

School Calendar Message April 2, 2007

As the legislative session and the school year begin to wind down, there has been increased interest—and even concern—about school calendars recently. With the recent spate of bad weather and another storm currently forecasted, we have been asked to remind superintendents of the required instructional days. (See the statute below.) Since many schools have scheduled Easter Monday as an optional school break, it may be needed instead as a storm make-up day if you have limited options in your calendar. It is difficult to postpone graduation and all school days must precede graduation.

Spring school calendars are to be reported to the Department immediately upon the end of the school year. We have been able to obtain lists of school closures from radio and TV websites; however, schools must indicate when/how they made those days up.

15.1-06-04. School calendar — Length.

1. *During each school year, a school district shall provide for a school calendar of at least one hundred eighty days, apportioned as follows:*
 - a. *One hundred seventy-three full days of instruction;*
 - b. *Three holidays listed in subdivisions b through j of subsection 1 of section 15.1-06-02 and selected by the school board in consultation with district teachers;*
 - c. *Up to two full days during which parent-teacher conferences are held or which are deemed by the school board to be compensatory time for parent-teacher conferences held outside regular school hours; and*
 - d. *Two days for professional development activities.*
2.
 - a. *In meeting the requirements for two days of professional development activities under subsection 1, a school district may require that its teachers attend the North Dakota education association instructional conference and may pay teachers for attending the conference, provided attendance is verified.*
 - b. *In meeting the requirements for two days of professional development activities under subsection 1, a school district may consider attendance at the North Dakota education association instructional conference to be optional, elect not to pay teachers for attending the instructional conference, and instead direct any resulting savings toward providing alternate professional development opportunities.*
3. *A school district may not require the attendance of teachers in school or at any school-sponsored, school-directed, school sanctioned, or school related activities and may not schedule classroom instruction time nor alternate professional development activities on any day that conflicts with the North Dakota education association instructional conference.*
4. *A full day of instruction consists of:*
 - a. *At least five and one-half hours for elementary students, during which time the students are required to be in attendance for the purpose of receiving curricular instruction; and*
 - b. *At least six hours for high school students, during which time the students are required to be in attendance for the purpose of receiving curricular instruction.*
5. *If a school's calendar provides for an extension of each school day beyond the statutorily required minimum number of hours, and if the extensions when aggregated over an entire school year amount to more than eighty-four hours of additional classroom instruction during the school year, the school is exempt from having to make up six hours of instruction time lost as a result of weather-related closure. In order to make up lost classroom instruction time beyond the six hours, the school must extend its normal school calendar day by at least thirty minutes.*
6. *A school that does not qualify under the provisions of subsection 3 must extend its normal school day by at least thirty minutes to make up classroom instruction time lost as a result of weather-related closure.*

7. *If because of weather a school must dismiss before completing a full day of instruction, the school is responsible for making up only those hours and portions of an hour between the time of early dismissal and the conclusion of a full day of classroom instruction.*