Facilitator Guide

Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership Limited

Workshop
Shifting the balance: Planning your yearly calendar

Workshop aims

To support school leaders to lead a review of the yearly calendar used in their context. This review will support schools to consider the impact of varying requirements on current workloads and decide what elements can be streamlined, removed or take place at a different time.

Audience

This *Facilitator guide* has been provided to support senior leadership teams to run workshops on reviewing and revising the yearly calendars used in their context. Workshops can be customised to be run with the whole school, teams, or departments, as needed.

Time

- Facilitator preparation – 1.5–2 hours
- Workshop – 1.5–2 hours

Why

The literature review and stakeholder consultations undertaken to inform the 'red tape review' outlined in the report *Shifting the balance: Increasing the focus on teaching and learning by reducing the burden of compliance and administration* found that yearly compliance calendars can support schools to reduce red tape by enabling all compliance and administrative requirement requests to be scrutinised, to identify duplication and eliminate redundancies.

Concerns about the level of administrative work undertaken by Australian teachers was also highlighted in the 2018 TALIS data, which indicated that:

- A higher proportion of Australian teachers [on average across the OECD] reported a major source of stress as "having too much administrative work to do" (Australia 55 per cent, OECD 49 per cent),[1] and that teachers' work-related stress is strongly connected to administrative tasks.

- Twenty-two per cent of teachers across the OECD who reported spending five hours per week on administrative tasks reported experiencing a lot of stress in their work, compared to 18 per cent of teachers who spend three hours per week on administrative tasks'

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[1] Thomson, S. and Hillman, K (2020), *The Teaching and Learning International Survey 2018. Australian Report Volume 2: Teachers and School Leaders as Valued Professionals,* Australian Government Department of Education / ACER, p. 28

How

Through the workshop, school leaders and teachers will have the opportunity to engage in discussions in a way that is the most beneficial for their context through:

- plotting the peaks and troughs in your school year

- discussing in a supportive and open environment what requirements could be removed, reduced, or moved to another time.

Open and constructive discussion of issues, impacts and alternatives is encouraged during the workshop. By drawing on teachers' expertise in reflection and critical, creative thinking, discussions will elicit a range of ideas that are relevant for your specific school context.

Workshop outcomes

The workshop outcomes may depend on the complexity of the issues faced within your specific context. However, it can be expected that at the end of the workshop there will be a greater understanding of these issues and the actions needed to resolve these, including:

- initiation of open and constructive discussions on the varying compliance and administrative requirements in your context;

- identification and agreement on appropriate actions for change to streamline or improve the practices currently used to manage compliance and administrative requirements; and

- agreement on how to implement the actions for change.

Prepare for the workshop

This workshop will support you and your colleagues to review your school's yearly calendar, consider the impact on workload and decide if elements can be streamlined, removed or can take place at a different time of year to reduce the impact on workload. This resource has been provided to support senior leadership teams to work with the whole school, teams or departments.

The PowerPoint presentation should be tailored to your own context. You can edit the slides and add your own notes to the comment box to assist your facilitation of the workshop.

Schedule approximately. 60 – 90 minutes for the workshop with your staff. Ask them to consider the yearly calendar and its pinch points prior to arriving at the workshop.

The workshop includes:

- An exercise to discuss the current yearly calendar;

- Discussions about what aspects could be changed/streamlined/stopped; and

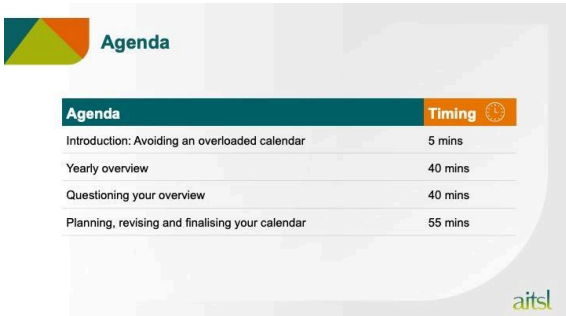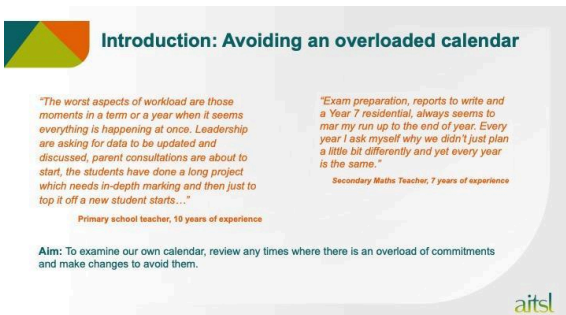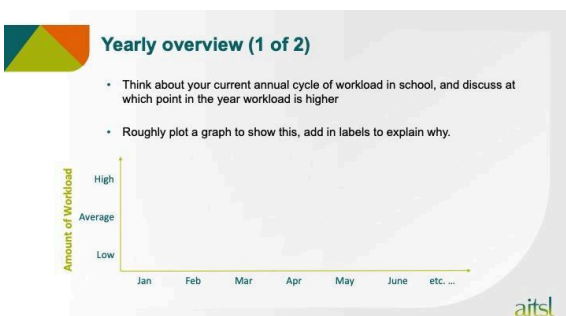- A review of the yearly plan and pinch points.

You might want to consider whether the exercises are completed individually or in teams/ departments before discussing together. Senior leadership teams are likely to want to oversee the process although they could also consider if it is more appropriate for another member of staff to facilitate the session and lead on follow-up, for example, a head of department. Alternatively, you might wish to consider asking somebody independent to facilitate the workshop to free up time to take part.
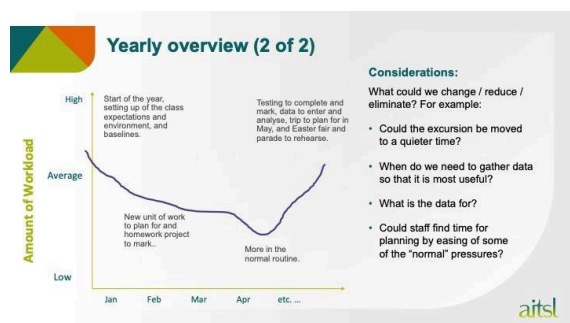

The key to completing this workshop successfully will be to provide a supportive environment for open and honest professional dialogue.

Useful pre-workshop reading

You might wish to read the *Shifting the balance: school leader guide* and the *Planning your yearly calendar section guide* within this Toolkit before commencing with this workshop.

Presentation guide

Slide	Facilitator notes
Agenda | Agenda	Timing
Introduction: Avoiding an overloaded calendar	5 mins
Yearly overview	40 mins
Questioning your overview	40 mins
Planning, revising and finalising your calendar	55 mins		This slide provides an overview of the session. You may need to edit this slide prior to the session. You can adjust the timing to suit your needs.
Introduction: Avoiding an overloaded calendar *"The worst aspects of workload are those moments in a term or a year when it seems everything is happening at once. Leadership are asking for data to be updated and discussed, parent consultations are about to start, the students have done a long project which needs in-depth marking and then just to top it off a new student starts…"* **Primary school teacher, 10 years of experience** *"Exam preparation, reports to write and a Year 7 residential, always seems to mar my run up to the end of year. Every year I ask myself why we didn't just plan a little bit differently and yet every year is the same."* **Secondary Maths Teacher, 7 years of experience** **Aim:** To examine our own calendar, review any times where there is an overload of commitments and make changes to avoid them.	Provide an overview to participating staff members of your aims for this workshop.
Yearly overview (1 of 2) • Think about your current annual cycle of workload in school, and discuss at which point in the year workload is higher • Roughly plot a graph to show this, add in labels to explain why.	**Activity: yearly overview.** Decide whether this exercise is completed individually, in teams or by Department and how views will be brought together in a discussion. You may wish to discuss that there will be times during the year where a heavy workload is unavoidable due to requirements that are important for teaching and learning for example reporting to parents but the focus of this workshop is to look at ways of working more efficiently and where possible ensuring that overload on staff is avoided.
Slide	**Facilitator notes**

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Yearly overview (2 of 2)

This slide provides an overview of the session.

Activity: yearly overview.

Decide whether this exercise is completed individually, in teams or by Department and how views will be brought together in a discussion.

You may wish to discuss that there will be times during the year where a heavy workload is unavoidable due to requirements that are important for teaching and learning for example reporting to parents but the focus of this workshop is to look at ways of working more efficiently and where possible ensuring that overload on staff is avoided.

Looking at your graphs: Questions

This slide provides some examples of things to consider and what the start of a graph might look like. It is not intended to be exhaustive.

Slide	Facilitator notes

Yearly planning (1 of 2)

Map out our year

- Take 12 pieces of paper and lay them out from January to December.
- Split each sheet into approximate weeks in that month.
- Decide as a whole staff the parts of the year which really cannot change and make sure you discuss why.
- Decide on the parts which you will block out, consider holiday times.
- Put each one on a Post-It and add these on to your calendar.

Activity: map out your year

- Either as a whole staff or in year/department group teams map out your year.

- Take 12 pieces of paper and lay them out from January to December

- Split each sheet into the approximate weeks in that month.

- Decide on the parts which you will block out (no commitments/requirements), consider holiday times!

- Decide as a whole staff the parts of the year which really cannot change and make sure you discuss why. Some suggestions of this are listed below:

  o Statutory testing

  o Baseline assessments

  o Census data

  o Festivals and related work around these (e.g. Christmas, Diwali)

  o Residential trips (which are pre-arranged)

  o Tournaments or competitions

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  - Statutory testing
  - Census data
  - Festivals and related work around these (e.g., Christmas, Diwali)
  - Residential trips (which are pre-arranged)
  - Tournaments or competitions

Put each one on a post-it and add these on to your calendar.

- Once you have the skeleton outline of your year, check through and ensure you are spacing out the tasks which are workload heavy.

- Think about the purpose behind key tasks and ensure that these are completed efficiently and the impact on teaching and learning is understood by all.

- Consider the other key events or tasks which need to be added into the year (this could be completed in year group and department teams), and what more you could remove.

- When adding to the calendar keep asking the question: If I do this at this point in the year, what will be the impact on workload? If the impact is high then reconsider the timings.

Slide	Facilitator notes

- Once you have finalised your calendar, make sure everyone has had a chance to comment on the content and key tasks added, make sure it is accessible to all staff and set review dates.

- If there are any clashes which will add to workload, look to change the timings or refine the tasks.

- When year groups/departments are planning other key tasks or trips, return to the calendar to assess the impact on workload.

- At the end of your session, you should decide how actions are recorded and reviewed, who is responsible, and how you will communicate changes with staff, governors, students and parents/carers.

Facilitator to make closing remarks and thank participants for their time and commitment.

Thank You