

200-RICR-20-05-1

TITLE 200 – BOARD OF EDUCATION

CHAPTER 20 – COUNCIL ON ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

SUBCHAPTER 05 - GENERAL AND SCHOOL OPERATIONS

PART 1 – Regulations Governing the School Calendar and Length of the School Day

1.1 Authority

This part is promulgated pursuant to R.I. Gen. Laws § 16-60-4.

1.2 Purpose

The purpose of this Part is to require the setting of school calendars for Rhode Island public schools to ensure the provision of a minimum school year of one hundred and eighty (180) days and to define the length of the school day for purposes of R.I. Gen. Laws §§ 16-2-2 and 16-2-3 to ensure that the school day is comprised of adequate instructional time for students.

1.3 Definitions

- A. "Day" or "School day" means the regular operation of all public school grades, including kindergarten, of the local education agency for a period which consists of not less than five and a half (5½) hours (three hundred and thirty (330) minutes) of actual school work excluding lunch, recess periods, study halls, homeroom, common planning time, student passing time and pre and post school teacher time and any other time that is not actual instructional time.
- B. "Local education agency" means a public board of education, school committee or other public authority legally constituted within the State for either administrative control or direction of one or more Rhode Island public elementary schools or secondary schools.

1.4 Adoption and filing of calendar and minimum number of days scheduled.

Each local education agency shall, no later than the July 1 next preceding the beginning of the school year for its district or school, adopt, file with the Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education and give public notice of a tentative calendar for that year, in which shall be included at least one hundred eighty-four (184) school days. Such calendar is subject to the review and approval by the Commissioner.

1.5 First day of school

In said tentative calendar, the first day of school shall be scheduled to take place not later than the first Thursday following the first Monday of September.

1.6 Filing of changes

By May 1 of each year, each local education agency shall file with the Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education any changes in the originally-scheduled calendar.

1.7 Statutory minimum

Nothing contained in this Part should be construed to require any school to operate more than the statutory minimum of one hundred eighty (180) days for students. Conversely, nothing herein shall be deemed to limit a local education agency from exceeding the minimum number of days and hours set forth herein.

1.8 School opening and closing dates

Local education agencies are permitted one day to be counted as one (1) of the one hundred eighty (180) required school days for the purposes of a special day for an incoming new class of students in a secondary school (the so-called "staggered opening" schedule) provided.

1. That it is clearly identified on the school calendar;
2. That it is limited to one day and one class; and
3. That the day is a full school day.

1.9 Special provisions— Kindergarten Screenings

Up to five (5) of the one hundred eighty (180) required school days may be set aside at the kindergarten level for the purpose of screening kindergarten students, orientation of parents and students, parent-teacher conferences, or any combination of the preceding (not to exceed five (5) days in total). Such programs are subject to the Commissioner's approval.

1.10 Graduation Dates

The school calendar shall indicate the graduation date and the last day of school for a high school senior. The school year for a high school senior shall be a minimum of one hundred seventy-one (171) instructional days. Local education agencies may schedule final exams for seniors and graduation any time after the completion of the one hundred seventy-one (171) instructional days.

1.11 Inclement Weather

During inclement weather, schools shall remain open and provide at least three (3) hours of instructional time in order to be considered a school day. If however, a school does not remain open for at least three (3) hours, superintendents or school directors must provide written notification within five (5) days to the Commissioner explaining the situation.

1.12 Physical Plant Problems — Other Emergencies

In instances of a physical plant problem severe enough to close a school, students may be dismissed early. Schools must be in operation for at least three (3) hours to be considered a school day. If a school is not open for at least three hours, superintendents or school directors must provide written notification to the Commissioner within five (5) days explaining the situation. The Commissioner is hereby authorized to shorten the school year for individual schools based on short term emergency closures for a total of no more than five (5) school days.

1.13 Mid-Term and Final Exams

A maximum of four days for mid-term and four days for final examinations may be scheduled at the school level. Schools must be open for at least five and a half (5½) hours exclusive of lunch. Teachers must be present during the school day. However, students are required to be present only during the examination. Senior exams shall be scheduled any time after the completion of one hundred seventy-one (171) instructional days. Final exams for students in grades 7 – 11 should be scheduled up through the one hundred seventy ninth (179th) day of the school year.

1.14 Required Elementary and Secondary Instructional Time

- A. Local education agency compliance with the requirement to provide students with five and a half (5½) hours (three hundred thirty (330) minutes) of actual instructional time per school day must indicate actual instruction in the subject areas required by the Basic Education Program (BEP) [Subchapter 10 Part 1](#) of this Chapter, for provision of art and music programming in addition to instructional activities in basic academic disciplines of English language arts, mathematics, social studies and science, combined with instruction in art, music, foreign language (where applicable) or other related instructional activities including but not limited to library, health, physical education and student advisory.
- B. The requirement of three hundred thirty (330) minutes of instructional time in each school day is effectively waived in those instances in which the superintendent of schools or director of a school relies upon § 1.11 of this Part herein to shorten the school day to no less than one hundred eighty (180) minutes in cases of inclement weather.

- C. For purposes of determining the adequacy of instructional time, time dedicated to student advisory may be included in calculating the required instructional time. The Commissioner shall make such additional determinations as to the inclusion or exclusion of time within the category of instructional time based upon his/her review of each local education agency's submission of its elementary and secondary schedules.

- D. A local education agency may establish a school year that is the equivalent of one hundred eighty (180) days through the use of longer school days in accordance with R.I. Gen. Laws § 16-2-2. If longer school days are used to provide the equivalent of one hundred eighty (180) school days, a minimum of one thousand eighty (1,080) school hours must be provided in a single school year, including no fewer than nine hundred and ninety (990) hours of actual instructional time. A detailed school day plan and proposed school calendar must be submitted to the Commissioner for approval in accordance with R.I. Gen. Laws § 16-2-2(a)(2) no later than May 1st of the preceding school year.

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