Education Programs

Organization of School Calendar and School Day

I. Purpose

This policy provides for a timely determination of the school calendar and school day.

II. General Statement of Policy

The primary goal of the calendar and school day is to advance learning for students and professional learning for teachers, in compliance with required guidelines set by the Minnesota Department of Education.

III. School Calendar Development

A. The school calendar will be adopted by the school board at least twelve months prior to the start of a school year. It will meet all provisions of state attendance law. The school calendar will establish student days, workshop days for employees, and other information related to students, staff and parents.

B. The school board will approve a calendar development process which includes:
- Consideration of state statutes, district work agreements and district learning needs
- Input opportunities from staff and families
- A decision-making process which defines both the process for gathering input and the team developing the recommendations

IV. Student School Day Schedule

A. The superintendent will be responsible for developing a school day schedule for each building, subject to review by the school board. All requirements and provisions of state law will be met.

B. The superintendent will work in collaboration with building principals in developing the school day schedule for schools. The decision making process will include:
- Input opportunities from staff and families
- Decision-making process which defines both the process for gathering input and the team developing the recommendations

C. In developing the student day schedule, consideration will be given to the

following:
- learning priorities;
- district work agreements;
- school bus schedules;
- cooperative programs;
- differences in time requirements at various grade levels;
- effective utilization of facilities;
- cost effectiveness; and
- other concerns deserving of attention

V. E-Learning Days

See the Edina Inclement Weather e-Learning Plan, attached as Appendix I, and also available on the district website under Academics, Learning and Technology, e-Learning Days.

Legal References:
Minn. Stat. § 120A.40 (School Calendar)
Minn. Stat. § 120A.41 (Length of School Year; Days of Instruction)
Minn. Stat. § 120A.415 (Extended School Calendar)
Minn. Stat. § 120A.42 (Holidays)
Minn. Stat. § 122A.40, Subds. 7 and 7a (Employment; Contracts; Termination)
Minn. Stat. § 122A.41, Subds. 4 and 4a (Teacher Tenure Act; Cities of the First Class; Definitions)
Minn. Stat. § 127A.41, Subd. 7 (Distribution of School Aids; Appropriation)

Cross Reference:
Policy 425 (Staff Development)

Policy		INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT 273
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Edina Inclement Weather e-Learning Plan

Table of Contents

Purpose:

To optimize a learning opportunity afforded by new legislation: The 2017 Legislature has amended the Length of School Year; Hours of Instruction (Minn. Stat. § 120A.41) to include the option of a school utilizing e-Learning days:
- Due to inclement weather.
- Up to five days in one school year.
- Counted as an instructional day and included as hours of instruction.
- Ability to provide continuity of instruction during non student days.

The following is the district's plan for utilizing this opportunity for continued learning in case of inclement weather.

About this plan

This plan was created over a two year period with input from many stakeholders, including: Teaching and Learning, Communications Department, Student Services, Assistive Technology, Teaching and Learning Board committee, EME, Technology Advisory Team, parents and the Department of Media and Technology Services. Upon completion, the Edina School Board approved the following plan.

In the development of the e-Learning Plan, we centered our discussion on the following key aspects:

1. Keep student at the center of all of our discussions
2. Ensure that instruction and learning will be maximized
3. Satisfy the state required elements for an e-learning plan

Like all plans, it is essential that it works in practice and contains strategies for continuous improvement. To that end, this plan will be reviewed annually and modified if needed.

This plan is divided into the following components:

1. Communications
2. Instruction
3. Training
4. Other considerations

Communications

Parent communication

The following forms of communication will provide parents and students with information about e-learning days, when they will be used, how they will be notified, what to expect for an e-learning day and to answer additional questions:

1. Communication to families about e-learning days
    a. Beginning of the year communication
       Upon approval from district leadership, the communications department will include information about e-learning days in their back to school communications annually. Content in this communication will provide background and how families will be notified of an e-learning day and what to expect when an e-learning day is called. It will also reference a web page on the district website where they can find additional information. By including this information in our back to school communications, we are providing families with sufficient advance information about e-learning days so that families can be prepared in the event we invoke them.
    b. Notification to parents of an e-learning day
       As much advance notice will be given as possible. The following practice already exists for notifying parents of school closings due to inclement weather: Parents/Guardians receive an automated phone call, email and optionally a text via the district's mass notification service. In addition to district mass communication, announcements are made on radio station WCCO and television stations WCCO, KSTP, KARE, and FOX, and the school district web page, www.edinaschools.org, prior to 6:30 a.m. that school will be closed. This practice will be amended to include notification that the district is invoking an e-learning day and provide instructions for accessing e-learning activities assigned via our learning management system.
       For e-learning days held on non student days, plenty of advance warning and will be provided to families. In addition, updates will be given to parents and students.
    c. Website with e-learning day resources. The district has developed a website that provides families additional information about e-learning days.

2. Communications between teachers and students and families
   a. A legislative requirement for e-learning is that there is a synchronous component, or the ability for a student-teacher interaction. The following items will help facilitate this.
      i. A standard format for posting e-learning day content on our learning management systems
      ii. Clear understanding of what is expected for e-learning
      iii. Clear expectations and instructions on how to contact the instructor in case of questions or additional information
   b. Posting of activities and virtual office hours
      i. When an e-learning day is declared, teachers would be responsible for updating their course pages in the LMS in the following manner.
         1. In K-2: posting instructions for the day in Seesaw.
         2. In 3-12: create an Assignment in Schoology with instructions. The title should be the name of the assignment, e-Learning Day and the date. All files needed for students should be attached to the assignment.
      ii. Included in this content would be the following information.
         1. Anticipate time requirements for course work recognizing students learn at different paces, especially in an independent context.
         2. Be present on Schoology or Seesaw and email during the e-Learning Day. Provide a school telephone number where parents can call to leave a message if they have questions.
         3. Plan for self-directed, independent learning with specific consideration to age and individual learning needs.
         4. Customize learning opportunities especially in troubleshooting student challenges
         5. Communicate with colleagues to ensure common expectations, communications, and protocols.

Instruction

e-Learning Days are a way for us to have continuity of learning in the event of inclement weather. The following components will be in place to ensure the program meets the requirements of the legislation and more importantly, aids in the learning process for students:
- Delivered primarily online
- In sync with current lesson plans, learning continues
- Presence of a teacher licensed in the content area/grade level:
  ○ Delivering content
  ○ Assessment of and for learning
  ○ Providing feedback
  ○ Diagnosing misconceptions
  ○ Coaching
  ○ Explaining concepts
- Attendance is taken
- Teachers are available online and by phone

Instructional Content

The following is a suggested framework for content during an e-learning day. Again, teachers will be provided professional development time to work on developing content. However it is important that there is consistency across the system in the delivery of this content.

- K-2 Classroom Staff: Share a Tic-Tac-Toe Board of ideas for students to create - connect with specialists for art, PE and music; Use Seesaw to share journals for parents to view.
- Gr. 3-5 Classroom Staff: Share a Google slide presentation with subjects listed on each slide for work completion; Use Schoology where parents can view as an Assignment (so it shows up in the "Upcoming" column on the right).
- Gr. 6-12 Classroom Staff: Create an assignment in Schoology with the instructions. The title should be the name of the assignment, e-Learning Day and the date. All files needed for students should be attached to the assignment.
- Content in Schoology should include:
  a. Assignment or Folder with Completion rules posted with the e-Learning day date as the due date at 11:59 pm.
  b. All communication for requirements to communicate expectations for that day should be posted in that assignment.
  c. Learning targets for that day listed
  d. Optional: If using a folder with completion rules, pages with embedded content and/or links to resources be noted.
  e. Attendance is confirmed via one of the following:
      i. Student Completion on the assignment or folder to confirm that students viewed the materials if using the folder.
      ii. Some type of submitted student creation or reflection to document learning.
      iii. Formative assessments to check for understanding
  f. Through synchronous and or asynchronous learning be present on Schoology or Seesaw and email during the elearning day. These could include the following:
      i. Posting your school telephone number and responding via an online chat or Google Voice.
      ii. Creating an online meeting using one of the districts provided online meeting tools such as Google Meet, Skype, or My Blue Button.
  g. Optional
      i. Screencast of Lessons for direct instruction
      ii. Review of digital citizenship expectations for the activities

The following is implemented in order to assist students with special needs:

Special Education will have access to their students' courses. Additionally, teachers will be able to create their own courses with their students. Below is additional information.

- **Special Education Resource Staff:** Contact students directly through SeeSaw (K-2), Schoology (Gr. 3-12), or email with reminders for how their accommodations and modifications can support their engagement with e-Learning Day activities *or* support general education teachers in lesson plan development to ensure accommodations are available.
  ○ Be available to access the student LMS system to assist and/or consider using virtual meeting tools such as Google Meet or Skype to assist the student.
- **Special Education Site Based Staff:** Share a list of 2-4 activities students can engage in at home to further progress toward IEP goals or learning in classroom activities through

SeeSaw, Schoology, or emailed directly to families. Include learning targets with your activity ideas. To verify attendance, families should respond with a picture of what they did on the e-learning day so students are able to share with their classmates when they return to school. Alternatively, you may ask families to create a video of a functional routine at home.

- ○ Be available to access the student LMS system to assist and/or consider using virtual meeting tools such as Google Meet or Skype to assist the student.

Training

Training for all users will be critical to ensure the success of elearning days. Indeed, currently our secondary schools leverage technology on a daily basis and an e-learning day will not be as difficult to implement. However, it is important that we provide opportunities for our staff, especially our k-5 grades, Special Education staff, and community to train for elearning days so that if one is declared, learning can continue for all of our students. The following training will be provided. Development of Instructional delivery frameworks. To assist our teachers in creating the necessary content as well as provide consistency across our learning environment, framework for instructions have been developed and will be accessible via our Learning Management Systems They are :

- K-2 Classroom Staff: Share out a Tic-Tac-Toe Board of ideas for students to create - connect with specialists for art, PE and music; Use Seesaw to share out to Journals for parents to view
- 3-5 Classroom Staff: Share out a Google Slide with subjects listed on each slide for work completion; Use Schoology to share out for parents to view as an Assignment, so it shows up in the Upcoming column on the right.
- 6-12 Create an assignment in Schoology with the instructions. The title should be the name of the assignment, eLearning Day and the date. All files needed for students should be attached to the assignment and instructions on how to communicate with the teacher provided.

Training will focus on the following areas so that when e-learning days are initiated, the following is consistent across the district.

- How to leverage technology to provide direction to students for learning in place to a face-to-face interaction.
- In order to be present on Schoology or Seesaw, training will be provided on how to use district-provided meeting tools such as Google Voice, Skype, Google Meet and My Blue Button.
- Strategies for incorporating learning that is self-directed, independent learning with specific consideration to age and individual learning needs.
- How to customize learning opportunities, especially in troubleshooting student challenges.

Additional Items

The following additional items are critical components of the plan and have been incorporated.

- Addressing students with special needs
  The following is implemented in order to assist students with special needs:

Special Education will have access to their students' courses. Additionally, teachers will be able to create their own courses with their students. Below is additional information.

- **Special Education Resource Staff:** Contact students directly through SeeSaw (K-2), Schoology (Gr. 3-12), or email with reminders for how their accommodations and modifications can support their engagement with e-Learning Day activities *or* support general education teachers in lesson plan development to ensure accommodations are available.
    - Be available to access the student LMS system to assist and/or consider using virtual meeting tools such as Google Meet or Skype to assist the student.
- **Special Education Site Based Staff:** Share a list of 2-4 activities students can engage in at home to further progress toward IEP goals or learning in classroom activities through SeeSaw, Schoology, or emailed directly to families. Include learning targets with your activity ideas. To verify attendance, families should respond with a picture of what they did on the e-learning day so students are able to share with their classmates when they return to school. Alternatively, you may ask families to create a video of a functional routine at home.
    - Be available to access the student LMS system to assist and/or consider using virtual meeting tools such as Google Meet or Skype to assist the student.

- Access to technology

  Access to technology is critical for learning at Edina Public Schools. Therefore access to technology and Internet access is critical for the day-to-day learning in Edina Public Schools regardless of e-learning or normal instruction.
    - The following process ensures all families have internet access for all learning.
        - Provide anyone who needs one, a district device to access learning
        - Provide anyone who is identified, a mobile hotspot

    - In addition, during our e-learning days the expectation is that a telephone can be used to provide assistance to our students. The plan is to utilize the voicemail system to leave messages, which then go directly to email. We would assist teachers to leverage Google Voice in order to keep their telephone numbers private.

Review

Though Edina Public Schools has a rich tradition of leveraging technology in our learning, e-learning is different and there will be opportunities to learn from our experiences once put into place. To that end this program should be reviewed annually.

Added to Policy 601: 1/13/20

Appendices

Appendix A: DRAFT announcement to Families

Learning continues with e-Learning Days during school closures due to Inclement weather

Edina Public schools will be implementing School Board approved e-Learning Days beginning in the 2019-2020 school year. Specifically, Edina Public Schools will begin to take advantage of legislation, **the 2017 Legislature has amended the Length of School Year; Hours of Instruction (Minn. Stat. § 120A.41) to include the option of a school utilizing e-Learning days due to inclement weather.**

When there is severe weather, EPS like others has to cancel school and in doing so, pausing our students' learning. By leveraging our technology systems and our staffs' long tradition of leveraging technology for instruction, we will be able to keep learning going even when the schools are closed.

Working with curriculum staff and Digital Learning specialists, teachers will develop learning opportunities that offer a combination of online and offline activities. These activities will be guided by students' classroom teachers. In addition, during these e-Learning days staff will utilize communication technology, including the telephone to support students in their learning.

Starting the 2019-2020 school year, Edina Public schools may wish to implement a e-Learning day in the event of a school closing due to inclement weather. Please note, during this pilot year, we may concentrate these e-Learning days at grades 6-12.

Appendix B: Website FAQ

What are e-Learning Days?

> e-Learning days are stay-at-home learning days that are invoked when the weather conditions force the district to close. Using our normal severe weather communications, families will be instructed to access technology to learn about what is expected on these days.

Why do we need e-Learning Days?

> Continuity of learning is important for our students to succeed. In order to do this, we feel that learning needs to continue even when we have an unplanned cancellation of a school day. Students will be expected to participate in their courses in EdinaApps or through activities that they can do around their home.

> All schools in Minnesota have a required amount of time for which students must attend. In the event that we have a school cancellation due to inclement weather, e-Learning Days help us meet our attendance requirements.

How do e-Learning Days work?

- Families will receive an automated message notifying them of a school cancellation. Messages will also be distributed on the district website, social media, and appear on local television stations.
- In most cases, K-Gr. 5 students will complete portions of a pre-assigned selection of learning activities created by their teacher. Gr. 6-12 students will log on to their courses in Schoology to connect with their teachers and work on their assignments.
- Teachers will check email and voicemail periodically during the school day to answer questions and provide guidance.
- The due dates for e-Learning Day assignments will be determined by each teacher but attendance is taken for that day.
- Students with special needs may face unique challenges while performing academic tasks independently. Provisions will be made for the particular needs of these students by their teachers.

How will the district ensure access to e-Learning materials for all students?

Access to technology is critical for learning at Edina Public Schools. Therefore access to technology and Internet access is critical for the day-to-day learning in Edina Public Schools regardless of e-learning or normal instruction.

The following process ensures all families have internet access for all learning.

- Provide anyone who needs one, a district device to access learning
- Provide anyone who is identified, a mobile hotspot

In addition, during our e-learning days the expectation is that a telephone can be used to provide assistance to our students. The plan is to utilize the voicemail system to leave messages, which then go directly to email. We would assist teachers to leverage Google Voice in order to keep their telephone numbers private.

Are other districts doing this?

A number of other districts in Minnesota are using similar activities for e-Learning Days. We looked at what other districts are doing and have incorporated some of those ideas in creating a plan to best meet the needs of our students, while complying with state laws that set expectations for e-Learning Days.