

OFFICE OF CHIEF SCHOOL PERFORMANCE OFFICER
Summary of State Board of Education Agenda Items
January 15-16, 2015

OFFICE OF ACCREDITATION

04. Discussion to establish State Board Policy 405 - Length of School Term in accordance with MS Code 37-13-63

The Office of Accreditation is proposing the establishment of State Board Policy 405 - Length of School Term. The policy suggests that school districts build inclement weather days into the school calendar each year. The policy provides guidelines regarding the requirements for altering the length of the school term as a result of inclement weather or natural disasters.

No Action: Discussion Only

Back-up material attached

DRAFT State Board Policy

DESCRIPTOR TERM: Length of School Term

CODE: 405

ADOPTION DATE:

Pursuant to Mississippi Code 37-13-63, except as otherwise provided, all public schools in the state shall be kept in session for at least one hundred eighty (180) days in each scholastic year. A scholastic year shall mean at least one hundred eighty (180) days of school in which both teachers and pupils are in regular attendance for scheduled classroom instruction for not less than sixty-three percent (63%) of the instructional day, as fixed by the local school board. For the purpose of determining a full school day, teachers and students must be present for at least sixty-three percent (63%) of the instructional day, as fixed by the local school board.

Given that every school in the state is likely to close its schools throughout the year due to inclement weather, the State Board of Education (SBE) suggests that every school district build extra days into its yearly calendar to compensate for probable days missed due to inclement weather conditions. Based on MS Code 37-13-63 (2) & 37-151-7 (3), if the Governor has declared a disaster or state of emergency, or the President has declared an emergency or major disaster to exist in this state, the SBE may permit the school district to alter the school term which may include operating the district for less than 180 days, provided the district is located within the area deemed as a disaster or state of emergency.

In accordance with MS Code 37-13-64, in the event weather conditions are the cause of school closure in any school district in which a state of emergency has not been declared pursuant to 37-151-7 (3)(c), the SBE may consider on a case by case basis requests to alter the school district calendar which may include operating the district for less than 180 days.

The intent of these laws is to address catastrophic conditions which would prevent the school district from being able to make up missed days. Under either condition, when a school closing results in fewer than the required 180 days of instruction for students, the following stipulations apply:

1. Instructional day(s) missed prior to the March SBE meeting must be made up - a day for a day.
2. Instructional day(s) missed after the March SBE meeting but prior to the April SBE meeting may be made up by adding no less than 60 minutes to the school day.
3. Only the instructional day(s) missed after the April SBE meeting will be considered for forgiveness on a case-by-case basis.

Source Code: *Miss. Code Ann.* §37-13-63, 37-13-64