

Maine School Administrative District No. 75

50 Republic Avenue

TOPSHAM, MAINE 04086

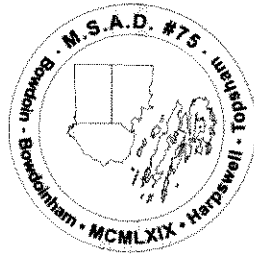
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November 6, 2017

Making Up Missed School Days

Questions are already being asked about making up last week's missed school days due to the power outage. There are rumors and misunderstanding about those days. The bottom line is that we are required to make up those days. Below is a statement from the Maine Department of Education.

School Administrative Units (SAU) that canceled school days due to circumstances surrounding the recent storm should treat those cancellations the same as any other weather-related school cancellation.

The state of emergency issued by the State of Maine was expressly to provide utility work crews relief from federal highway regulations in order to restore power to those who have been impacted – it does not result in an automatic excusal of missed school days.

As part of the standard procedure for meeting requirements for instructional days, written requests for waivers for storm days may be submitted by the district school board in the spring when districts have a better sense of storm days used.

When seeking any waiver of the minimum school year requirements, the Department of Education expects that the school district will have "exhausted all reasonable avenues for making up lost school days, and that waivers will be granted only in extraordinary circumstances. As a reminder, the requirement is 175 days for students in grades K-11, and 170 days for high school seniors. Acceptable efforts to reschedule classes include the following:

- Rescheduling or shortening scheduled vacation
- Postponing the scheduled school closing date
- Conducting classes on weekends
- In addition, districts sometimes choose to revert a scheduled teacher in-service day to a student instructional day"

Families are anxious to know how any additional school closures, such as snow days, will be addressed in our school system. We will begin looking at our current calendar now that school has resumed. We have a Calendar Committee that designed the original school calendar, and we will reconvene that group after discussing possible options with our administrators. It is our intent to identify how each future missed school day will be made up. Ultimately that plan will be presented to the School Board. As noted in the message from the Department of Education, the School Board may wish to request a waiver in the spring.

The District will present a way for parents to share their preferences as well. Whatever plan we develop will undoubtedly create conflicts for some families, while appealing to others. We will do the best we can to be sensitive to these conflicts and not negatively impact the instructional needs of our students and staff.

We will keep you updated as we work on this issue. The storm has been compared to the Ice Storm, and families and schools have endured challenges. Yet in times like these, the patience, understanding and compassion that people have shown one another is a source of pride for all of us in M.S.A.D. No. 75.

We hope every home, in all four towns, is back to normal soon!

With appreciation,

Brad Smith, Superintendent of Schools