

Council Days and Alternate Proposals

Council Days are Important!

The school calendar currently identifies three (3) professional development days for activities planned by teachers, for teachers. It is of utmost importance both to our profession and to maintain these days, that they be used for their intended purpose — professional growth.

Alternate Proposals for Council Days

- Council Day is a day for LEARNING, not a day for DOING the many things that are always on a busy teacher's 'to-do' list!
- An Alternate proposal should clearly reflect what an individual teacher will learn by his/her chosen plan.
- The plan is written up on the provided form and submitted to the **School-Based PD Committee**, four weeks in advance of Council Day (usually on or around the end of March), who may accept it or ask the teacher to reconsider some aspect of the proposal.
- If a School Based Committee cannot resolve a conflict over a proposal, it may be submitted to the Branch PD Committee.
- Subsequent problems may be referred to the Staff Officer responsible for PD at the NBTA.
- **It is important that this process be framed in a positive manner**, so that teachers clearly understand the importance of maintaining a high standard for professional activities on this day.

Please read the Guidelines for Alternate Proposals included and familiarize yourself with these guidelines.

We encourage all teachers to fill in Appendices H and I. These should be returned to the chairperson of the School PD Committee and then given to the principal. As the direct supervisor, your principal is responsible to know that all staff are accounted for on this paid day of employment.

Notation Regarding Absence from Work on Council Day

If a teacher must be absent from work on Council Day, an alternate proposal is not required at the school level. Teachers who fall into this category are asked to follow regular procedures and fill in appropriate documentation to be processed by their District Office and documented as though it were any other day of the school year.

See Appendices H and I for Guidelines and Form

Alternate Proposals Council Day FAQ's

- **Do I have to attend a Council Conference?**

Teachers in New Brunswick do have a contractual obligation to participate in professional development on Council day. Your Professional Association encourages all teachers to participate in one of the three Council programs. However, teachers have a choice about their professional activity on this day. If for some reason a teacher is unable to attend a Council Day conference and has not been otherwise approved for absence through the employer then that teacher must submit an Alternate Proposal (see below for details).

- **What is an Alternate Proposal?**

As mentioned, if a teacher is unable to attend Council Day, the Association has requested that this teacher give some serious personal thought to a meaningful professional development activity that could substitute for their attendance at the provincial conference. By completing the Alternate Proposal application form (available from your PD Rep or on the NBTA website and Appendix I) and submitting it to your School-Based Committee, a teacher will be free to pursue that plan, provided it meets the guidelines developed by the NBTA Provincial Association.

- **Is an Alternate Proposal necessary?**

The NBTA believes very strongly that it is important to protect the integrity of the one professional development day that remains within our calendar year and is "owned" by teachers. The NBTA Board of Directors felt it was important to establish a mechanism by which each individual teacher assumed the professional responsibility for the use of that day. By thinking about a personal plan, recording it on paper and submitting it for Committee review, the high standard for professional learning is more likely to be maintained.

- **Who approves or rejects my proposal?**

Your School-Based PD Committee, which ideally should consist of several teachers and may include an administrator, is asked to review the Alternate Proposals. The School-Based Committee may refer to the Branch PD Chair/Committee or the NBTA Staff Officer responsible for PD (452-1740) for guidance.

- **Why are some Alternate Proposals rejected by the Committee?**

The single overriding factor in their decision is based on the question: Does this proposal demonstrate an opportunity for professional learning? The focus here is on the learning. In other words if a proposal consists of a teacher creating an opportunity to complete a task which is part of his or her daily work load, i.e. marking, lesson planning, text book review, etc. the Committee may reject the proposal. As much as all teachers have a very long "to do list" and as important as the things on that list may be, Council Day is not intended as a catch up day; therefore, the Alternate Proposal must reflect an emphasis on professional learning as opposed to crossing something off of one's list. Other considerations also include that the proposal is an individual plan and not a group activity.

- **May a teacher attend any Council?**

Definitely -- yes. The trend has increasingly been for teachers to consider all three Council programs as options. Teachers are free to select one of the programs based on either program content or geographic accessibility. Most programs provide many generic learning opportunities that would be appropriate for teachers regardless of the level at which they teach. The chance to meet with colleagues from around the province and share in both learning and social activities is a once-a-year opportunity.