

## First Alaska's Institute 42<sup>nd</sup> Annual Elder's & Youth Conference 2025

### Project Outline: Designing a Culturally-Responsive Year-Round School Calendar

#### Purpose

The First Alaskan's Institute is hosting the annual Elders & Youth Conference on October 12-15, 2025. Students of the North Slope have the opportunity to attend the conference. This year, the recognized Alaska Native Language is Iñupiaq.

To be considered for travel and attendance at the Elders & Youth Conference, students will critically engage with the idea of year-round schooling by creating responses that reflect their understanding of local needs, hunting, gathering, and cultural practices, Iñupiaq values, and student well-being. The project highlights the importance of aligning education with community and cultural rhythms while addressing student attendance challenges.

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#### Student Response Options

##### 1. Writing Prompts

*Format:* 1-2 page essay, blog-style reflection, or letter to a school leader.

Please use the following prompts to guide your written response:

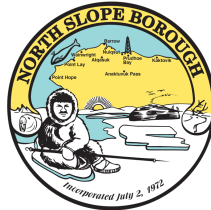
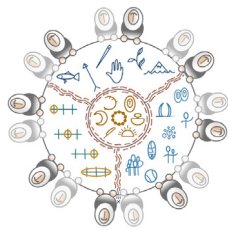
- How does this calendar reflect cultural and community practices?
- What challenges might this calendar solve for attendance and learning?
- What concerns or adjustments would you suggest?

##### 2. Drafting Their Own Culturally-Responsive Calendar

*Format:* Utilizing the sample calendar provided, you will create your own visual calendar (paper or digital) with a 1–2 paragraph explanation for each major break. The first calendar in this Project Outline is just an example for you to reference, the second calendar is a blank canvas to work from.

Students design an alternative year-round calendar that:

- Accounts for hunting/gathering seasons, cultural events, and local needs.
- Minimizes learning gaps from long breaks.
- Balances academic requirements with student/family well-being.

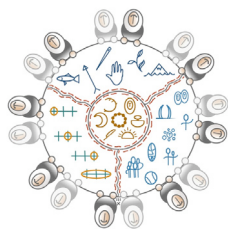


### 3. Video Project

*Format:* Individual or group video project, posted privately for submission review. If completing as a group, each group member must equally contribute to the project and a description of roles/responsibilities must be submitted with video. Maximum number of group members cannot exceed 3 participants.

Students create a 3–5 minute video that:

- Explains their perspective on the sample year-round calendar.
  - Shares stories, interviews, or reflections on why aligning school with community rhythms matters.
  - Offers solutions or creative ideas for improving the model.
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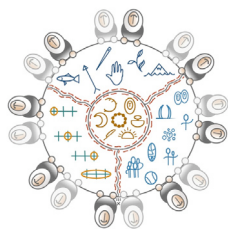


**Rubric:** Your project will be scored on three areas: Critical Thinking, Creativity & Relevance, and Communication. Use this rubric as a checklist before you submit.

**Student Tip** - Before submitting, ask yourself:

- Did I show how school calendars can reflect Iñupiaq values, subsistence activities, and student well-being?
- Did I bring in my own perspective, ideas, or creativity?
- Is my message clear, whether in writing, visuals, or video?

Criteria	Excellent (4)	Proficient (3)	Developing (2)	Beginning (1)
<b>Critical Thinking (Engagement with school, culture, and community)</b>	Makes strong, specific connections between the calendar, Iñupiaq values, subsistence practices, and student well-being. Offers thoughtful analysis of attendance challenges and solutions.	Makes clear connections to culture and community needs with some analysis of attendance challenges or solutions.	Mentions culture/community but connections are limited or vague. Few ideas for attendance or solutions.	Little or no evidence of cultural connections or awareness of attendance issues.
<b>Creativity &amp; Relevance (Cultural responsiveness and solutions)</b>	Response shows originality and cultural insight. Ideas for breaks and solutions are realistic, relevant, and respectful of	Response shows some creativity and relevance. Ideas are mostly realistic and show some cultural awareness.	Response has limited creativity or relevance. Cultural connections are weak or incomplete.	Response lacks creativity and does not connect to culture, rhythms, or real solutions.

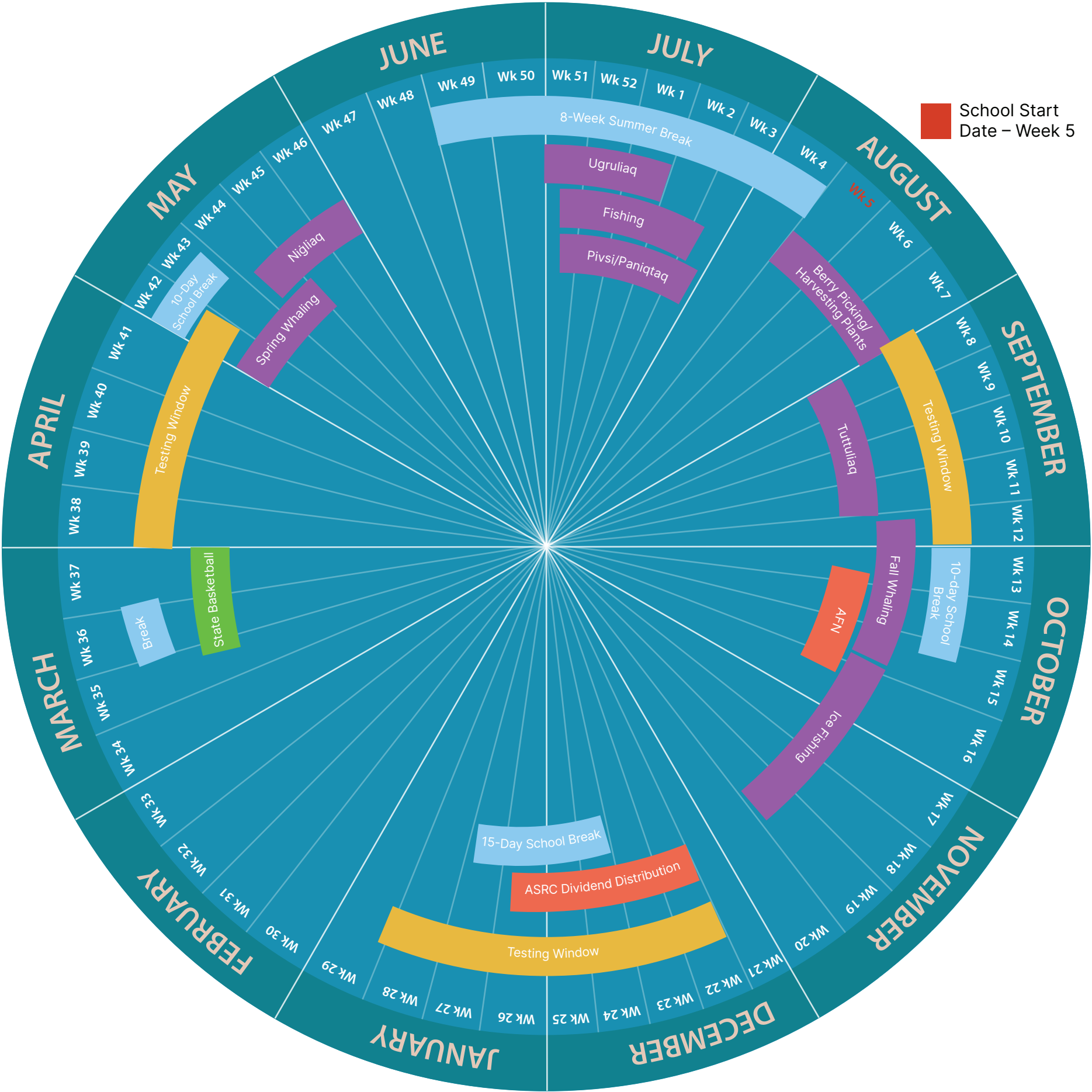


	community rhythms.			
<b>Communication (Clarity and organization in writing, visuals, or video)</b>	Work is clear, well-organized, and engaging. Writing flows logically, calendars are easy to follow, or video is polished. Message is compelling.	Work is mostly clear and organized. Some minor issues with flow, formatting, or delivery, but message comes through.	Work is somewhat unclear or unorganized. Parts are hard to follow or incomplete.	Work is unclear, disorganized, or missing key components. Message is difficult to understand.

Total Points: \_\_\_\_ / 12

- 11–12 points = Outstanding (ready for submission to Elders & Youth Conference committee)
- 8–10 points = Strong (meets expectations with minor revisions)
- 5–7 points = Needs revision (develop ideas more clearly or connect more strongly to culture/community)
- 1–4 points = Incomplete (significant work needed before submission)





School Start Date – Week 5



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SUBSISTENCE

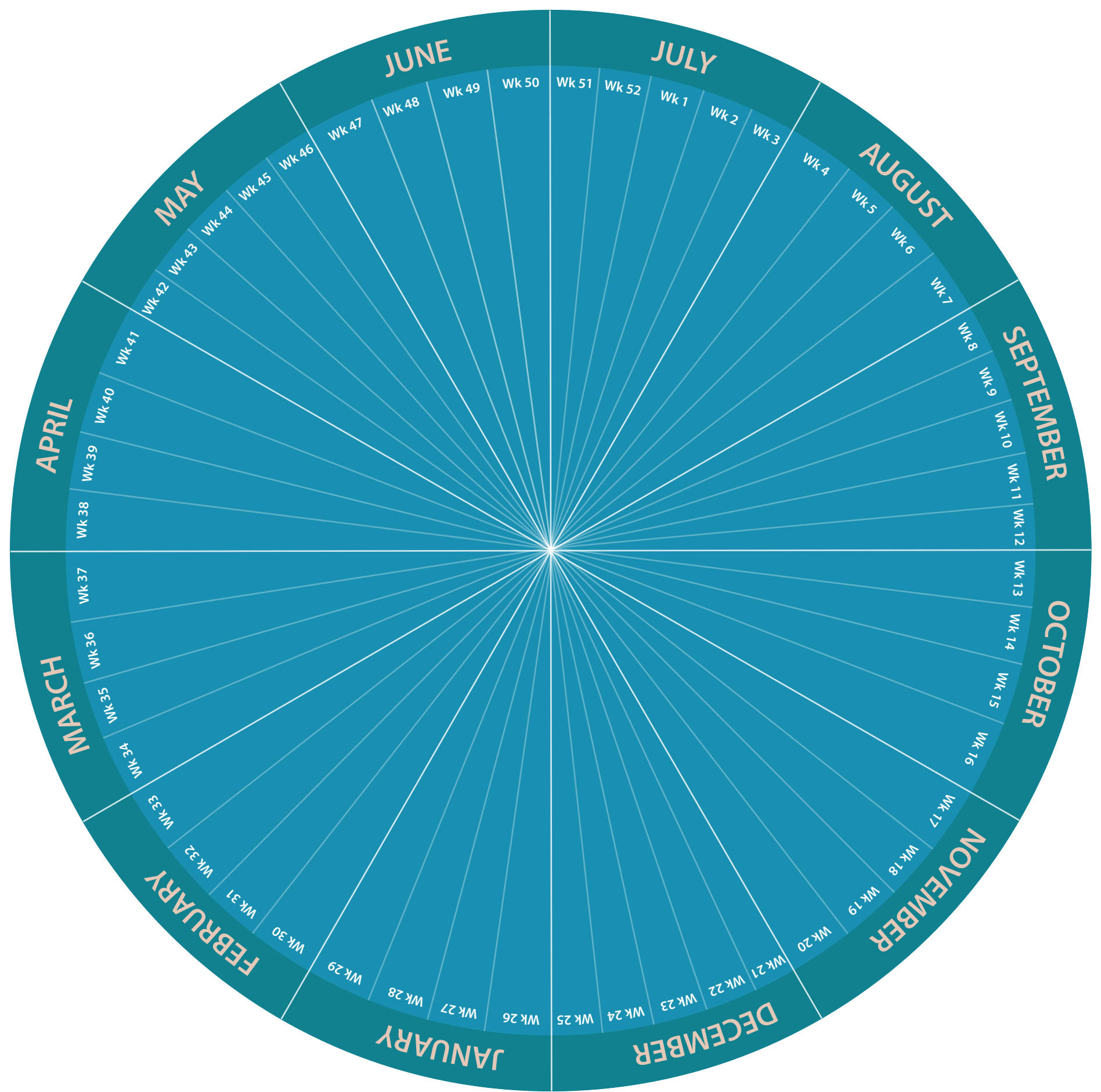


TESTING



SCHOOL BREAK

# Sample



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SUBSISTENCE



TESTING



SCHOOL BREAK