

PUBLIC SCHOOL CALENDAR GUIDELINES

--- 2019-20 School Year ---
(January, 2019)

This is a compilation of guidelines and procedures,
supported by statute to assist Local Education Agencies and
Regional Offices of Education in reporting and approving
Public School Calendars

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Public School Calendar 2019-20 School Year

OVERVIEW

The Public School Calendar is a web-based system accessible via IWAS for districts and Regional Offices of Education (ROE) to enter and transmit proposed, amended and final calendars for approval. Per Section 10-19 of the School Code [105 ILCS 5/10-19] *each school board shall annually prepare a calendar for the school term, specifying the opening and closing dates and providing a minimum term of at least 185 days to ensure 176 days of actual pupil attendance.* Each ROE is assigned primary approval of all district calendars, including any changes. Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) staff retained authority to approve regional office alternative school program calendars as well as certain types of days in district calendars.

Due to P.A. 100-0465, also known as the Evidence-Based Funding for Student Success Act that took effect on Aug. 31, 2017, Section 18-8.05 of the School Code was repealed. When this occurred, statutory support for certain traditional calendar days that were integral to the annual calendar were eliminated. As a result, this necessitated some codes to be removed as an option in the Public School Calendar system beginning with the 2019-20 school year.

The days and codes removed from the Public School Calendar system are:

- Full Day Parent/Teacher Conference Days (FPT); Full Day Teacher In-Service Days (FI); Full Day School Improvement Days (WFS), for which a waiver was required under 18-8.05; and Half-Day School Improvement Days (XHS), for which banking of time was previously a requirement.
- Since there is no longer a minimum time requirement for a school day, Interrupted (XID) and Delayed Start Day (XDS) calendar codes have been removed.

In addition, the repeal of Section 18-8.05 eliminated an instructional day to be a minimum of five hours, thereby also eliminating statutory support for banking 120 minutes of time in excess of the previously defined school day in order to use Half-Day School Improvement Days, (XHS). ISBE released guidance, available in the [Definition of an Instructional Day](#) memo, on Nov. 9, 2018, to assist school districts in defining their instructional day.

Guidance regarding the collection of student attendance in the Student Information System is available via the Oct. 18, 2018, webinar on the topic.

TECHNICAL SUPPORT

Questions pertaining to the public school calendar should be directed to:

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SCHOOL CALENDAR PREPARATION GUIDELINES

PROPOSED CALENDAR

All school districts must prepare a proposed school calendar consisting of a minimum of 185 days to ensure 176 days of actual pupil attendance. The recommended due date for proposed calendars to be transmitted is June 15 prior to the beginning of the next school term.

EXAMPLE:

Student Attendance Days	176
Maximum Teacher Institute Days	4
Minimum Proposed Emergency Days	5
Total Calendar Days	185

The school district regular term begin and end dates must be entered.

- **Begin Date** - The first day of school activity as determined by the local school board.
- **End Date** – The last day of school activity as determined by the local school board, including Proposed Emergency Days (calendar code XED).

AVAILABLE CALENDAR DAYS, CODES AND DEFINITIONS

Code	Type Day	School Code Section
AOG	Act of God Day	Section 10-19 and 18-12
ED	Emergency Day	Section 10-19
HOL	Holiday	Section 24-2
NIA	Not in Attendance	NA
PI	Parent Institute	Section 3-11
TI	Teacher Institute	Section 3-11
TIH	Teacher Institute Workshop Holiday Waiver	Section 24-2
X	Student Attendance Day	Section 10-19
XED	Proposed Emergency Day	Section 10-19
XH	Holiday Waiver	Section 24-2

AOG – Act of God Day. A day that is used for a condition beyond the control of the district that poses a hazardous threat to the health and safety of the students. Act of God Days may only be requested after the district has exhausted all of the Proposed Emergency Days built into the proposed calendar.

Act of God Days must be approved by the Regional Superintendent and the State Superintendent of Education. Act of God Days count toward the required number of student attendance days in the Public School Calendar and are not required to be made up.

ED - Emergency Day. A condition the district deems as an emergency and determines to close all district school buildings. Emergency Days must be made up prior to the end of the school year.

IMPORTANT: If an Emergency Day is utilized, it is recommended that an amended calendar be submitted electronically through IWAS to the Regional Office of Education for approval. This will ensure that the most up-to-date Public School Calendar is available online via the School Calendar Inquiry.

HOL – Holidays. Pre-populated. Per Section 24-2, the legal school holidays in Illinois are provided below. School activities are permitted for those days in bold print.

- New Year’s Day (Jan. 1)
- **Martin Luther King, Jr. Birthday** (third Monday in January)
- **Lincoln’s Birthday** (Feb. 12)
- **Casimir Pulaski’s Birthday** (first Monday in March)
- Memorial Day (last Monday in May)
- Independence Day (July 4)
- Labor Day (first Monday in September)
- **Columbus Day** (second Monday in October)
- **Veterans Day** (Nov. 11)
- Thanksgiving Day (fourth Thursday in November)
- Christmas Day (Dec. 25)

SCHOOL ACTIVITIES ON LEGAL HOLIDAYS

Section 24-2 of the School Code allows school activities to occur and be coded in the Public School Calendar on five legal school holidays (Martin Luther King (third Monday in January), Abraham Lincoln (Feb. 12), Casimir Pulaski, (first Monday in March), Christopher Columbus (second Monday in October), and Veterans Day (Nov. 11), provided that:

1. The person or persons honored by the holiday are recognized through instructional activities conducted on that day or, if the day is not used for student attendance, are recognized on the first school day preceding or following that day.
2. The entity choosing to exercise this authority first holds a public hearing about the proposal. The entity shall provide notice preceding the public hearing to both educators and parents. The notice shall set forth the time, date and place of the hearing, describe the proposal, and indicate that the entity will take testimony from educators and parents about the proposal.
3. Provided these requirements are met, the district has the flexibility to use the day as a holiday or for school activities as described in the proposal. If school activities are conducted on the legal school holiday, the entity codes the Public School Calendar as appropriate for the activities.

Note - A school holding any kind of event on Nov. 11, Veterans Day, must include a moment of silence at the event to recognize veterans of foreign wars. (Public Act 96-0084)

NIA – Not in Attendance Day. A day for which there are no students present or engaged in learning as defined by the local school board.

PI – Parent Institute Day. A day used by the district to provide information on topics that the district deems as necessary to achieve the following purposes:

1. Enhance parental involvement in the education of the district's students;
2. Improve parental communication and involvement with the district;
3. Enhance parental knowledge of child development, district programs, school conditions, and societal problems threatening students; and
4. Improve parental skill development.

Parent Institute Days shall be designed by the school district upon consultation with the district's teaching staff, administrators, and parents' organizations. The district may provide appropriate personnel, including district staff, to conduct, attend, or participate in all or any portion of the institutes. Districts shall use every means available to inform parents and guardians about parental institutes and to encourage attendance at and active participation in such events.

Parental institutes may be held during that period of the day that is not part of the regular school day and may be held on Saturdays. Days scheduled for parental institutes may be scheduled separately for different grade levels and different attendance centers of the district.

Districts may establish reasonable fees, not to exceed the cost of holding parental institutes, for attendance and shall waive any fees so established for any parents or guardians who may be unable to afford such fees. Nothing shall preclude districts from applying for or accepting private funds to conduct parental institutes.

A school district may utilize up to two days allowed by law for teachers' institutes to conduct parental institutes for the parents and guardians of children attending the district. No district may utilize Teacher Institute Days as Parent Institute Days without the consent of the district's in-service advisory committee created under Section 3-11. If a district does not have an in-service advisory committee, Parent Institute Days must be approved by the district's teaching staff.

TI - Teacher Institute Day (maximum four days). A day used for any educational gathering, demonstration of methods of instruction, visitation of schools or other institutions or facilities, sexual abuse and sexual assault awareness seminar, or training in first-aid (which may include cardiopulmonary resuscitation or defibrillator training) held or approved by the Regional Superintendent and declared to be an institute day, or for parent-teacher conferences. Up to two Teacher Institute Days may be used as either parent-teacher conferences or parental institutes, as provided in Section 10-22.18d of the Illinois School Code. Teacher Institute Days used as parent-teacher conference days would use calendar code TI. Teacher Institute Days used as Parent Institute Days would use calendar code PI.

X - Student Attendance Day (minimum 176 days). A day for which students are receiving instruction as defined by the local school board.

XED - Proposed Emergency Day (minimum five days). Days included in the proposed calendar as a placeholder and used only if the district must close due to an emergency.

DAYS REQUIRING WAIVERS

TIH - Teacher Institute /Workshop Holiday Waiver – A day when circumstances necessitate that a teacher institute/workshop be held on a holiday other than one of the five allowable days under Section 24-2 of the School Code.

XH - Pupil Attendance Holiday Waiver – A day when circumstances necessitate that a student attendance day be held on a holiday other than one of the five allowable days under Section 24-2 of the School Code

In either instance, the district must adhere to the follow guidelines:

1. Beginning Jan. 1, 2013, all applicants for any type of waiver or modification must post a notice on the applicant's website at least 14 days in advance of the public hearing, stating the time, date, location and general subject matter of the hearing.
2. The posting of such information on the applicant's official website is in addition to the requirement to publish a notice of the public hearing in a newspaper of general circulation at least seven days prior to the hearing.
3. In addition to 1 and 2 above, districts and other applicants applying to increase the fee charged for driver's education (105 ILCS 5/27-24.2) must also publish the proposed amount of the fee as part of the website notice and the notice of public hearing placed in a local newspaper.
4. All other public notice requirements that apply to the waiver process remain in effect (written notice of public hearing provided at least seven days in advance to applicant's exclusive collective bargaining agent and advance written notice of public hearing provided to state legislators representing the territory of the applicant).

Additional information regarding the waiver process can be found at <https://www.isbe.net/Pages/Modifications-of-the-School-Codes-and-Rules-of-the-State-Board.aspx>.

AMENDED CALENDAR

An amended calendar may be submitted only after the proposed calendar has been approved by the Regional Office of Education. Calendar amendments are necessary due to changes determined by the district or for unanticipated circumstances out of the control of the district such as the use of Emergency or Act of God days.

Amended calendars should be submitted to the respective regional office within 30 days of the change or event. The calendar changes must be submitted and approved by the Regional Superintendent of Schools before the calendar or changes may take effect. There is no limit to the number of amended calendars that a district may submit for approval.

The document type selected in the calendar system must be **Amended Public School Calendar**.

FINAL CALENDAR

The recommended due date for submitting the final calendar is the last day of school.

The document type selected in the calendar system must be **Final Public School Calendar**.

Checkpoints prior to approval of final calendar.

Note: If an Amended Public School Calendar is in “draft” status, i.e. has not been submitted for RCDT Administrator or Regional Office of Education (ROE)/Intermediate Service Center (ISC) approval, leave the calendar in draft status and proceed entering the final calendar. If an Amended Public School Calendar has a “submitted” status, it must complete the process, i.e. receive approval from the ROE/ISC before a final calendar may be accessed.

The **Regular School End Date** is the last day of school activity. Any unused proposed Emergency Days (Calendar Code XED) that are coded at the end of the school calendar must be removed by correcting the **Regular School End Date** to the last day of actual school activity. Once the Regular School End Date has been updated, the calendar codes after that date are truncated.

- Verify that any Emergency Days used are coded as (ED) on the day(s) the district was closed.
- Verify Total Calendar Days = at least 180
- Verify that Total Attendance Days = at least 176.

SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES

A special circumstance is an event that causes one or more school buildings or the entire district to close due to circumstances beyond the control of the district.

School District Closure

The health and safety of students are a primary concern for every school superintendent. Conditions beyond the control of the school district that pose a hazardous threat to the health and safety of students, including adverse weather such as snow, ice, extreme heat or extreme cold, etc., may result in district closure. Under these or similar circumstances, the district has the following options:

- a. **Emergency Day (calendar code ED)** - The district can convert one of its five Proposed Emergency Days (calendar code XED) and use it as an Emergency Day. Emergency Days must be made up prior to the end of the school year.
- b. **Act of God Day (calendar code AOG)** - If all of the Proposed Emergency Days have been utilized, the district can request an **Act of God Day** (calendar code AOG). When an Emergency or Act of God day is used, an amended calendar must be submitted using the Public School Calendar system in IWAS within 30 days of occurrence.

- c. **Interrupted Attendance Day-** Since the local school board determines what constitutes an instructional day, if students attend part of a day but are dismissed early due to a hazardous threat to the health and safety of the students, the day will be recognized as an instructional day. The day will be counted as part of the required 176 student attendance days and a calendar change is not necessary.

Individual School Building Closure Due to Public Health Emergency

A district with multiple individual buildings providing instruction may claim attendance when the district must close one, but not all, individual buildings within the district, due to a public health emergency as determined by the Illinois State Board of Education in consultation with the Illinois Department of Public Health. The district may claim attendance for the day(s) the building is closed using the average attendance of this individual building for the three student attendance days immediately preceding the closure date. This situation does not affect the official Public School Calendar, but reporting of such day(s) must be made within 30 days of occurrence by submitting the required information electronically via the Public School Calendar system in IWAS using the menu item “Enter School Building Interruption/Closure” to the Regional Superintendent for forwarding to the State Superintendent for approval.

(In order to claim attendance, the district must follow the steps outlined below to justify a school building closure to student attendance due to a public health emergency):

1. The school district must consult with a local health department in its area and request a written statement from that entity. The school district must then submit that signed statement to ISBE that includes:
 - The name of the building that is being recommended for closure.
 - The specific public health emergency that warrants the closure.
 - The anticipated dates(s) that the building will be closed as recommended by the health department.
2. Once the signed statement is received, ISBE will consult with the Illinois Department of Public Health to determine that a public health emergency exists.
3. If verified, the district and the appropriate Regional Office of Education will be notified that a public health emergency exists and the district will be allowed to submit an electronic request of the building closure.

Reporting Individual School Building Closures

When a closure affects an individual building or buildings as described in Section 18-12, the closure must be reported within one month of the occurrence to the Illinois State Board of Education via the electronic Public School Calendar system available in IWAS.

Procedures for the District Document Author to report and submit the request for individual school building closure in the Public School Calendar system in IWAS to the District Administrator.

1. Login to the Public School Calendar system in IWAS.
2. Choose menu item “Enter School Building Interruption/Closure.”
3. From the dropdown, select the school building that was closed.
4. Click on the “Closure” button.
5. Select the month and day of the closure.
6. Click the “Continue” button. **Note:** Individual entry must be made for each day the building was closed.
7. Enter the reason for the closure in the box provided.
8. Click the “Save Page Entry” button.
9. Click the “Submit” button to forward the information to the appropriate district staff/ for approval. You will see a confirmation screen indicating that the request has been submitted.

Procedures for the District Administrator to approve and submit the request for individual school building closure in the Public School Calendar system in IWAS to the local Regional Superintendent.

1. Login to the Public School Calendar system in IWAS.
2. Choose menu item “Approve – School Building Interruption/Closure.”
3. From the dropdown, select the school building that was closed and click the “Continue” button.
4. Click the “Approve” link.
5. Verify that the information is accurate.
6. Click the appropriate button to submit to the Regional Superintendent for approval or to disapprove the request if the information needs to be revised.

Section 18-12 of the School Code provides that if a district must close one or more recognized school buildings, but not all district buildings, attendance may be claimed for that building for a maximum of two days. The attendance for that building for the affected day(s) would be based on the average attendance of that building for the three prior student attendance days immediately preceding the closure/interruption.

SCHOOL CALENDAR – QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

What type of days are required to be reported?

The School Code currently requires districts to report a proposed calendar with 176 student instructional days, four institute and five proposed emergency days, for a total of 185 days. If fewer than four institute days are used, one attendance day must be added for each institute day not utilized.

Is there a minimum number of hours/minutes required for an instructional day?

There is no statutory minimum of hours or minutes to constitute an instructional day. The local school board and collective bargaining unit defines an instructional day for the local district and determines the length of the school day to be counted toward the required 176 instructional days. ISBE released guidance, available in the [Definition of an Instructional Day](#) memo, on Nov. 9, 2018, to assist school districts in defining their instructional day.

What constitutes student attendance days?

Attendance can be counted when a student is participating in learning anywhere and anytime. Students who are engaged in learning for any portion of an instructional day may be counted for purposes of attendance.

What constitutes a student non-attendance day?

Days in which no students are present or engaged in learning as defined by the district for a given instructional day are considered non-attendance.

May half-days be coded in school calendars?

No. Since districts are free to determine the minimum number of hours for instructional days, any day reported by a district that involves student engagement and learning will be recognized as an instructional day regardless of the length of the day or method of student participation. Therefore, half-days are to be reported as attendance days for calendar purposes.

Are districts required to make up delayed start or interrupted days?

No. Districts will not be required to make up instructional days interrupted due to reasons beyond their control (e.g. weather-related issues), provided student learning has occurred. Districts are encouraged to make an effort to maintain the continuity of the learning environment during interrupted days where possible, when all students have access.

Must all instruction be classroom-based?

No. Students learn in a variety of ways and settings. Districts may define student engagement and student learning in any number or combination of ways (classroom or online instruction, independent research projects, work-based learning and internships, etc.). ISBE encourages districts to use the new flexibility afforded in the law to innovate with respect to new ways of engaging students in learning that center on student competencies and mastery of subject matter.

Are teacher in-service trainings and parent-teacher conferences considered to be instructional days?

No. Public Act 100-0465 made significant modifications to the structure of instructional time but no longer allows for a calendar with fewer than 176 instructional days. Since the provisions of the school calendar are in transition, districts that have approved calendars for 174 instructional days for the 2018-19 school year will not be required to modify their calendars for this school year.