

Senators Michel, Wiger and Hottinger introduced—
S.F. No. 3203: Referred to the Committee on Education.

1.1 A bill for an act
1.2 relating to education finance; increasing the length of the school year by five
1.3 weeks; repealing the Labor Day start; amending Minnesota Statutes 2004, section
1.4 120A.41; repealing Minnesota Statutes 2005 Supplement, section 120A.40.

1.5 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MINNESOTA:

1.6 Section 1. Minnesota Statutes 2004, section 120A.41, is amended to read:

1.7 **120A.41 LENGTH OF SCHOOL YEAR; DAYS OF INSTRUCTION.**

1.8 (a) For fiscal years 2007 and earlier, a school board's annual school calendar must
1.9 include at least the number of days of student instruction the board formally adopted as its
1.10 school calendar at the beginning of the 1996-1997 school year.

1.11 (b) For fiscal year 2008, a school board's annual school calendar must include at
1.12 least 180 days of student instruction and at least ten noninstructional days devoted to
1.13 parent-teacher conferences, teacher workshops, or other staff development activities.
1.14 For fiscal years 2009 and later, the annual school calendar must be increased by five
1.15 instructional days and five noninstructional days per year until the annual school calendar
1.16 includes at least 200 days of student instruction and at least 30 noninstructional days.

1.17 **Sec. 2. REPEALER.**

1.18 Minnesota Statutes 2005 Supplement, section 120A.40, is repealed for fiscal year
1.19 2008 and later.

APPENDIX

Repealed Minnesota Statutes: 06-6401

120A.40 SCHOOL CALENDAR.

(a) Except for learning programs during summer, flexible learning year programs authorized under sections 124D.12 to 124D.127, and learning year programs under section 124D.128, a district must not commence an elementary or secondary school year before Labor Day, except as provided under paragraph (b). Days devoted to teachers' workshops may be held before Labor Day. Districts that enter into cooperative agreements are encouraged to adopt similar school calendars.

(b) A district may begin the school year on any day before Labor Day to accommodate a construction or remodeling project of \$400,000 or more affecting a district school facility. A school district that agrees to the same schedule with a school district in an adjoining state also may begin the school year before Labor Day as authorized under this paragraph.

Minnesota Association of School Administrators (MASA)

Proposal to Extend the School Year

FACT SHEET

Rationale

If Minnesota is serious about competing globally and creating a world class education for our children, it is imperative that students spend more time in school and that teachers have more time to engage in high-level professional development and classroom planning.

There simply is not enough time in our current school year to do the job schools can and should be doing. In fact, the amount of time available for teaching and learning has actually eroded over the last several years. State tests require four to six days of school time, parents are increasingly willing to take their children out of school for vacations, and strong academic and extracurricular programs can require time away from school for their activities. The result is less time available to do academic work.

Our goal is to give students enough time in school so that the best students can truly excel, average students can be prepared to compete in a global economy and all students can achieve basic literacy, numeracy and life skills. Our current system does not allow students enough time to learn what society needs and expects them to learn.

Most people would agree that the more time you spend practicing and learning something, the better you get. According to Jack Jennings, president of the Center on Education Policy in Washington, D.C., who praises this effort, "There is enormous pressure in this country to raise test scores and increase graduation rates. This proposal is trying to force a debate on whether we are going to take education seriously or not."

What is being proposed?

Minnesota should extend its current 172-day school year to 200 days for students and 230 days for teachers¹. The transition should be made over a four-year period to enable schools and state systems to properly implement this change. We expect that our education system would be appropriately funded so that school staff would be properly compensated for their work.

Why should we extend the school year?

Consider this:

- ▶ Minnesota is the only state with neither a minimum number of days nor a minimum number of instructional hours. Minnesota's average is 172 days.
- ▶ The majority of other states require 180 days in school (one requires 185)².
- ▶ Many of our global competitors have school years that are 10 to 30 percent longer than ours. Examples include China at 230, Japan and Australia at 210, and England at 190³.
- ▶ Teachers are continually being asked to do more and test more—but with no increase in time available to complete the tasks or analyze the test data.
- ▶ Minnesota's current teacher year averages 185 days. However, after taking out days for parent-teacher conferences, pre-school preparation, grade marking and year-end wrap-up, there are only a few days left for curriculum planning, professional development, test analysis and development of individual student instructional strategies.

¹The 52-week year has a total of 260 work days possible. This would provide teachers six weeks of vacation and holiday time per year, which is typical for the average knowledge worker in the United States.

²Source: Education Commission of the States.

³Source: National Association for Year Round Education (NAYRE).

What would be accomplished?

With an extended school year, we would expect:

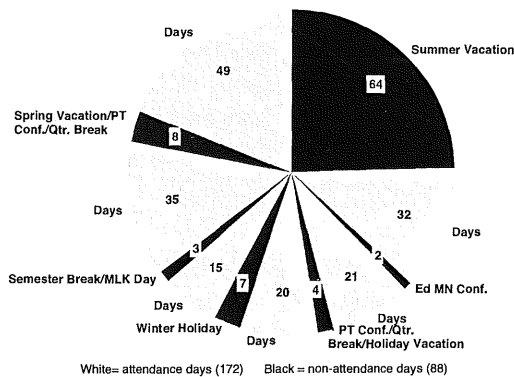
- ▶ Students to post significant gains on proficiency tests
- ▶ Students to have more time on task, resulting in a deeper understanding of concepts and ideas in core subjects such as reading, math, social studies and science
- ▶ Teachers with enough time to complete their course syllabi
- ▶ Time for remediation and extra support for students who struggle, as well as time for in-school enrichment for students who excel
- ▶ Increased opportunities for teachers to teach to the unique needs of individual students, to analyze test data and to engage in high-quality professional development

How would it be implemented?

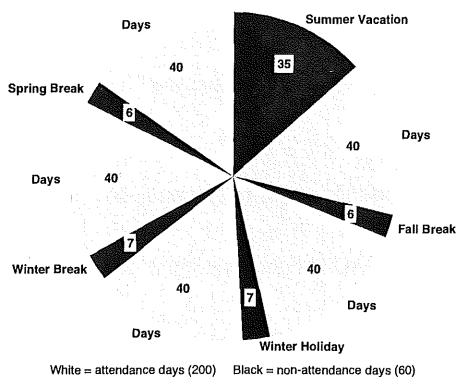
The transition would occur over a four-year period. Each year, seven days would be added for students and an additional three to four days for teachers, until the goal of 200 days for students and 230 days for teachers is met.

This change would also give us an opportunity to move to a more balanced calendar. The additional time would come out of current school year breaks, as well as summer break. A large body of evidence points to “summer learning loss,” particularly among our neediest learners. By changing the calendar to reflect shorter and more frequent breaks, we eliminate the learning loss, reduce the opportunity for high-risk behaviors that occur during the long summer break, and spread planning time for teachers throughout the school year.

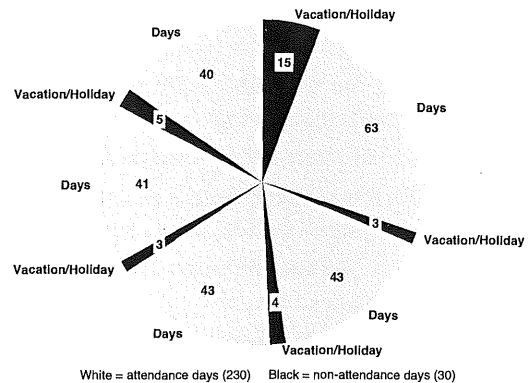
Example of Current 172 Day Calendar



Example of 200 Day Student Calendar



Example of 230 Day Teacher Work Year Calendar



For more information about the Extended School Year proposal, contact Charlie Kyte, Executive Director of MASA, at 651.645.6272 or ckyte@mnasa.org.



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Proposal to Extend the School Year

Minnesota Association of School
Administrators (MASA)

March 2006

Rationale

- Global competition requires more time for learning and more time for planning
- School year has eroded due to mandates and other choices
- Are we going to take education seriously?

Proposal

- Extend current 172-day school year to 200 days for students and 230 days for teachers
- Phase-in transition over four years
- Appropriately fund system and compensate staff

Why extend the school year?

- Minnesota is the only state without minimum days or minimum hours (average 172 days)
- Majority of other states require 180 days
- Global competitors' years are 10-30% longer than ours
 - China-230; Japan and Australia-210; England-190
- Teachers being asked to do more with less time

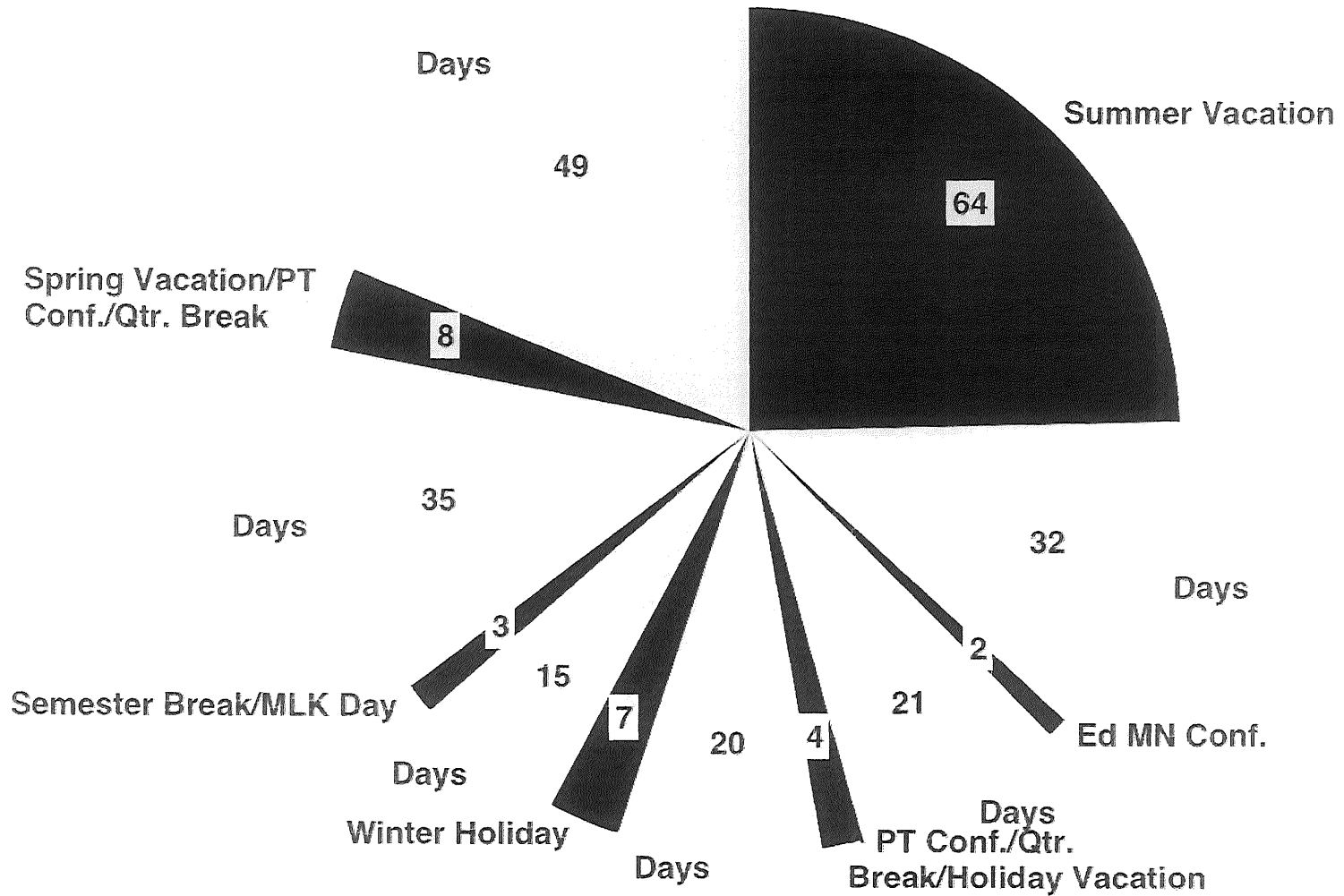
What would we gain?

- Significant student gains on tests
- More student time on task - deeper knowledge
- Time to complete course syllabi
- Time for both remediation and enrichment
- Time for teachers to: address individual student needs, analyze test data, engage in professional development

How would we implement it?

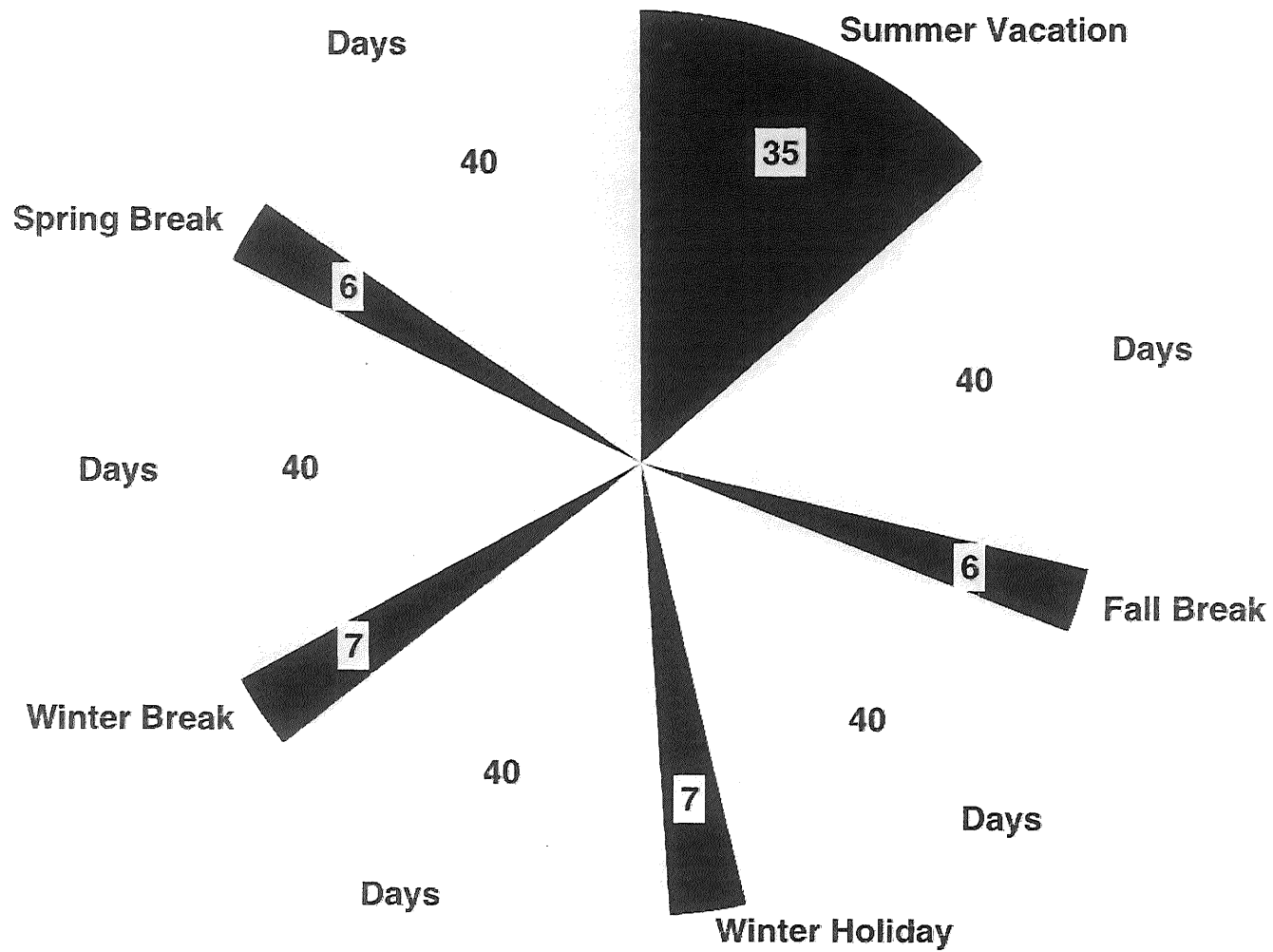
- Phase in over five years
 - In the first year, set the student days at a true 180 days, and the teacher days at 190.
 - Over the next 4 years, add 5 students days each year, plus 5 teacher days each year
- Move to a balanced calendar
 - Eliminate summer learning loss
 - Reduce summer high-risk behaviors
 - Spread teacher planning time

Example of Current 172 Day Calendar



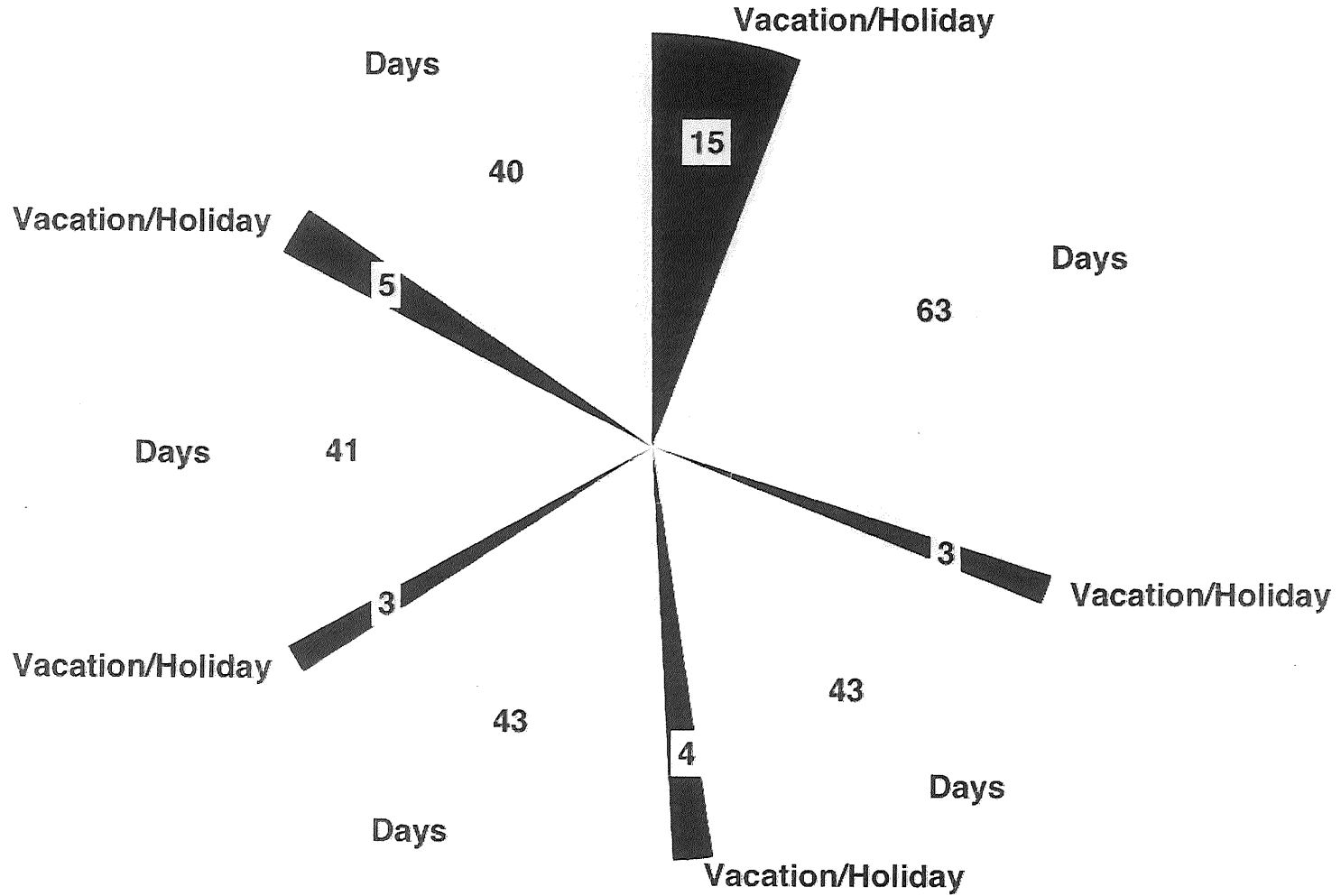
White= attendance days (172) Black = non-attendance days (88)

Example of 200 Day Student Calendar



White = attendance days (200) Black = non-attendance days (60)

Example of 230 Day Teacher Work Year Calendar



White = attendance days (230) Black = non-attendance days (30)

“It’s not just about competing academically with kids from California or Connecticut. American students must vie for positions with their peers from India and China, too - places where young people spend more time in class.”

-- Star Tribune Editorial Page, 12/05