and it allows for 15 day breaks in the fall, winter, and spring. There would be four 45 day instruction periods totaling 180 days in the school year. The summer break would be 15 days and whatever days are left over until the start of a new school year, approximately 10 more, depending on school district choice of holidays. Example $365 \text{ days} - 180 \text{ instructional} - 60 \text{ break} - 104 \text{ Saturdays \& Sundays} - 10 \text{ Federal holidays} = 11$ extra days. The 11 extra days are usually spaced out during the year. With this form, according to proponents, summer setback would be limited and the review time at the start of the new school year would be reduced.

The 45-10 model.

The 45-10 variation is based on 45 days of instruction followed by a 10 day break, but this also has a 30 day summer break. It keeps the quarter system benefits, but it is closer in resemblance to a traditional calendar. Again, there would be four 45 day instruction sessions totaling 180 days of instruction in the school year. . Example $365 \text{ day} - 180 \text{ instructional} - 40 \text{ break} - 104 \text{ Saturdays \& Sundays} - 10 \text{ Federal holidays} = 31$ extra days. The 45-10 model might be easier for some people that are undecided about YRE, because it stills allows for an extended summer break.

The 60-20 model.

The 60-20 is a trimester plan. It consists of 60 days of instruction followed by a 20 day break. As a trimester, the school year would consist of three 60 day sessions totaling a 180 day school calendar. . Example 365 day -180 instructional – 60 break – 104 Saturdays & Sundays – 10 Federal holidays = 11 extra days. The summer break would be a little longer than 20 days, based again, upon how the school district divides the extra days. 60-15, is a slight variation on the 60-20 calendar. It follows the same trimester pattern of 60 instructional days but 15 days of break between trimesters. This usually creates a longer summer break similar to the 45-10.

The 90-30 model.

The 90-30 model is a traditional semester-based calendar with 90 days of instruction in two equal semesters. Each semester is followed by a 30 day break. This shortens the time for summer setback, theoretically reducing learning loss. This would also more closely align with colleges across the country, and would allow students to better match college schedules while still in high school. As more and more high school students are taking advantage of Post-Secondary Educational Opportunities, the 90-30 model might fit best for some students.

Multi-Track and Single-Track

YRE schools typically operate on a multi-track or single-track schedule. The multi-track schedule is designed specifically for schools that are dealing with overcrowding. Typically schools split students and teachers into 4 groups, and at any given time during the school year 3 of the 4 groups are in school with the 4th group on break. This allows the school to accommodate more students during the year, and it is seen as a way to prevent the district from having to build expensive additional school buildings to accommodate all students.

Single-track schedules are all students on a more balanced schedule of shorter summer breaks and other vacation days spread out during the school year. Everyone is in school at the same time, all teachers and all students.

Schools that operate on a multi-track usually experience a cost savings, "the savings from capital expenditures outweigh any increases in operating expenditures. It is less clear, however, whether schools operating on a single-track experience cost savings" (Skinner, p.4).

Pro's to YRE

YRE *might* help prevent summer learning loss. The idea is quite simple, the less time out of school over the summer the less loss of learning experienced by students. It may be a particular problem for children from lower socioeconomic status and for students with special educational needs. Summer learning loss is accepted on both sides of the YRE argument. Cooper et al, state that summer learning loss was equivalent to at least one month of instruction. The disagreement comes later when debating if YRE has any positive effects on student achievement.

By using a balanced calendar, you create opportunities to set up intersessions in the schools at the end of quarter. During the scheduled breaks, students that are falling behind are allowed to catch up by taking remedial classes during the year instead of waiting for summer school. "Although year-round calendars do not increase average achievement by themselves, they might have benefits, at least for low-achieving students, if combined with substantial amounts of remedial instruction during intersessions" (von Hippel, 2016, p.26).

YRE proponents continue to argue that schools operating on balanced calendars see increases in student achievement. More studies are needed to prove that YRE has a positive effect on student achievement.

There might be cost savings if using the multi-track schedule. These saving almost always will come from building capital expenditures. It can be a much more efficient use of the school building. Many buildings that operate on a traditional calendar are unoccupied for the summer months

YRE and a balanced calendar might help to prevent burnout among teachers and other staff members. Having more frequent breaks can provide staff with a refreshing or reinvigorating that is lacking in the traditional school calendar. It might also have positive effects on student morale. Students might have a better outlook on school if they know that the next break is only 45 days away instead of 4 or 5 months.

Cons to YRE

Data on the positive effects of YRE is inconclusive. "The research on the extent to which year-round schools affect student achievement has generally been found to be inconclusive and lacking in methodological rigor (Skinner, p.4) Cooper et al, in 2003, looked at studies by Kneese, McMillen, and Palmer and Bemis, and the "meta-analysis revealed ambiguous results" (Cooper et al, p.38)

Families could have students at different schools on different schedules if YRE is not offered district wide. They might have children on different tracks if they are in a multi-track school. Parents that have kids in different grade levels can sometimes find it difficult to plan vacations. Childcare is a huge concern for many parents. It might be more difficult to arrange on a balanced calendar. Four times a year for 15 days can pose a completely different problem as compared to finding childcare for one long summer break.

Band, athletics, and other extracurricular activities might suffer from problems with scheduling practices and competitions during the intersessions. The concerns of the effects of

the balanced calendar on after school extracurricular activities of older students have been a major issue for some.

Districts can save money on building expenditures, but operational costs can be more expensive. Sometimes the initial implementation may become costly as you prepare a building to house students throughout the school year. Upgrading buildings with air-conditioning can add costs. It may also be difficult to do big maintenance projects, because of the lack of time when the building is vacant. Districts may also have to pay staff more, teachers, administrative staff, and maintenance workers on year-round contracts.

Economic concerns from businesses or other organizations that might be negatively affected by changing the school calendar from traditional to year-round. Amusement parks, campgrounds, and the resort industry have been very vocal about not wanting the traditional calendar to change. High school students might also have difficulty finding jobs for shorter summers, and would not be able to earn as much for college.

It might not be as easy for teachers to continue their own education, because they would not be able to take university classes over the summer. Administrators might get burned out, or might be more susceptible to burnout because of the fact that they are working year-round.

YRE might work really well in an urban setting, but not all schools are the same. Rural districts may run into problems that urban districts may not. Students working on the farm in the spring and over the summer in rural areas could lead to problems within the community. A careful consideration of a school district's needs must be done before moving to YRE.

Chapter 3: Research Design

This study looked at the perceived advantages and disadvantages, according to parents, teachers, and administrators, of a 45/15 school calendar being adopted at Southland Schools. It is a qualitative study conducted in the Southland School District located in Adams, MN.

Interviews were conducted with the three different populations: parents, teachers, and administrators. Each group was interviewed and asked a set of questions about their perceptions of the advantages and disadvantages of a 45/15 school calendar being used in the district.

Interviewing parents, teachers, and administrators of Southland is an effective way to collect data on how these different groups might react if a 45/15 school calendar was proposed in the District. In-person interviewing permits not only the words of the interviewee, but also the emphasis behind those words. Interviews may enable the interviewer to judge if the person being interviewed has actual knowledge of the questions being asked and the sincerity of the answers given.

For each population, a slightly different set of interview questions will be asked. Each group has a different background, and a different amount of prior knowledge about the 45/15 calendar. Asking teachers about some of the educational benefits of a 45/15 calendar would make sense, because teachers are professional educators. Parents in the district might have a better perception of the “pulse” of the community in terms of openness to new or different ideas; while the administrators may be “out of touch” with the community’s feelings. However administrators may have a better understanding of the logistical side of a proposed switch to 45/15.

Parents

Data collection.

Interviewing parents about their perceived advantages and disadvantages to a 45/15 school calendar is the best way to get accurate information from one of the groups most closely associated with Southland Schools. The interview questions were designed to gauge their basic knowledge and understanding of the 45/15 school calendar.

The interview questions were a set of six questions. These questions were read to each parent in the exactly the same fashion and order. After each question I took notes on the responses given. The interview questions themselves were intentionally open-ended to prevent interviewer influence on answers provided by parents.

Question #1—Have you heard of the 45/15 school calendar?

This question was chosen to determine if the parent had prior knowledge of the 45/15 school calendar. It was also asked to determine if it was necessary for the interviewer to explain the 45/15 school calendar before the remaining questions were asked.

Question #2—What are your initial thoughts?

Question 2 was asked to obtain the parents viewpoint on the 45/15 calendar as a whole. It was to try and gauge their openness to the idea of the 45/15 calendar. It also provided an opportunity for the parent to share their opinion.

Question #3—What disadvantages/concerns do you have about the 45/15 school calendar?

This question allowed the parents to share their concerns about the 45/15 calendar. It also allowed parents to identify what they thought were disadvantages to the 45/15 calendar. It provided insight on how educated the parents were to the research on 45/15 calendars.

Question #4—What advantages/positives do you see with the 45/15 school calendar?

Question 4 was asked to allow the parents to share what they believed were some possible advantages to the 45/15 calendar. This question also provided insight how educated the parents were to the research on 45/15 calendars.

Question #5—Would it work for your family?

Question 5 was designed to get the parents thinking about the positives and negatives they had just stated, and to then evaluate if they believed that a 45/15 school calendar would work for their own family.

Question #6—Do you think that Southland would benefit from moving to a 45/15?

Question 6 was designed to have the parent, using their own personal knowledge of the District, think about a new 45/15 calendar for the District as a whole, not just at a personal level.

The set of interview questions (Appendix B) was not pilot tested on anyone before being given to the set of parents.

Sample.

The sample that was obtained was of parents who came to The Southland High School Parent/Teacher Conferences on December 12, 2016 from 4:00 pm to 8:00 pm to the classroom of the author. After discussing their child's progress in my course, all 19 parents that came to my classroom were asked if they would be willing to be interviewed. All 19 answered yes. All 19 interviews were included in this study.

Protocol.

One week prior to parent/teacher conferences, I went to the High School Principal and obtained his consent to conduct a short survey/interview with parents who came to my room for Parent Conferences. After meeting with the High School Principal I went directly to the Superintendent to obtain his consent also. Permission to conduct the research was given by the

Superintendent (Appendix A). No concerns were raised by either the Principal or the Superintendent.

At the end of each parent/teacher conference, the parent/s were asked if they would be willing to answer a few questions. All 19 parents consented. The Consent Statement (Appendix B) was read at the beginning of each interview. After obtaining the consent of the parent or parents, I proceeded to ask each parent the set of six questions. The questions were verbally asked, and I took notes after each response.

At the completion of each interview the questions and notes were placed in a 3-ring binder. A new set of questions with the same consent statement and questions was used for each interview. At no time was the name of the parent written down, and each set of notes was kept anonymous. Each parent was thanked verbally, and told how much I truly appreciated and valued their opinion.

Analysis.

I am going to report the data collected from the 19 parents. I will report the responses for all six questions asked individually. Each one will have analysis of all answers given.

Teachers.

Data collection.

Interviewing teachers about their perceived advantages and disadvantages to a 45/15 school calendar is the best way to get accurate information from one of the groups most closely associated with Southland Schools. During the interview process, I was able to judge the emphasis on which the teacher answers the question. Interviewing allowed me the chance to ask follow-up questions to clarify responses. The interview questions were designed to gauge the basic knowledge of the 45/15 school calendar by the teachers, to gauge their interest in the

revised calendar, and to obtain their list of advantages and disadvantages if Southland Public School were to change their school calendar.

The interview questions were a set of six questions designed by myself. These questions were read to each parent in the exactly the same fashion and order. After each question I took notes on the response given. The interview questions were:

Question #1—Do you know of any schools that are operating YRE, example 45/15, if so which schools and what are they running?

This question was asked to help determine a baseline of the knowledge that the teacher had about the 45/15 calendar. This also helped provide the types of school calendars the teacher had had exposure to. It was also designed to get the teacher thinking about alternative school calendars.

Question #2—Based upon years of teaching experience would YRE be a benefit to reducing summer setback?

This question was used to determine if the teacher believed that YRE would help in the retention of knowledge from year to year. I hoped to hear of the teacher's personal experience on how much time has been spent on re-teaching at the beginning of the school year, and if they personally believed the amount of time spent would be reduced if Southland Schools were to implement YRE. Proponents of YRE claim that YRE reduces the amount of summer setback. I wanted to get first hand opinions on this issue from the teachers themselves.

Question #3—Based upon your years of teaching experience, would going to YRE, i.e. 45/15 improve teacher and student morale?

Advocates of YRE claim that student and teacher morale is improved with YRE, because neither teacher nor student is "burned out". With the more frequent breaks that a 45/15 calendar

would bring, the teachers and students are more refreshed and ready to learn. This question was designed to obtain the personal opinions of teachers with the Southland School District. Is burnout an issue or concern here?

Question #4—Looking at extra-curricular activities, what issues or concerns should be considered with a 45/15 calendar?

One of the major concerns that is presented by opponents to YRE is that extra-curricular activities are hurt, or are difficult to run because of revised school calendar. If the school district is the only school in a conference running that type of calendar how would it affect the practice schedules and competitive contests of sports, fine arts, or other extra-curricular activities. This question was designed to get the teacher's opinions on what problems might happen if a 45/15 calendar was implemented.

Question #5—When thinking about local economy, what issues or concerns does a 45/15 calendar raise?

When interviewing the district's parents, one concern that was brought up was the local farming economy. How would switching to 45/15 impact the local farming industry? Would the switch cause problems for young people trying to work? The reasoning behind asking this question was to obtain teachers opinions to this specific issue raised by some of the parents.

Question #6—Do you think that Southland Schools would benefit from moving to a 45/15? Why or why not?

Question 6 was designed to have the teacher, using their own personal knowledge of the District, think about the District as a whole, not just on a personal level.

The set of interview questions (see Appendix D) was pilot tested on several colleagues before being given.

Sample.

The sample of six teachers included two teachers from the Elementary building, two from the Middle School, and two from the High School. Each of the teachers have currently or have had in the past children within the District. Having a child in the School District provides that the teacher is vested as a parent and as an educational professional. Sometimes, a second point of view, such as being a parent, helps to provide a different point of view. Each of the teachers is a veteran of at least 5 years of teaching experience. Having veteran teachers provides for a protection from someone fresh out of college with great ideas and no real practical experience influencing the data. Each of the interviews were conducted in their classrooms in March 2017, after school.

Protocol.

One week prior to the teacher interviews, I met with the High School Principal and obtained his consent to conduct a short survey/interview with the teachers. After meeting with the High School Principal I went directly to the Superintendent to obtain his consent also. Permission to conduct the research was given by the Superintendent (Appendix A). No concerns were raised by either the Principal or the Superintendent.

The Consent Statement was read at the beginning of each interview (see Appendix B).

After obtaining consent, I proceeded to ask each teacher the set of six questions. The questions were verbally asked, and I took notes on the responses given.

At the completion of each interview the questions and notes were placed in a 3-ring binder. A new set of questions with the same opening paragraph and questions was used for each interview. At no time was the name of the teacher written down, and each set of notes was

kept anonymous. Each teacher was thanked verbally, and told how much I truly appreciated and valued their opinion.

Analysis.

I am going to report the data collected from teachers. I will report the responses from the six questions asked of the six teachers. Each one will have an analysis of all answers given

School Administrators

Data collection.

Interviewing administrators about their perceived advantages and disadvantages to a 45/15 school calendar is the best way to get accurate information from one of the groups most closely associated with Southland Schools. During the interview process, I can judge the emphasis on which the Administrator answers the question. If he is very passionate about a point shared during the interview, I am able to give that point some extra consideration. Interviewing allows me to clarify points made. I am also able to measure the sincerity of the answers given. The interview questions were designed to gauge the basic knowledge and understanding of the 45/15 school calendar and its possibility for Southland Public Schools.

The interview questions were a set of 6 questions. These questions were read to each administrator in exactly the same fashion and order. After each question notes were taken on the responses given by each administrator. The interview questions were:

Question #1— Do you know of any schools that are operating YRE, example 45/15, if so which schools and what are they running?

This question was specifically designed to get at the administrator's background knowledge of the YRE calendar. How many different YRE calendars are they aware of? I also

wanted to get the Administrator thinking about YRE, and this hopefully introduces the topic. This question helps to set the stage for the following questions.

Question #2—Based upon your years of teaching experience would YRE be a benefit to reducing summer setback?

With this question, each Administrator was asked to go back to their personal experience as a classroom teacher, and to think about the summer loss of learning that most people agree happens to students due to a three month summer vacation. In their opinion would YRE help with this? This allowed them to use personal teaching experience along with their experience as a Principal and/or Superintendent.

Question #3—Based upon your years of teaching experience would going to YRE, i.e. 45/15 improve teacher and student morale? Is student and teacher morale an issue at Southland?

Advocates of YRE make claims that student and teacher morale is improved with YRE, because neither student nor teacher is “burned out”. With the more frequent breaks that a 45/15 calendar would bring, the teachers and students are more refreshed and ready to learn. This question is designed to obtain their personal opinion, does YRE help morale within the school. It then asks is morale at Southland is an issue. If morale is believed to be an issue would YRE help? If morale is not an issue, then one of the reasons for YRE, as stated by some advocates, is a moot point.

Question #4—Looking at extra-curricular activities, what issues or concerns should be considered with a 45/15 calendar?

As most Administrators will tell you, they must look at issues from multiple points of view. During the parent interviews, concerns about how extra-curricular activities would be run, were mentioned. This question is asked to determine what specific problems have the

Administrators heard of, and how would these issues be addressed if YRE was instituted at Southland. Would these issues or concerns be of such great impact that it would prevent the district from going to YRE?

Question #5—When thinking about the local economy, what issues or concerns does a 45/15 calendar raise?

Southland Schools are in a very rural area, this question asked administrators what role the rural economy might play in the decision to move or not move to YRE. During the parent interviews, concerns about the rural nature of the district were raised. These concerns were often cited as reasons for the possible move to YRE being very difficult in Southland.

Question #6—Do you think that Southland Schools would benefit from moving to a 45/15 calendar? Why or why not?

This question was designed to be general at first, as an introduction to the topic, and to then get the Administrator to provide reasons for their answer. I wanted them to “talk it out” while answering the question. In this fashion, I will be able to gauge the conviction with which they answer the question. I wanted them to think about YRE in terms of the entire district.

Question #7—Because of your unique position as an administrator, what are the hurdles you see if Southland was to try to move to YRE, i.e. 45/15? (Economic, extra-curricular, staffing, and facilities wise.)

This question was designed to bring the Administrative mind into the interview. It allows the administrator to think out loud. If the Administrators touched on drawbacks, I would not ask follow-ups. I want to have them consider what facilities issues YRE would present. I also wanted to get their opinion on what specific issues, in terms of possible staff issues, YRE might present.

Question #8—Based upon your professional journals, conferences, and conversations with other district administrators what are you hearing are the pros and cons of YRE?

Administrators often talk and network with each other. This question was designed to get them to share what they had heard about other districts and the positives and negatives that those districts have gone through when making or considering the change to YRE.

The set of interview questions (see Appendix E) was pilot tested with three professional educators before being given to the administrators of Southland Public Schools.

Sample.

The sample used was the three district Administrators of South Public Schools: the Elementary Principal, the Middle School/ High School Principal, and the Superintendent. Each of the administrators is a veteran of at least 5 years teaching. Each of the interviews were conducted in their offices in March 2017.

Protocol.

Permission to conduct the research was given by the Superintendent (Appendix A). The Consent Statement was read at the beginning of each interview (see Appendix B). After obtaining consent, I proceeded to ask each administrator the set of eight questions. The questions were verbally asked, and I took notes on each response.

At the completion of each interview the questions and notes were placed in a 3-ring binder. A new set of questions with the same opening paragraph and questions was used for each interview. At no time was the name of the administrator written down, and each set of notes was kept anonymous. Each administrator was thanked verbally, and told how much I truly appreciated and valued their opinion.

Analysis.

I am going to report the data collected from administrators. I will report all eight questions asked individually. Each one will have an analysis of all answers given.

Chapter 4: Data Analysis

The following analyzes are based on 19 parent interviews, six teacher interviews and three administrator interviews.

Parent Interview Analysis

Appendix F has the responses of the 19 parents interviewed, for each of the six questions asked.

Question #1 – have you heard of the 45/15 school calendar?

Looking at the first question posed to parents, have you heard of the 45/15 school calendar, 18 of the 19 parents said that they had heard of 45/15. The single interview that had not heard of 45/15 was a migrant family, which required the student act as interpreter for the parents. The dominant answer is that most families have heard of 45/15.

Question #2—what are your initial thoughts?

Four basic answers were given: 1-in favor of 45/15 or positive, 2-openly opposed to it or negative, 3-see positive and negative or mixed neutral stance, and 4-no initial thoughts. 6 out of 19 had a positive outlook on 45/15, statements such as “love it”, “good for kids”, and “when I learned what it was about, I thought it would be good” were what parents answered. 6 out of 19 stated that they had mixed views, “I can see some positives and some negatives” or statements about being neutral to 45/15 were expressed. 5 out of 19 had a negative viewpoint of 45/15, 2 parents stated that this would work in an urban area not in a rural area like Southland. “Don’t care for it” or “I would not like it” were a couple of the other responses given. 2 interviews had no initial thoughts at all. When looking at the parent population interviewed, approximately 1/3 liked, 1/3 disliked, and 1/3 were mixed. This indicates that there is not a strong leaning in either

direction, and if that holds through the general population it would be a difficult task to convince parents in the district that a move to 45/15 should be made.

Question #3—what disadvantages/concerns do you have about 45/15?

Question #3 was very wide open to parents sharing any concerns about a possible switch to a 45/15 calendar. With 19 parent surveys, one parent may have shared 4 or 5 concerns, while a couple of the parents had no concerns whatsoever. Daycare issues specifically dealing with younger students on the 15-day breaks was the concern that was voiced the most. 6 of 19 indicated that this was a disadvantage or concern. Several citing concerns with elementary aged children, and how would daycare providers in the district answer this problem.

Building/facilities issues were the next biggest concern. None of the buildings in the Southland School district are fully air-conditioned, and this was mentioned by multiple parents. 4 of 19 surveys stated this as a concern now, if a move to 45/15 would be happening. Sports and sports practices were also a concern. Would practice be happening on intersession days, would sports seasons need to change, and how would it work playing other schools: were just a few of the statements that parents shared with me. Three parents were concerned with summer jobs, and with a shorter summer break, students would not be able to earn as much money. Another parent voiced concern over local employers, and would they be able to find enough worker to help during “normal” summer time. Two separate families indicated that family schedules would be a concern. Having other children in a neighboring school district, and that district not running the same calendar would cause concerns and issues for their families. One parent expressed concern over the multiple 15-day breaks, citing possible issues of having to re-teach many times during the year. The traditional calendar would, in the parents observation, cause re-teaching just one time. The parent was afraid that the students would be forgetting things on the 15-day

intersessions, and this would necessitate re-teaching multiple times a year, therefore wasting more time. The final concern is a little difficult to identify because six of the 19 expressed a concern about “not summer like we think”. There was “less of a summer break”, “less time off in summer”, and “not a summer like we had” to quote 3 different parents. I am going to put these 6 together in a category called “different summer”. The big concern is that it would be different than they are used to, and changing the mindset of people is difficult. It was seen as a concern or disadvantage, but the main reason for that was simply because it was different not because of a specifically stated reason. In all of the listed concerns or disadvantages, there does not seem to be 1 or 2 that all parents seem to agree on. Because of the lack of a couple major concerns, meaning more than half the parents stated it, it would be difficult to cover all of these. The District would struggle to “sell” the change to a 45/15 calendar.

Question #4—What advantages/positives do you see with 45/15?

Question #4, similar to question #3, was open to parents to share perceived positives or advantages to a possible move to a 45/15 calendar. Two major things jumped out when analyzing the answers provided. First, in 14 of 19 surveys retention of knowledge was stated in some form or fashion. Parents truly seemed to believe that the shorter summer break, and the balancing of the calendar would help with the retention of knowledge by their children. Even one of the parents who was the most opposed to a switch to 45/15, stated “retention of knowledge” was one small positive. The second major positive was “burnout” of teachers and students. Five of the 19 specifically mentioned “burnout or being refreshed”. Teacher attitudes were mentioned by another parent, and student behavior was identified by 3 parents. It was stated that having more frequent breaks during the year, would provide a more consistent routine and structure for students, thereby helping to improve the attitude of students in school. Three

different parents mentioned being able to take family vacations during the “old school year”, and not having their child miss days of school as a positive. Another parent mentioned that scheduling of appointments, Doctor and dentist specifically; during intersession would also be a positive. With most schools operating on the traditional calendar, the common days off of school are usually booked full at many places. A switch to a 45/15, would provide alternative times to schedule appointments. Another parent mentioned that the intersession breaks would be “good” times for curriculum adjustments by teachers. Instead of waiting for the summer, a teacher would be able to make adjustment in a more timely fashion. Two parents stated that more frequent breaks would be “better” for their children. Each parent hinted that the traditional summer break was too long, and that by the end, their children are ready to go back to school.

Question #5—Would it work for your family?

Question # 5 was specifically asked to get the family to think about if a switch to 45/15 work for your family. The parents really had one of two options to answer. Yes, it would work for my family, or No, it would not work for my family. 14 of 19 surveys indicated that at switch to a 45/15 calendar would work for their family. 5 of 19 stated that it would not work for their family. Parents were not asked to elaborate on why or why not. Most chose to just simply answer. Of the 5 parents that stated it would not work, all 5 were farming families or had children working on farms.

Question #6—Do you think that Southland would benefit from moving to a 45/15?

Question #6 asked the parent to think about the school district as a whole benefitting from the change in calendar, not just their own family. The parents were not asked to elaborate on why, but many chose to do so. Three basic answers were given. Yes, no, and not sure were the responses received. 7 out of 19 stated that Southland would benefit. 6 were not sure if

Southland would benefit, and 6 stated that No, Southland would not benefit. Many parents said that they believe it would be a very tough “sell” in our rural community, and that this was a major concern.

Teacher Interview Analysis

Appendix G has the responses of the six teachers interviewed, for each of the six questions asked.

Question #1—Do you know of any schools that are operating YRE, if so which school and what type?

Looking at the responses given to question #1, all six teachers stated that in Austin, MN 45/15 is run at Sumner School. Two of the six teachers reported that they also were aware that a school in Rochester ran YRE, both teachers stated that they believed the 45/15 calendar option was used there also. The question provided confirmation that each of the teachers interviewed knew of at least one school running a 45/15 school calendar.

Question #2—Based on your years of teaching experience would YRE be a benefit to reducing summer setback?

Question #2 taps into the professional experience of the teachers interviewed. Each teacher is a veteran of at least five years teaching experience, and this provided them with a highly qualified point of view. Three out of the 6 teachers replied that with conviction, they believe that shortening the summer break would benefit summer setback. A fourth teacher stated that it would benefit some kids. A fifth teacher stated “I can see when it would be helpful”, they also stated that it would be difficult to make the switch to 45/15. The final teacher answered that they do not believe that switching to 45/15 would reducing summer setback. They stated that with 3 weeks off, the kids still will forget things; therefore they are not sure how much time

would be saved. When looking at one of the major positives listed by advocates of YRE, reduction of summer setback, or summer learning loss, the majority of teachers interviewed, 5 out of 6, stated that a move to YRE would be of some sort of benefit to reducing summer setback. One veteran teacher did not believe that a move to YRE would provide much of a benefit.

Question #3—Based, upon your years of teaching experience would going to YRE, improve teacher and/or student morale?

Questions #3 deals with another major point made by proponents of 45/15, that such a move improves teacher and student morale. A majority of teachers questioned, 4 out of 6 responded yes to this question. One teacher thought that morale amongst teachers would go down because they would not have the full 3 months to “recharge”. The final teacher was uncertain of the effect on morale. They stated that teachers are used to having 3 months off, and that the shorter summer break “maybe would hinder” teacher morale. Three out of the 4 were adamant about the fact that teachers would be refreshed, reenergized, or invigorated by the days off during the year. One teacher mentioned that right now “spring fever” has set in with several of her colleagues, and that a 15-day break would be very welcome. Another of the teachers responding yes, stated that having a break between quarters would provide a time for teachers and students to take vacations which would not necessitate them missing class time, another benefit.

Question #4—Looking at extra-curricular activities, what issues or concerns should be considered with a 45/15 calendar?

All six teachers interviewed stated that sports practices and games would need to be considered. Would games and practices be held during the intersession times? Each teacher

stated that the different issues such as: fall sport 2-a-day practices, volleyball in late summer with humid gyms, moving softball and baseball to summer sports, and length of seasons would need to be addressed before the move to 45/15 happened. It was also mentioned by 2 of the 6 teachers that FFA and summer fairs, County and State, would need to be addressed. Trying to work with the other schools in the conference to make seasons match, and to try to minimize the amount of time during intersession students would be involved was considered important. The biggest issue was, would games and practices be held during intersession, if so, the students would not really be getting time off. Extra-curricular activities are important to many and this issue was seen by all six teachers as a major hurdle that would have to be solved.

Question #5—When thinking about the local economy, what issues or concerns does a 45/15 calendar raise?

Several different local economy issues were mentioned by the teachers, the first one being day care issues. The local day care providers would see a change to shorter summer seasons. Would they be willing to pick-up and offer day care during the 15-day intersession times during the rest of the year. One possible solution suggested by 2 of the teachers was having School Aged Child Care (SACC) offer more times. Having the school provide SACC might provide some small financial benefits to the district. 3 of the 6 teacher mentioned an impact on agricultural jobs in our area. One stated that there would be no kid power to help with all the different types of agricultural tasks. Another mentioned student workers on the farm, and the students might not be available. One teacher mentioned summer jobs in Austin, and stated that our students might be at a disadvantage for being hired for summer jobs. If a student from another district not operating under a 45/15 applied for a summer job, an employer might hire that other student over a student from Southland because they would be available for a longer

time in the summer. One teacher mentioned that the local swimming pool might have to close earlier in the summer because of Southland students being back in school. Two of the six teachers mentioned the tourist or resort industry in Northern Minnesota could be affected by a move to 45/15, but both teachers did not feel that it would have a significant impact on local tourism.

Question #6—Do you think that Southland Schools would benefit from moving to a 45/15?

This question split the teachers right down the middle, 3 stated that Southland would benefit, and 3 stated Southland would not. All 3 teachers that stated Southland would not benefit cited tradition and believing that the local community would be opposed to a change to a 45/15 calendar as the major reason why. 2 of the 3 that believed Southland would benefit also mentioned tradition and the difficulty of changing the local mindset would be major obstacles that would have to be overcome. All 3 teachers saying yes, believed that the retention of student knowledge and the refreshing of students and teachers would be major benefits. Overall, when 6 professionals working within the district could not clearly state one way or another if Southland would benefit from moving to a 45/15 calendar, it would be difficult to advocate for the change. If this small sample size holds true to the opinions of all employees within the district, it would seem that the teacher support of such a change could be lacking. That lack of universal support might have a detrimental effect on how the change was viewed within the communities served by the school district.

Administrator Interview Analysis

Appendix H has the responses of the three administrators interviewed, for each of the eight questions asked.

Question #1—Do you know of any school that are operating YRE, 45/15, if so which schools and what are they running?

All three administrators stated that they know of one school in Rochester running a 45/15 calendar. Two of the three also listed Sumner School in Austin as running a 45/15 school calendar. One was able to add that there is at least one section at the Kindergarten center in Austin that is running on a 45/15 calendar as well. Based on the responses given, the YRE calendar, such as 45/15, is not run in many schools in our immediate area.

Question #2—Based upon your years of educational experience, would YRE be a benefit to reducing summer setback?

Each of the administrators responded that a benefit to moving to 45/15 would be that summer setback would be reduced. One stated that the benefit would be less in the upper grades, because the classes are different year to year. Another stated that for a certain student population, Free & Reduced and the ELL students, the benefits are much bigger. The final administrator stated that on the traditional calendar it may take 3 weeks to a month to review, but with a 45/15 calendar they thought it would be less.

Question #3—Based upon your years of educational experience, would going to YRE, improve teacher and student morale?

All three administrators completely agreed that going to YRE would improve teacher and student morale. Based on their years of experience as teachers and administrators, two of the three stated that in the spring they see the highest rates of discipline problems with both teachers and students. One of the administrator actually worked in a building that was operating a 45/15 calendar, and they stated that the “staff loved it”. The staff would come back rejuvenated and ready to go after the intersessions. It was stated that 45/15 also seemed to help with absenteeism.

One administrator stated that “mental health” breaks are important for teachers and that the traditional calendar seems to work very well until about January. It was stated that then it gets to be a long time for staff and students and it seems to coincide with more discipline issues. The administrator stated “I have no studies to support this it is just what I have seen over my years.”

Question #4—Looking at extra-curricular activities, what issues or concerns should be considered with a move to 45/15?

Each administrator brought up different issues. When asked this question, but they all stated some similar things. One similarity was that the calendar would be very different from what people have become accustomed to, and that the mindset of most people would need to change. One thing needed was to let people know that changing the mindset of “this is how it has always been done” is okay to do. One stated that looking at the athletic conference that Southland is connected to would be very important, and that we would need to follow the conference very closely. Another stated that transportation and practice issues on intersession days would be of a major concern to people. Parent feedback might be that if their student was at school for practice, why not just be in school? Another administrator stated that the fall would probably look very similar to now, but that spring/summer might need to look significantly different. Maybe baseball, softball, and golf would be moved to be summer sports. This move might benefit the sports themselves because it seems to be a struggle with Minnesota weather issues. 4-H and some summer programming might have to make changes.

Question #5—When thinking about the local economy, what issues or concerns does a 45/15 calendar raise?

All three administrators mentioned the agriculture community that Southland is a part of. One of the administrators mentioned that as a more traditional community it would be “an

incredible fight” and very difficult to make a switch to a 45/15 calendar. One mentioned that most planting is done in the spring, and most harvesting is done in the fall, both are times that our students are already in school. The impact would probably be minimal during those times, but it might impact summer hay baling season. It would be also possible that there could be a shortage of student workers in the summer months. Another administrator spoke about the resort lobby in Minnesota being very strong, but that many people would take trips year round not just in the summer. This would be a different look, but probably not a huge impact on the bottom line for many resorts. It was also stated that farm families are getting smaller and that the number of family farms is shrinking. A reduction of the impact of a switch to a 45/15 calendar was implied because of the smaller families and smaller number of farms.

Question #6—Do you think Southland Schools would benefit from moving to 45/15? Why or why not?

The first administrator stated that they were not sure. If the research said it would benefit kids, then with the proper implementation Southland would benefit, but if the research does not show benefits, Southland would not benefit. It was stated that without some building/facilities changes there would be no benefit. The second administrator said that a change to 45/15 would pose too many challenges for this rural community. They were mixed on the pros and cons of a switch to a 45/15 calendar “but here NO, we would not benefit.” The final administrator stated that we are not set up for it buildings and facilities wise. They like the idea of a 45/15 calendar, but are very concerned about lack of parent support.

Question #7—Because of your unique position, what are the hurdles that you see, if Southland was to try to move to YRE?

Two of the three administrators stated that a convincing or compelling reason for the switch would be necessary for the community to change. It would take time to educate the parents. If it can be shown to be what is best for kids, it might be accepted. If the reasons are not there, it would be very difficult. Two of three administrators spoke about staff buy-in being important. With the staff seeing the clear reasons to make the change, it would be easier to share those reasons with the community members that might need a little more convincing. Two of the three administrators mentioned that the mindset of the community would be very difficult to change. This is what has always been done, and that is how it should be done. These thoughts would be big hurdles.

Question #8—Based upon your professional journals, conferences, and conversations with other district administrators what are you hearing are the pros and cons of YRE?

It was stated that sometimes the things you are told will be better are not always true. The reality is that classroom teachers and classroom instruction matter more than anything else. Some of the pros stated were that staff and students were rejuvenated and less time was spent on re-teaching. Another administrator was told “why not try it, what we are doing now is not improving test scores”. Some stated that a certain population of students seems to benefit more, ELL, Free & Reduced Lunch, and Title students specifically. Some of the cons that were mentioned were the mindset of people. Change is hard and many people do not like change. Overcoming that mindset poses considerable challenges. The facilities issue, making sure buildings are climate controlled, is that is mentioned by other districts.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

What Did I Learn About 45/15?

When I think about every interview that I conducted, I believe that the overall feeling is that the change to a 45/15 balanced calendar for Southland School would be extremely difficult. Without having a significant majority of parents supporting the change, the School Board would find it tough to proceed with the change. I believe that a large number of parents would be very vocal against the change, and they would do what they could to prevent it. If the Board wanted to push forward, it would be important to have all of the teaching staff pushing for the change also, because a great selling point is that teachers think it would benefit our students. According to my research, that is not the case. Some of the teachers like it, and some do not. Again, this makes the change to 45/15 a very tough sell to the community at large. The School District's three administrators are not 100% unified in their thoughts on a 45/15 calendar. In my opinion, if Southland was looking to proceed with a change to a 45/15 calendar, we would want the administrators, teachers, and a significant percentage of parents within the district supporting the change. At this time, that is not what my research indicates.

I learned that there are not many good studies on the benefits of a 45/15 calendar. Some of the reasons given for moving to a 45/15 calendar are: it reduces summer setback for all students, it may have a greater effect for children with special educational needs, it can help with overcrowding in schools, it helps with teacher and student burnout, it can be used for remediation for students that are falling behind, and it may have some cost savings when running multitrack year round schools. These reasons are often cited as the impetus for changing to a balanced calendar, specifically a 45/15 calendar. I also learned that some of these same reasons listed as benefits of moving to a 45/15 might not be able to be proven. Test scores used to

measure student achievement are not conclusively proving that YRE is causing test scores to rise significantly. Data on its positive effects are inconclusive (Skinner, 2014). The move to YRE might be costly when getting the facilities ready for the change. Having facilities serve students for more months of the year can be costly, and make it difficult to do the maintenance projects that used to be done during the summer months. The benefit of having sessions of remediation during the breaks might actually negate a stated positive of helping with burnout of teachers and students. If during the 15-day intersession, students and teachers are still at the school working on remediation neither will be able to reenergize for the upcoming 45 day quarter. One thing that I learned is that if the decision is made to switch, it is very difficult for families if their children are not on the same schedule. It is probably best if the decision is made district wide, so that all families will be on the same calendar.

What Did I Learn About the Research Process?

I learned that the research process is a lengthy one. Once my topic was chosen, I need to answer the question of how was I going to obtain my information. I learned that when I want to interview people on a topic, I must obtain permission to conduct the research. Simple minded me, would just have asked some people. I needed to think about the different groups that wanted to gather information from. After selecting the 3 different groups that I wanted to interview, I learned how to write interview questions that were appropriate to each of the groups. I also learned that I need to make sure that everyone involved was completely aware of why I was asking these questions. I did not want false rumors and gossip to start spreading around my school district. I needed to figure out how I was going to record the information I received from each interview. I determined that I was going to take notes on each interview, and then write those notes up. I learned that research process has a pattern and a structure to it, and this needs

to be followed so that your research can be repeated if need be. It also can help improve the validity of your research.

What Would I Do Differently?

There are many things that I would do differently if I were to conduct this research again. I would get a larger sample size. I conducted 19 parent interviews for this study. I would want a minimum of 50 parent interview next time. With a larger sample size, I think it would be a more accurate reflection of how the general public thinks. 19 parents gives a small cross section of the public view. That view might be off, because the 19 parent interviews were conducted during parent-teacher conferences in my room. In my professional experience, the parents that come to conferences are usually the parents that are most involved in their children's education. This is a case in point, I teach 115 students every day, and I had only 19 parents come to conferences on the night in which I conducted my interviews. Less than 20% of parents showed up to discuss their child's education.

I interviewed only six teachers in my district. The criteria that I used in selecting teachers to interview were: a veteran of more than 5 years teaching experience, and the teacher must have or have had in the past a child that is in our district. I did this because I wanted teachers who have experience to base their opinions on. I also wanted to have teachers with children because I felt it was important to have them think with the dual perspective of a parent as well as a teacher. I would next time interview every teacher in the district. I think that this would give a better feeling of the mindset of teachers within Southland Schools. I also would make sure that I got all levels of teaching from kindergarten through high school. I think that different levels may have different opinions. I tried to make sure I got this by interviewing 2

elementary, 2 middle school, and 2 high school teachers, but I think interviewing everybody would be better.

I did interview all the administrators within the district so I think that I got valuable information from them, but next time I would interview the school board member as well. I think that would provide more valuable information. I would interview administrators at districts that are running 45/15, so that I could get their firsthand knowledge. What benefits do they see? What are the positives and negatives? What things would they recommend to a district considering a change? What has worked and what has not worked? What convinced them to make the switch? How did they communicate it to the community? Are they going to stay with it? These are just a few of the questions that I would want to ask.

Next time I think I would try to tape the interviews, that way I could try to remove a potential problem of me taking notes.

I truly believe that it is difficult to conduct great research when you are doing something else. In my life I have many different things that pull me in different directions. My family needs time with me and I need time with them. My number one job is to be a husband and father, and to do that I need time. My second job is my chosen profession, to be a teacher I need time to prepare, correct, plan, and teach. My job as teacher comes with many other responsibilities also. Social Studies Department Chairman, Calendar Committee, Building Staff Development Committee, District Staff Development Committee, Site Team, District Advisory Committee, and Chief Negotiator are just some of the different things I am doing during my week at school. All of these require some amount of time, not daily, and sometimes not even weekly, but they all pull me away from other things. My job as a student has to come after these, and part of my job as a student now is to try to conduct research. I think that the best research is

conducted by professional researchers. They have been trained to do the research, they are paid to do the research, and they have the time to do the research. Professional researchers probably would not make the mistakes that I have made during this project. I am attached to this research because it is an important issue to me, but that attachment might cause me to overlook things. It might cause me to make mistakes, and maybe the detachment of a professional researcher would provide more accurate research.

Are There Any Spin-offs, Or Other Topics That Came Up?

Other topics that came to my mind while doing this research were, should the length of the school year be longer? This paper does not address this issue. It simply is trying to determine the perceptions of Southland School considering a balanced calendar based upon a 45/15 model. Another topic that I would find interesting is does YRE improve achievement scores? One more topic would be how 45/15 affects small rural agricultural based communities. It would great to find several communities that fit these criteria, and to then do a case study on them. Another topic that would be interesting, but very difficult would be why people are opposed to changing the educational system.

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Appendix A

Research Permission Statement

Southland District 500 – High School & Middle School
203 2nd Street N.W. ~ Adams, Minnesota 55909

“HOME OF THE REBELS”

December 5, 2016

To Whom It May Concern:

Ethan Riggan, a teacher at Southland Public Schools, came to my office to obtain my permission for a series of short interviews with three different groups that are all connected with Southland Public Schools. Ethan asked permission to conduct these interviews as a part of his Capstone Project for a Masters in Educational Leadership from Winona State University. Ethan will inform all of the interviewees that this project is for his Capstone Project, and it is not an official set of questions from Southland Public Schools or the School Board of ISD 500. Ethan will be interviewing parents, teachers, and school administrators. I have granted Ethan said permission to conduct his research.

Sincerely,

Jeff Sampson
Superintendent
Southland Public Schools

Appendix B

Consent Statement

Would you mind if I asked you about your opinion on a current issue in education? I am writing a capstone paper, like a thesis for my masters, and I am researching the advantages/disadvantages of the 45-15 school calendar. This is NOT A DISTRICT inquiry; this is just from me and for my research paper. I will not write down your name and the answers/opinions you give me will be totally confidential. I will be writing a few notes. Having said all of this, would you be willing to answer a few questions?

45-15 calendar: 45 days (9 weeks) of instruction, followed by 15 days (3 weeks) of vacation/intersession.

Appendix C

Parent/Teacher Conference Survey

Consent Statement

Read to parents:

Would you mind if I asked you about your opinion on a current issue in education?

I am writing a capstone paper, like a thesis for my masters, and I am researching the advantages/disadvantages of the 45-15 school calendar. This is NOT A DISTRICT inquiry; this is just from me and for my research paper. I will not write down your name and the answers/opinions you give me will be totally confidential. I will be writing a few notes. Having said all of this, would you be willing to answer a few questions?

45-15 calendar: 45 days (9 weeks) of instruction, followed by 15 days (3 weeks) of vacation/intersession.

Questions:

1. Have you heard of the 45-15 school calendar?
2. What are your initial thoughts?
3. What disadvantages/concerns do you have about 45-15?
4. What advantages/positives do you see with 45-15?
5. Would it work for your family?
6. Do think that Southland would benefit from moving to a 45-15?

Appendix D

Teacher Interview

Consent Statement

Read to teachers:

Would you mind if I asked you about your opinion on a current issue in education?

I am writing a capstone paper, like a thesis for my masters, and I am researching the advantages/disadvantages of the 45-15 school calendar. This is NOT A DISTRICT inquiry; this is just from me and for my research paper. I will not write down your name and the answers/opinions you give me will be totally confidential. I will be writing a few notes. Having said all of this, would you be willing to answer a few questions?

45-15 calendar: 45 days (9 weeks) of instruction, followed by 15 days (3 weeks) of vacation/intersession.

Questions for Teachers:

#1— Do you know of any schools that are operating YRE, example 45/15, if so which schools and what are they running?

#2—Based upon your years of teaching experience would YRE be a benefit to reducing summer setback?

#3—Based upon your years of teaching experience would going to YRE, i.e. 45/15 improve teacher and student morale?

#4—Looking at extra-curricular activities, what issues or concerns should be considered with a 45/15 calendar?

#5—When thinking about the local economy, what issues or concerns does a 45/15 calendar raise?

#6—Do you think that Southland Schools would benefit from moving to a 45/15? Why or why not?

Appendix E

Administrator Interview

Consent Statement

Read to Administrators:

Would you mind if I asked you about your opinion on a current issue in education?

I am writing a capstone paper, like a thesis for my masters, and I am researching the advantages/disadvantages of the 45-15 school calendar. This is NOT A DISTRICT inquiry; this is just from me and for my research paper. I will not write down your name and the answers/opinions you give me will be totally confidential. I will be writing a few notes. Having said all of this, would you be willing to answer a few questions?

45-15 calendar: 45 days (9 weeks) of instruction, followed by 15 days (3 weeks) of vacation/intersession.

Questions for Administrators:

#1— Do you know of any schools that are operating YRE, example 45/15, if so which schools and what are they running?

#2—Based upon your years of educational experience, would YRE be a benefit to reducing summer setback

#3—Based upon your years of educational experience, would going to YRE, i.e. 45/15 improve teacher and student morale

#4—Looking at extra-curricular activities, what issues or concerns should be considered with a 45/15 calendar?

#5—When thinking about the local economy, what issues or concerns does a 45/15 calendar raise?

#6—Do you think that Southland Schools would benefit from moving to a 45/15? Why or why not?

#7—Because of your unique position, what are the hurdles that you see, if Southland was to try to move to YRE, i.e. 45/15? (Economic, extra-curricular, and facilities wise.)

#8—Based upon your professional journals, conferences, and conversations with other district administrators what are you hearing are the pros and cons of YRE

Appendix F

Parent Responses

Parent/Teacher Conference Survey

Read to parents:

Would you mind if I asked you about your opinion on a current issue in education?

I am writing a capstone paper, like a thesis for my masters, and I am researching the advantages/disadvantages of the 45-15 school calendar. This is NOT A DISTRICT inquiry, this is just from me and for my research paper. I will not write down your name and the answers/opinions you give me will be totally confidential. I will be writing a few notes. Having said all of this, would you be willing to answer a few questions?

45-15 calendar: 45 days (9 weeks) of instruction, followed by 15 days (3 weeks) of vacation/intersession.

1. Have you heard of the 45-15 school calendar?
Yes
2. What are your initial thoughts?
I love that—a bit longer but with more breaks
3. What disadvantages/concerns do you have about 45-15?
Sports? Nothing really—No air conditioning, too long for kids?
4. What advantages/positives do you see with 45-15?
Retention—burn-out for kids and teachers
5. Would it work for your family?
Very well—husband travels—would work for us—older kids
6. Do think that Southland would benefit from moving to a 45-15?
Yes—my friends would work well

(Parent 1)

Parent/Teacher Conference Survey

Read to parents:

Would you mind if I asked you about your opinion on a current issue in education?

I am writing a capstone paper, like a thesis for my masters, and I am researching the advantages/disadvantages of the 45-15 school calendar. This is NOT A DISTRICT inquiry, this is just from me and for my research paper. I will not write down your name and the answers/opinions you give me will be totally confidential. I will be writing a few notes. Having said all of this, would you be willing to answer a few questions?

45-15 calendar: 45 days (9 weeks) of instruction, followed by 15 days (3 weeks) of vacation/intersession.

1. Have you heard of the 45-15 school calendar?
Yes
2. What are your initial thoughts?
There are positives and negatives
3. What disadvantages/concerns do you have about 45-15?
Less of a summer break, sports practices, day care issues
4. What advantages/positives do you see with 45-15?
Shorter break to lose info—refreshed—might be nice for families
5. Would it work for your family?
Yes
6. Do think that Southland would benefit from moving to a 45-15?
Yes

(Parent 2)

Parent/Teacher Conference Survey

Read to parents:

Would you mind if I asked you about your opinion on a current issue in education?

I am writing a capstone paper, like a thesis for my masters, and I am researching the advantages/disadvantages of the 45-15 school calendar. This is NOT A DISTRICT inquiry, this is just from me and for my research paper. I will not write down your name and the answers/opinions you give me will be totally confidential. I will be writing a few notes. Having said all of this, would you be willing to answer a few questions?

45-15 calendar: 45 days (9 weeks) of instruction, followed by 15 days (3 weeks) of vacation/intersession.

1. Have you heard of the 45-15 school calendar?

Yes

2. What are your initial thoughts?

Urban areas—great, rural areas—poor—good but not for here

3. What disadvantages/concerns do you have about 45-15?

Rural area, summers are very busy, “not summer like we think of it”

4. What advantages/positives do you see with 45-15?

Structured routine allows for planned vacations during year—appointments easier

5. Would it work for your family?

No—(emphatic)

6. Do think that Southland would benefit from moving to a 45-15?

No, beginning school before Labor Day—takes away State Fair—Albert Lea 4-H and FFA—leader—taken away

(Parent 3)

Parent/Teacher Conference Survey

Read to parents:

Would you mind if I asked you about your opinion on a current issue in education?

I am writing a capstone paper, like a thesis for my masters, and I am researching the advantages/disadvantages of the 45-15 school calendar. This is NOT A DISTRICT inquiry, this is just from me and for my research paper. I will not write down your name and the answers/opinions you give me will be totally confidential. I will be writing a few notes. Having said all of this, would you be willing to answer a few questions?

45-15 calendar: 45 days (9 weeks) of instruction, followed by 15 days (3 weeks) of vacation/intersession.

1. Have you heard of the 45-15 school calendar?
Yes
2. What are your initial thoughts?
Don't care for it
3. What disadvantages/concerns do you have about 45-15?
"Summer fever"—hard to focus during summer, summer jobs for college, summer employers??
4. What advantages/positives do you see with 45-15?
Small or little positives, retention of education
5. Would it work for your family?
No
6. Do think that Southland would benefit from moving to a 45-15?
No, air conditioning, a facilities thing

(Parent 4)

Parent/Teacher Conference Survey

Read to parents:

Would you mind if I asked you about your opinion on a current issue in education?

I am writing a capstone paper, like a thesis for my masters, and I am researching the advantages/disadvantages of the 45-15 school calendar. This is NOT A DISTRICT inquiry, this is just from me and for my research paper. I will not write down your name and the answers/opinions you give me will be totally confidential. I will be writing a few notes. Having said all of this, would you be willing to answer a few questions?

45-15 calendar: 45 days (9 weeks) of instruction, followed by 15 days (3 weeks) of vacation/intersession.

1. Have you heard of the 45-15 school calendar?
Yes
2. What are your initial thoughts?
Open to it
3. What disadvantages/concerns do you have about 45-15?
Jobs—summer jobs to earn college money—Fall sports
4. What advantages/positives do you see with 45-15?
Better retention, family vacations-freedom during “old school year”
5. Would it work for your family?
I think so
6. Do think that Southland would benefit from moving to a 45-15?
Not sure, Legion baseball and summer sports?

(Parent 5)

Parent/Teacher Conference Survey

Read to parents:

Would you mind if I asked you about your opinion on a current issue in education?

I am writing a capstone paper, like a thesis for my masters, and I am researching the advantages/disadvantages of the 45-15 school calendar. This is NOT A DISTRICT inquiry, this is just from me and for my research paper. I will not write down your name and the answers/opinions you give me will be totally confidential. I will be writing a few notes. Having said all of this, would you be willing to answer a few questions?

45-15 calendar: 45 days (9 weeks) of instruction, followed by 15 days (3 weeks) of vacation/intersession.

1. Have you heard of the 45-15 school calendar?
Yes
2. What are your initial thoughts?
Mixed—I know families like it—neutral stance—would listen to good
3. What disadvantages/concerns do you have about 45-15?
Time-off in the summer
4. What advantages/positives do you see with 45-15?
Retention—planned vacation different times
5. Would it work for your family?
Yes, better if younger
6. Do think that Southland would benefit from moving to a 45-15?
Maybe not—yes it would

(Parent 6)

Parent/Teacher Conference Survey

Read to parents:

Would you mind if I asked you about your opinion on a current issue in education?

I am writing a capstone paper, like a thesis for my masters, and I am researching the advantages/disadvantages of the 45-15 school calendar. This is NOT A DISTRICT inquiry, this is just from me and for my research paper. I will not write down your name and the answers/opinions you give me will be totally confidential. I will be writing a few notes. Having said all of this, would you be willing to answer a few questions?

45-15 calendar: 45 days (9 weeks) of instruction, followed by 15 days (3 weeks) of vacation/intersession.

1. Have you heard of the 45-15 school calendar?
Yes
2. What are your initial thoughts?
I would not like it, know kids/families in it and they love it, out of the norm
3. What disadvantages/concerns do you have about 45-15?
Day care issues—for the younger kids
4. What advantages/positives do you see with 45-15?
Breaks/prevent burn out
5. Would it work for your family?
Yeah,
6. Do think that Southland would benefit from moving to a 45-15?
No, to many strong willed parents—

(Parent 7)

Parent/Teacher Conference Survey

Read to parents:

Would you mind if I asked you about your opinion on a current issue in education?

I am writing a capstone paper, like a thesis for my masters, and I am researching the advantages/disadvantages of the 45-15 school calendar. This is NOT A DISTRICT inquiry, this is just from me and for my research paper. I will not write down your name and the answers/opinions you give me will be totally confidential. I will be writing a few notes. Having said all of this, would you be willing to answer a few questions?

45-15 calendar: 45 days (9 weeks) of instruction, followed by 15 days (3 weeks) of vacation/intersession.

1. Have you heard of the 45-15 school calendar?

Yes

2. What are your initial thoughts?

Good for kids—

Parent home for summer?

3. What disadvantages/concerns do you have about 45-15?

Family aspects—if not on same calendar would be difficult

Husbands schedule

4. What advantages/positives do you see with 45-15?

Retention—structure – behavior especially

5. Would it work for your family?

We could make it work—not in daycare

All on same schedule

6. Do think that Southland would benefit from moving to a 45-15?

Do not, hard one to sell

Know of a student at Longfellow—different schedule the family loves it

(Parent 8)

Parent/Teacher Conference Survey

Read to parents:

Would you mind if I asked you about your opinion on a current issue in education?

I am writing a capstone paper, like a thesis for my masters, and I am researching the advantages/disadvantages of the 45-15 school calendar. This is NOT A DISTRICT inquiry, this is just from me and for my research paper. I will not write down your name and the answers/opinions you give me will be totally confidential. I will be writing a few notes. Having said all of this, would you be willing to answer a few questions?

45-15 calendar: 45 days (9 weeks) of instruction, followed by 15 days (3 weeks) of vacation/intersession.

1. Have you heard of the 45-15 school calendar?
Yes
2. What are your initial thoughts?
Good thing
3. What disadvantages/concerns do you have about 45-15?
Day care issues—younger kids
Summer break—summer jobs issues
4. What advantages/positives do you see with 45-15?
Retention--routine
5. Would it work for your family?
Yes—would have to make it work
6. Do think that Southland would benefit from moving to a 45-15?
Possible—more yes than no—I think so

(Parent 9)

Parent/Teacher Conference Survey

Read to parents:

Would you mind if I asked you about your opinion on a current issue in education?

I am writing a capstone paper, like a thesis for my masters, and I am researching the advantages/disadvantages of the 45-15 school calendar. This is NOT A DISTRICT inquiry, this is just from me and for my research paper. I will not write down your name and the answers/opinions you give me will be totally confidential. I will be writing a few notes. Having said all of this, would you be willing to answer a few questions?

45-15 calendar: 45 days (9 weeks) of instruction, followed by 15 days (3 weeks) of vacation/intersession.

1. Have you heard of the 45-15 school calendar?
No
2. What are your initial thoughts?
NONE
3. What disadvantages/concerns do you have about 45-15?
NONE
4. What advantages/positives do you see with 45-15?
Set schedule--routine
5. Would it work for your family?
Yes
6. Do think that Southland would benefit from moving to a 45-15?
??

(Parents 10)

Parent/Teacher Conference Survey

Read to parents:

Would you mind if I asked you about your opinion on a current issue in education?

I am writing a capstone paper, like a thesis for my masters, and I am researching the advantages/disadvantages of the 45-15 school calendar. This is NOT A DISTRICT inquiry, this is just from me and for my research paper. I will not write down your name and the answers/opinions you give me will be totally confidential. I will be writing a few notes. Having said all of this, would you be willing to answer a few questions?

45-15 calendar: 45 days (9 weeks) of instruction, followed by 15 days (3 weeks) of vacation/intersession.

1. Have you heard of the 45-15 school calendar?
Yes
2. What are your initial thoughts?
Excellent
3. What disadvantages/concerns do you have about 45-15?
Not really
Special needs students
Daycare
Just elementary
School need to be
??
4. What advantages/positives do you see with 45-15?
Positive about breaks
Retention
Young parents
Teacher burn-out, happier, patience, refreshed
5. Would it work for your family?
Yes—no big deal (blake good)
6. Do think that Southland would benefit from moving to a 45-15?
I don't see why not
-negative side—older community
Adams convenience—viewed it

(Parents 11)

Parent/Teacher Conference Survey

Read to parents:

Would you mind if I asked you about your opinion on a current issue in education?

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45-15 calendar: 45 days (9 weeks) of instruction, followed by 15 days (3 weeks) of vacation/intersession.

1. Have you heard of the 45-15 school calendar?
Yes
2. What are your initial thoughts?
NONE
3. What disadvantages/concerns do you have about 45-15?
Air conditioning
Day care
4. What advantages/positives do you see with 45-15?
Breaks better
5. Would it work for your family?
Probably—bus driver—so would have to
6. Do think that Southland would benefit from moving to a 45-15?
Not sure
Could be some issues

(Parents 12)

Parent/Teacher Conference Survey

Read to parents:

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45-15 calendar: 45 days (9 weeks) of instruction, followed by 15 days (3 weeks) of vacation/intersession.

1. Have you heard of the 45-15 school calendar?
Yes
2. What are your initial thoughts?
Not for and not against
3. What disadvantages/concerns do you have about 45-15?
*Messes up summertime
farmers*
4. What advantages/positives do you see with 45-15?
*Breaks maybe
Retention
More curriculum time*
5. Would it work for your family?
Not ideal
6. Do think that Southland would benefit from moving to a 45-15?
Not for sure

(Parent 13)

Parent/Teacher Conference Survey

Read to parents:

Would you mind if I asked you about your opinion on a current issue in education?

I am writing a capstone paper, like a thesis for my masters, and I am researching the advantages/disadvantages of the 45-15 school calendar. This is NOT A DISTRICT inquiry, this is just from me and for my research paper. I will not write down your name and the answers/opinions you give me will be totally confidential. I will be writing a few notes. Having said all of this, would you be willing to answer a few questions?

45-15 calendar: 45 days (9 weeks) of instruction, followed by 15 days (3 weeks) of vacation/intersession.

1. Have you heard of the 45-15 school calendar?
Yes
2. What are your initial thoughts?
Work well in urban
Rural work and 4H?
3. What disadvantages/concerns do you have about 45-15?
Different schedules
Air conditioning
Facilities
4. What advantages/positives do you see with 45-15?
Retention?
5. Would it work for your family?
NO—Summer work
6. Do think that Southland would benefit from moving to a 45-15?
Hard push—rural
Has some pros

(Parent 14)

Parent/Teacher Conference Survey

Read to parents:

Would you mind if I asked you about your opinion on a current issue in education?

I am writing a capstone paper, like a thesis for my masters, and I am researching the advantages/disadvantages of the 45-15 school calendar. This is NOT A DISTRICT inquiry, this is just from me and for my research paper. I will not write down your name and the answers/opinions you give me will be totally confidential. I will be writing a few notes. Having said all of this, would you be willing to answer a few questions?

45-15 calendar: 45 days (9 weeks) of instruction, followed by 15 days (3 weeks) of vacation/intersession.

1. Have you heard of the 45-15 school calendar?

Yes

2. What are your initial thoughts?

No-climate

Good weather

3. What disadvantages/concerns do you have about 45-15?

Climate/good weather (I personally think they were thinking of air conditioning)

4. What advantages/positives do you see with 45-15?

Retention—with struggling kids

5. Would it work for your family?

Not really—farming summer

6. Do think that Southland would benefit from moving to a 45-15?

4-day week shot down

IDK

(Parent 15)

Parent/Teacher Conference Survey

Read to parents:

Would you mind if I asked you about your opinion on a current issue in education?

I am writing a capstone paper, like a thesis for my masters, and I am researching the advantages/disadvantages of the 45-15 school calendar. This is NOT A DISTRICT inquiry, this is just from me and for my research paper. I will not write down your name and the answers/opinions you give me will be totally confidential. I will be writing a few notes. Having said all of this, would you be willing to answer a few questions?

45-15 calendar: 45 days (9 weeks) of instruction, followed by 15 days (3 weeks) of vacation/intersession.

1. Have you heard of the 45-15 school calendar?
Yes
2. What are your initial thoughts?
indifferent
3. What disadvantages/concerns do you have about 45-15?
Not get back into learning—too much re-teaching
4. What advantages/positives do you see with 45-15?
Retain more from year to year
5. Would it work for your family?
Yeah, I do
6. Do think that Southland would benefit from moving to a 45-15?
I think it would
Better year long

(Parent 16)

Parent/Teacher Conference Survey

Read to parents:

Would you mind if I asked you about your opinion on a current issue in education?

I am writing a capstone paper, like a thesis for my masters, and I am researching the advantages/disadvantages of the 45-15 school calendar. This is NOT A DISTRICT inquiry, this is just from me and for my research paper. I will not write down your name and the answers/opinions you give me will be totally confidential. I will be writing a few notes. Having said all of this, would you be willing to answer a few questions?

45-15 calendar: 45 days (9 weeks) of instruction, followed by 15 days (3 weeks) of vacation/intersession.

1. Have you heard of the 45-15 school calendar?
Yes
2. What are your initial thoughts?
When I didn't know about it—bad
When I did know about it--good
3. What disadvantages/concerns do you have about 45-15?
Concern from calendar?
Summer break?
4. What advantages/positives do you see with 45-15?
More consistent
retention
5. Would it work for your family?
Too little, too late
6. Do think that Southland would benefit from moving to a 45-15?
Yes-adapt

(Parent 17)

Parent/Teacher Conference Survey

Read to parents:

Would you mind if I asked you about your opinion on a current issue in education?

I am writing a capstone paper, like a thesis for my masters, and I am researching the advantages/disadvantages of the 45-15 school calendar. This is NOT A DISTRICT inquiry, this is just from me and for my research paper. I will not write down your name and the answers/opinions you give me will be totally confidential. I will be writing a few notes. Having said all of this, would you be willing to answer a few questions?

45-15 calendar: 45 days (9 weeks) of instruction, followed by 15 days (3 weeks) of vacation/intersession.

1. Have you heard of the 45-15 school calendar?
Yes
2. What are your initial thoughts?
Good/bad
3. What disadvantages/concerns do you have about 45-15?
Daycare hard
Elementary
4. What advantages/positives do you see with 45-15?
Minority retain issue
High school-need break
5. Would it work for your family?
Early—SAC issue
Now – yes
6. Do think that Southland would benefit from moving to a 45-15?
I think it would

(Parent 18)

Parent/Teacher Conference Survey

Read to parents:

Would you mind if I asked you about your opinion on a current issue in education?

I am writing a capstone paper, like a thesis for my masters, and I am researching the advantages/disadvantages of the 45-15 school calendar. This is NOT A DISTRICT inquiry, this is just from me and for my research paper. I will not write down your name and the answers/opinions you give me will be totally confidential. I will be writing a few notes. Having said all of this, would you be willing to answer a few questions?

45-15 calendar: 45 days (9 weeks) of instruction, followed by 15 days (3 weeks) of vacation/intersession.

1. Have you heard of the 45-15 school calendar?
Yes
2. What are your initial thoughts?
Some good/ some bad
3. What disadvantages/concerns do you have about 45-15?
Daycare
4. What advantages/positives do you see with 45-15?
Loss over summer
Retention of knowledge
5. Would it work for your family?
Yes
6. Do think that Southland would benefit from moving to a 45-15?
IDK—possibly
SAC would help

(Parent 19)

Appendix G

Teacher Responses

Questions for Teachers:

#1— Do you know of any schools that are operating YRE, example 45/15, if so which schools and what are they running?—*Austin—45/15—Rochester Longfellow—45/15*

#2—Based upon your years of teaching experience would YRE be a benefit to reducing summer setback?—*I think it would help summer learning loss for some kids—personally everyone needs shut down time—not sure that 15 is enough—FFA—may affect—could be a positive—full time job issues, summer interaction*

#3—Based, upon your years of teaching experience would going to YRE, i.e. 45/15 improve teacher and student morale?—*ag based community?—no morale would be less—get a break away from some kids—resistance, in my experience 3 yrs—after that then it becomes normal—4 yrs to turn people around to your thinking—parents struggle, not the way we did it*

#4—Looking at extra-curricular activities, what issues or concerns should be considered with a 45/15 calendar?—*sports—softball & baseball move to summer?—FFA beneficial, more contact, showing might be difficult—Iowa FFA is a summer program—MN FFA spring 15 extended day contract*

#5—When thinking about the local economy, what issues or concerns does a 45/15 calendar raise? Ag based economy—dairy, crop, rock picking, livestock—no kid power—change in 7 & 8 grade—extra sports summer programs—big economy, tourist would also be bad—not really us, canning machines, lose workers

#6—Do you think that Southland Schools would benefit from moving to a 45/15? Why or why not?—*No system we have tradition—hard to change—drawbacks outweigh benefits—education up maybe—social & economic down—wouldn't fly here—all year commitment.*

(Teacher 1)

Questions for Teachers:

#1— Do you know of any schools that are operating YRE, example 45/15, if so which schools and what are they running?—*Austin—45/15*

#2—Based upon your years of teaching experience would YRE be a benefit to reducing summer setback?—*I think it would be a huge benefit to students, especially our struggling students. We will be able to check on this with pre-school assessments next year.*

#3—Based, upon your years of teaching experience would going to YRE, i.e. 45/15 improve teacher and student morale?—*I think it would benefit. I wouldn't feel like we were starting over at the beginning of each year.—could be beneficial for vacations, not missing school, Dr. appointments—things like these*

#4—Looking at extra-curricular activities, what issues or concerns should be considered with a 45/15 calendar?—*sports practices & games on days off?*

#5—When thinking about the local economy, what issues or concerns does a 45/15 calendar raise?—*get building ready—day care issues, provide and find for families, SAC could be beefed up to help with this*

#6—Do you think that Southland Schools would benefit from moving to a 45/15? Why or why not?—*Yes, I do, for student regression and for staff & student refreshing—would it help with burn-out? No to YRE, without breaks—this community very conservative—change doesn't go well—needs to be a k-12—district wide thing—if consortium went to it, it would be an easy sell—also much easier if state would make the move*

(Teacher 2)

Questions for Teachers:

#1— Do you know of any schools that are operating YRE, example 45/15, if so which schools and what are they running?—*Sumner—45/15*

#2—Based upon your years of teaching experience would YRE be a benefit to reducing summer setback?—*absolutely, so for it—I wish we would go to –I see teaching in summer school special ed—the help that having the shorter break would help kids retain—I see the regression there, I think that the remedial aspect would be helpful*

#3—Based, upon your years of teaching experience would going to YRE, i.e. 45/15 improve teacher and student morale?—*yes, last couple of weeks a few colleagues say they are getting burned out—spring fever has set in.*

#4—Looking at extra-curricular activities, what issues or concerns should be considered with a 45/15 calendar?—*how would practices & games work on breaks?*

#5—When thinking about the local economy, what issues or concerns does a 45/15 calendar raise?—*parents being able to afford daycare—find enough daycare—using the school aged child care—*

#6—Do you think that Southland Schools would benefit from moving to a 45/15? Why or why not?—*Yes, I would love it regression, refreshing –here rural, Christian, farming, traditional –make it hard to accept—not an easy sell—be hard to get out of routine*

(Teacher 3)

Questions for Teachers:

#1— Do you know of any schools that are operating YRE, example 45/15, if so which schools and what are they running?—*Austin 45/15—couple of schools—3 classrooms at k-center*

#2—Based upon your years of teaching experience would YRE be a benefit to reducing summer setback?—*I don't think so—I know how many kids forget stuff over the weekend---3 weeks off won't necessarily benefit them—they still forget, don't know how much time is saved*

#3—Based, upon your years of teaching experience would going to YRE, i.e. 45/15 improve teacher and student morale?—*in the middle of the year students-yes-Teachers-I don't think it would have much of an effect—relatives wouldn't be off at same time—spouse teacher, if spouse not teacher might be nice*

#4—Looking at extra-curricular activities, what issues or concerns should be considered with a 45/15 calendar?—*Fall sports—school starting early 2-a-days hard—volleyball more humid late summer issue—concentration not as good, classroom focus tougher*

#5—When thinking about the local economy, what issues or concerns does a 45/15 calendar raise?—*school time more in summer, kids working –summer jobs—swimming pool shut down earlier? Before school/after school convenience store ok—3 weeks off maybe hurting, changing when money spent*

#6—Do you think that Southland Schools would benefit from moving to a 45/15? Why or why not?—*a lot of push back—we have a lot of very vocal people—teachers don't do enough work already—3-week break would cause friction
Day care issues in middle of winter--?
Spending more money—summer shut down buildings—not as much 3 weeks off
Kids & teachers could be more refreshed coming out of 3 week break*

(Teacher 4)

Questions for Teachers:

#1— Do you know of any schools that are operating YRE, example 45/15, if so which schools and what are they running?—*Austin 45/15—Summer*

#2—Based upon your years of teaching experience would YRE be a benefit to reducing summer setback?—*I can see when it would be helpful*
Past tradition difficult to make switch

#3—Based, upon your years of teaching experience would going to YRE, i.e. 45/15 improve teacher and student morale?—*not sure—for so long we have had 3 months to recharge—maybe it would be hinder*
w/o experience don't know

#4—Looking at extra-curricular activities, what issues or concerns should be considered with a 45/15 calendar?—*kind of put a crimp in sports, practices and games when off? Do they come in for it?? Summer fairs –different arrangements*

#5—When thinking about the local economy, what issues or concerns does a 45/15 calendar raise?—*Ag environment—spring fall summer hay bailing—*
Hard to get student workers on farm
Austin-summer workers, students might not get hired

#6—Do you think that Southland Schools would benefit from moving to a 45/15? Why or why not?—*I don't see it being an advantage for southland—not advantageous*
Reteach in fall—not a lot in high school, maybe more so in elementary
As a whole—traditional

(Teacher 5)

Questions for Teachers:

#1— Do you know of any schools that are operating YRE, example 45/15, if so which schools and what are they running?—*Rochester 1 45/15--Austin 45/15—Sumner*

#2—Based upon your years of teaching experience would YRE be a benefit to reducing summer setback?—*absolutely do, it would benefit!!*

#3—Based, upon your years of teaching experience would going to YRE, i.e. 45/15 improve teacher and student morale?—*YES, to both, both teachers and students get burned out Having a break in between helpful
Less absenteeism—both teachers and students
Vacations during breaks not school time
As professionals—feel refreshed—also refreshing classes, changes to curriculum, make adjustments, and add to class—helps to keep track of adjustments—not lost over a years' worth of teaching*

#4—Looking at extra-curricular activities, what issues or concerns should be considered with a 45/15 calendar?—*how would district/school respect down time
Working with other districts—winter would be tough, would those students get a break?*

#5—When thinking about the local economy, what issues or concerns does a 45/15 calendar raise?—*up north-problem, around here Jellystone-nothing
Farming a little impact
3 weeks in spring—summer down time*

#6—Do you think that Southland Schools would benefit from moving to a 45/15? Why or why not?—*Yes, burnout-students with tons of opportunities would help w/ teachers and student burnout—teachers—here spread thin 3 or 4 committees a break would help with that*

(Teacher 6)

Appendix H

Administrator Responses

Questions for Administrators:

#1— Do you know of any schools that are operating YRE, example 45/15, if so which schools and what are they running? --*in Rochester one school 45/15—not many*

#2—Based upon your years of educational experience, would YRE be a benefit to reducing summer setback?—*I think it would—I don't have research-at upper level not as much-classes different year to year—more remediation needed not necessarily summer loss--elementary more loss-lang, math—as k-12 principal a good chunk of 1st quarter review—many variables.*

#3—Based upon your years of educational experience, would going to YRE, i.e. 45/15 improve teacher and student morale?—*I think it might, especially March & April—highest Principal to staff discipline in May—should help with this—students probably similar --if staff against will always find issues with it --3 wks off, how quick to get back to groove--?would sum total of review time be => old system*

#4—Looking at extra-curricular activities, what issues or concerns should be considered with a 45/15 calendar?—*if activities will happen during 15 off, if yes, transportation, practice times—parent feedback, supposedly time-off but still at school, why not in school—needs answers*

#5—When thinking about the local economy, what issues or concerns does a 45/15 calendar raise?—*ag economy —planting done in spring, in school, same w/fall harvest—really probably not much with student labor—maybe hay season/bailing --maybe a shortage of student workers in summer break*

#6—Do you think that Southland Schools would benefit from moving to a 45/15? Why or why not?—*not sure—no research looked by him—if research says good for kids with proper implementation then yes --if no research to back then no --w/o newer facilities HVAC—a/c probably not*

#7—Because of your unique position, what are the hurdles that you see, if Southland was to try to move to YRE, i.e. 45/15? (Economic, extra-curricular, and facilities wise.)—*we would need convincing arguments that it is best for kids, because for some a huge adjustment, some really pretty easy --staff buy-in—massage/mold work with --facilities—hvac a/c*

#8—Based upon your professional journals, conferences, and conversations with other district administrators what are you hearing are the pros and cons of YRE?—*hearing that natural, logical assumptions are not always as good as supposed to be—i.e. retention—classroom teacher and instruction matters more*
--similar to 4-day week, supposed to save 20% on transportation/energy costs —reality is less.

(Administrator 1)

Questions for Administrators:

#1— Do you know of any schools that are operating YRE, example 45/15, if so which schools and what are they running?—*Sumner in Austin 45/15—K-center one section—Rochester—Longfellow 45/15*

#2—Based upon your years of educational experience, would YRE be a benefit to reducing summer setback?—*Yes-continuation of education, certain select student pop 30% Free/Reduced—ELL—benefits—much bigger, at Sumner 10 days of ½ day academy during intersession—about 80% attendance—not mandated, but strongly suggested—1/2 more projects, targeting math, language*

#3—Based upon your years of educational experience, would going to YRE, i.e. 45/15 improve teacher and student morale?—*Yes—it give rejuvenation—very good—staff that work in it loved it—he worked with them.—helps with students not missing as much school*

#4—Looking at extra-curricular activities, what issues or concerns should be considered with a 45/15 calendar?—*look at rest of conference that you are in—try to follow conference as much as possible—those involved would have to attend on breaks—parents, students*

#5—When thinking about the local economy, what issues or concerns does a 45/15 calendar raise?—*farm community—more traditional—believes it would be an incredible fight—mentioned once—very difficult*

#6—Do you think that Southland Schools would benefit from moving to a 45/15? Why or why not?—*overall no, too rural a community, pose problems and challenges—mixed on pros/cons—“but here NO”*

#7—Because of your unique position, what are the hurdles that you see, if Southland was to try to move to YRE, i.e. 45/15? (Economic, extra-curricular, and facilities wise.)—*1.tradition—mind set of people 2, educate people on pros/cons—reasons --push back or back lash about the change could be big*

#8—Based upon your professional journals, conferences, and conversations with other district administrators what are you hearing are the pros and cons of YRE?—*Pros—staff and student rejuvenation, not as much re-teach, time to plan around the schedule Cons—looks different—a different lens needed, not easy to get people to see it that way, extra-circulars, and a/c*

(Administrator 2)

Questions for Administrators:

#1— Do you know of any schools that are operating YRE, example 45/15, if so which schools and what are they running?—*Sumner in Austin 45/15—Rochester—Longfellow 45/15—Albert Lea??*

#2—Based upon your years of educational experience, would YRE be a benefit to reducing summer setback?—*I believe so, get time at beginning of year—to get back into groove—month? 3 weeks? Now less—from the year before*

#3—Based upon your years of educational experience, would going to YRE, i.e. 45/15 improve teacher and student morale?—*breaks for “mental health” for both teachers and students—looking at calendar now fall is good until Jan—then it gets bad a long time—for staff and students—more discipline issues—then spring gets better—no studies to support, but what I have seen over my years*

#4—Looking at extra-curricular activities, what issues or concerns should be considered with a 45/15 calendar?—*4-H maybe some issues, maybe summer programming—change to the mindset of people that this is ok—might affect community events in summer??—look different, Fall--now people playoffs then break—not a lot of difference—Spring/summer break—maybe baseball, softball, golf shift to summer*

#5—When thinking about the local economy, what issues or concerns does a 45/15 calendar raise?—*based on Ag calendar—farm families gotten smaller size and less of them—MN wise, trips year round not just summer—resort lobby in MN STRONG—not a huge impact, just a different look*

#6—Do you think that Southland Schools would benefit from moving to a 45/15? Why or why not?—*not set up for it, buildings/facilities wise—I have liked idea, mental health breaks, morale, etc...--I think so, concern about lack of parent engagement—maybe consistent 45/15 keeps kids moving forward*

#7—Because of your unique position, what are the hurdles that you see, if Southland was to try to move to YRE, i.e. 45/15? (Economic, extra-curricular, and facilities wise.)—*facilities—no contract issues, just need to have teachers on board with it--***mindset-change is hard, big, difficult*

#8—Based upon your professional journals, conferences, and conversations with other district administrators what are you hearing are the pros and cons of YRE?—
Pros—doing the current not moving test scores so lets try, kids on lower end of spectrum, probably better for them—Free/reduced pop remediation and title money
Cons—facilities—need for climate controlled, mindset hurdle in the community, mindset of staff
Can say scores will improve—no—I see it being better

(Administrator 3)