




STATE OF CONNECTICUT
STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION



TO: Superintendents of Schools

FROM: Dr. Miguel A. Cardona, Commissioner of Education 

DATE: October 27, 2020

SUBJECT: Weather Related Closures as Remote Learning Days

Connecticut Public Schools have been resilient in developing plans for the continuity of learning since the emergency closure of schools as a result of COVID-19. To implement both hybrid and remote learning plans, districts developed plans that required each to develop a robust infrastructure. This infrastructure includes internet connectivity, a plan to work toward a student-to-device ratio of 1:1 across all grades, a common learning management system, high impact, high quality digital tools, and resources and curricula aligned to educational standards. Combined, they provide continuity of learning, flexibility, and confidence with an orientation toward equity of access and opportunity.

As approved during the CSDE Board of Education meeting on October 7th, 2020, and for the duration of the 2020-2021 school year, Superintendents may choose to treat “snow days” as a Remote Learning Day (RLD) or a day to be made up later in the school year as you have in the past. When necessary, districts can decide to provide all students with remote learning on those days in a manner that is consistent with the regulatory requirements outlined in Adapt, Advance, Achieve and Addendum 12. This decision will be made at the local level led by the superintendent in consultation with local officials. Districts should continue to use an internal set of guidelines and geographical understanding to determine what is best for their district and community.

A “snow day” is intended to limit student movement to and from school where conditions are deemed unsafe. A district “snow day” in the form of a Remote Learning Day remains a work day for all faculty and staff. Superintendents with district leadership can determine the location of work for each staff member.

Developed in collaboration with Connecticut Superintendents, CAPSS, and other educators, listed below are guidance to support superintendents and districts in the development of protocols, policy, and regulations when determining weather related closures as a Remote Learning Day. The guidance outlined is intended to support the unique needs of each community and the current configuration or learning model of each district.

If you have any questions, please contact Chief Academic Officer Irene Parisi at Irene.parisi@ct.gov or 860-713-6852.

Guidance for Consideration when Implementing Remote Learning Days due to Inclement Weather

Decision Making

- Time permitting, Superintendents network with their area superintendent group to engage in discussion and decision making related to a potential closure.
- To provide time for appropriate planning and access, when possible, Superintendents should analyze all available information to determine the extent of the closure the night before.

Teaching and Learning (Taken from ReOpening Plan and Addendum)

- Teachers should utilize learning management systems to deliver instruction through the daily learning plan to include taking attendance. Instructional Guidance for Remote Learning should be implemented.
- In the event of a weather related closure, all impacted district schools apply the instructional learning model that is specific to their district and aligned with CSDE Addendum 12 Plan for Hybrid and Remote Instructional Guidance. Districts will plan the length of the PK–12 remote instructional day of direct engaged learning to not be less than the allocated hours listed below of 4.5 hours for elementary and 5.0 hours for secondary with a 50/50 plan for synchronous and asynchronous delivery of learning.
- The student day should be organized around content specific learning outcomes for each block or period.
- Daily learning plans and schedules should be communicated by district and school leaders to families through the appropriate learning management system and other communication channels.
- Districts should consider not holding extra-curricular activities on a day that has been declared a Remote Learning Day.
- The outline of the district's remote learning during inclement weather strategy should parallel their plan toward 1:1 digital access strategy. This can vary from district to district or from level to level within a district. Daily learning plans should review Design Principles in the Plan for Reimagining CT Classrooms for Continuity of Learning to align with Principle 4 and its focus on equity (page 2).
- All students are expected to complete the requirements of the remote daily learning plan and assignment in a manner consistent with the timeline and quality expectations of the district. Districts are required to align with the guidance outlined in Addendum 6 to provide learning to students with special needs.

Staff and Student Logistics

- All Remote Learning Days (RLD) are considered a staff work day. All certified staff (administrators, teachers, etc.) are expected to be available by email or other forms of communication channels (learning management system) to support students who are engaged in daily learning plans. If the faculty or staff member cannot be available to learners, they should apply for the appropriate leave as they would on any other regular scheduled school day.
- Superintendents have engaged and planned with each bargaining units to establish roles and responsibilities on an emergency closure for non-certified staff and personnel, e.g., paraprofessional. The plan may include considerations for accessing and connecting to technology.
- Districts should direct all staff to maintain a system of record for attendance and work completion, as well as communication of all assignments and lesson activities.
- A student is considered to be “in attendance” if present at his/her assigned school, or an activity sponsored by the school (e.g., field trip), for at least half of the regular school day” (Connecticut State Board of Education, 2008). For more information on planning the instructional time for remote learning and establishing structures and systems to support greater student/family participation in remote learning, please see the guidance documents titled Tracking Daily Attendance on Remote Days in 2020–21 and Supporting Student Attendance during Remote Learning.
- Consideration should be given to the number of students and faculty who may be under power or internet outage circumstances before declaring a remote learning day when closed for inclement weather, as it may be detrimental to the participant’s ability to successfully participate in these activities. If a widespread power outage exists, superintendents with local officials can determine schools are closed and the day is recorded as a closure. The closure will require make up at the end of the school year.
- Staff should be able to respond to appropriate requests for student assistance during the duration of a RLD. These responses should be in the form of email or other acceptable forms of electronic communication and should be in a manner deemed to be timely by all parties involved.
- Districts can decide what the obligation of non-certified staff is on Remote Learning Days.
- Districts are required to align with the guidance outlined in Addendum 13 to provide meals to students on Remote Learning Days in place of a called “snow day.”

For latest version of the ReOpening plan and Addendums, visit:

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/COVID19/COVID-19-Resources-for-Families-and-Educators/Addendums-and-FAQs>