



OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

Avon Public Schools

34 SIMSBURY ROAD
AVON, CONNECTICUT 06001
TEL: (860) 404-4700
gmala@avon.k12.ct.us

Gary S. Mala
SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

November 16, 2011

Greetings:

I sincerely hope that this message finds you well and enjoying this school week.

As you may be aware, I prepared and shared a proposal to make up the lost student and staff days as a result of both Hurricane Irene and Storm Alfred with the Board of Education last evening. In an attempt to provide you with an understanding of the serious restrictions placed on any proposal considered, I offer the following information that I obtained from the Legal Department of the Connecticut State Department of Education.

Is there consideration being given to a waiver to the 180 day statutory requirement in response to school days lost due to Hurricane Irene and now Storm Alfred?

Response: No.

Can time be added to the end of all remaining school days to make up the time equivalent for days lost?

Response: No. By statute, the length of any school day cannot exceed seven hours. This would require a statutory change or amendment. I plan on communicating with our state legislative delegation to see if they would be willing to sponsor such an amendment.

Can any scheduled student half-day be extended to a full day and be considered two school days?

Response: No.

Can Saturday sessions be held to make up lost days?

Response: No. This is prohibited by law.

Can school days be made up on holidays? If so, which ones?

Response: School may be in session on Veterans' Day, Good Friday, and Presidents' Day. No school can be in session on any other holidays that fall in December or January of any year.

Understanding that we have not yet entered the winter season, I reviewed the Board's existing policy #5065 (School Calendar Setting), and sought long-range weather forecasts for the 2011-2012 winter season. After considering the many ways to approach the making up of what now stands at eight (8) student days plus two (2) staff days for professional development (August 29th and November 8th), I requested the following revisions to the 2011-2012 district calendar.

Make-up the eight (8) student days we have missed using the following days: Friday, January 13 (previously scheduled as a no school day for students and a teacher professional development day), Wednesday, February 22*, Thursday, February 23*, Friday, February 24*, Thursday, April 19*, Friday, April 20*, Thursday, June 14, and Friday, June 15. Please note that the student attendance policy will be suspended on those days marked with an asterisk (*).

If needed, the next five (5) snow days would be made up June 18 through 22. Any additional snow days (days 6+) will be made up as per Board Policy #5065 using Wednesday, April 18, Tuesday, April 17 and Monday, April 16.

The one (1) postponed day for non-certified staff (August 29th) will follow the last day of school in June and the (3) postponed days of certified staff professional development (August 29th, November 8th and January 13th) will follow the last day of school in June and will focus on curriculum development, technology integration and NEASC preparation.

Additionally, I am preparing to seek legislative relief and will request a waiver to allow for Monday, January 2, 2012 (legal holiday) to be used as a school day. Given the current state statutory restrictions associated with holidays that fall during the months of December and January, this waiver is not likely. If approved, Wednesday, February 22nd would once again be a vacation day.

I recommended this revised calendar based on what I believe to be the most educationally sound reasons given all of the variables that had to be considered. Specifically, I offered the following as my rationale for my proposed make-up plan:

1. It restores four (4) instructional days (most of every option considered) prior to the administration of state-wide, standardized assessments (March 2012).
2. It results in additional, full school week(s) during the month of January.
3. It maintains shortened breaks in February and April and avoids going without a break from the end of February through the end of June.
4. It allows for the historical average of three (3) –to five (5) snow days to be made up in accordance with Board Policy #5065.
5. The last, available day for students needs to be followed by three (3) required professional development days for all certified staff. Staff days have to be made up prior to the state statutory deadline of July 1, 2012. Therefore, the last available day for students is Tuesday, June 26, 2012.
6. It avoids having a school calendar that has no breaks for long periods of time.
7. It allows for three (3) consecutive days for focused, professional development for all certified staff in areas that have been identified as the most significant priorities for district work. These areas are curriculum development and revision for English Language Arts K-12 and mathematics K-12, integration of technology and preparation for accreditation of Avon High School by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC).

I appreciate and respect that some may not agree with what was proposed and ultimately approved by the Board of Education last evening. However, I must re-emphasize that this is a situation of historic proportion, as you know. We remain committed to assisting students, families and staff in all ways feasible to meet the challenges that are created by this necessary revision to the school district calendar, a copy of which is attached.

Thank you for your continued support of our schools.



Gary S. Mala
Superintendent of Schools
gmala@avon.k12.ct.us

“Welcome to a New Beginning”

ATTACHMENT: Revised School Calendar 2011-2012

