School Calendar Requirements

School Calendar as Provided in Statute

Missouri statute directs that each school board shall prepare annually a calendar for the school term per Section 171.031.1, RSMo. The school term shall consist of one thousand forty-four hours of actual pupil attendance which shall be required with no minimum number of school days required, and “school day” shall mean any day in which, for any amount of time, pupils are under the guidance and direction of teachers in the teaching process. For kindergarten and prekindergarten grade levels the board shall provide a minimum of five hundred twenty-two hours of actual pupil attendance in a term with no minimum number of school days.

School Calendar as Provided in Statute

In order to be eligible to receive state aid for its education program a school district and charter school must adopt a calendar that meets minimum standards that provides at least 1,044 hours of instruction and such plan must include a minimum of 36 weather make-up hours for possible loss of attendance due to inclement weather. No minimum number of school days shall be required, and “school day” shall mean any day in which, for any amount of time, pupils are under the guidance and direction of teachers in the teaching process per Section 160.041, RSMo.

A school district or charter school may be exempt from the requirement to make up school lost or cancelled due to inclement weather in the school district or charter school when the school district or charter school has made up the thirty-six hours required under subsection 2 of this section and half the number of additional lost or cancelled hours up to forty-eight, resulting in no more than sixty total make-up hours required by this section.

Points of Clarification

1. In order to assure that the district or charter school has complied with this statute, the planned calendar will be reported to the Department on Core Data Screen 10 by August 15 of each year.

2. School districts or charter schools must meet the minimum requirement of providing at least 1,044 hours of instruction, such calendar shall also include thirty-six make-up hours for possible loss of attendance due to inclement weather, as defined in subsection 1 of section 171.033.

   A half-day Kindergarten or Prekindergarten program must provide a minimum of five hundred twenty-two hours of actual pupil attendance and shall also include thirty-six make-up hours for possible loss of attendance due to inclement weather.

3. A school district or charter school may be exempt from the requirement to make-up some school lost or cancelled due to inclement weather in the school district or charter school when the school district or charter school has made up the 36 hours and half the number of additional lost or cancelled hours up to 48, resulting in no more than 60 total make-up hours required by this section.

4. One thousand forty-four hours of actual pupil attendance with no minimum number of school days shall be required for each pupil or group of pupils; except that, the board shall provide a minimum of 522 hours of actual pupil attendance in a term for kindergarten and prekindergarten pupils with no minimum number of school days.

5. Planning more than the 1,044 hour requirement will not generate additional ADA and, as a result, a higher payment amount for a school district or charter school. The basic formula calculation uses student attendance hours to equate an ADA amount for each district or charter school. For example, a student with perfect attendance is a 1.0 ADA. If a district or charter school plans 1,044 hours of instruction that same student will be a 1.0 ADA. If a district or charter school plans 1,104 hours of instruction that same student will be a 1.0 ADA. A student can never be more than a 1.0 ADA and the amount of hours planned will not change this outcome.
6. Per 171.033.5, RSMo., an approved alternative method of instruction can be used for any hours of school lost or cancelled due to exceptional or emergency circumstances during a school year which shall include, but not be limited to, inclement weather, a utility outage, or an outbreak of a contagious disease. The alternative method of instruction, provided for in a DESE approved plan, can be used for up to 36 hours during the school year pursuant to 171.033.5, however, if used, will not count towards the first 36 required make-up hours.

No Opening Date Earlier than Fourteen Calendar Days Prior to the First Monday in September

Starting in 2020-21 Section 171.031, RSMo, directs that a district may not set their opening date earlier than fourteen calendar days prior to the first Monday in September.

Inclement Weather Make-up

For information regarding inclement weather make-up requirements please see Finance Topics and Procedures page.

Alternative Methods of Instruction

Beginning in school year 2020-21, a local education agency (LEA) will not be required to make up school hours that are lost or cancelled due to exceptional or emergency circumstances, which shall include, but not be limited to, inclement weather, a utility outage, or an outbreak of a contagious disease, if the LEA implements an Alternative Methods of Instruction (AMI) Plan that is approved by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) (see Section 171.033, RSMo). LEAs must assure that the plan will favorably impact teaching and learning to receive DESE approval. LEAs will be required to submit an AMI Plan for each school year of implementation.

When an AMI day is implemented the day is considered a day school was in session. Attendance hours must be claimed on completion of assignments and must be claimed in the manner approved in the AMI plan. Students who do not complete the lessons in the timeframe and manner approved within the AMI plan must be marked absent. Since the AMI is limited to 36 hours it may be necessary to adjust the length of the day for one or more AMI days to ensure no more than 36 AMI hours are included in the district’s hours-in-session for the school year.

The Office of Quality Schools will begin accepting AMI Plans for review immediately. Plans for the 2020-21 school year must be submitted no later than June 15, 2020. The AMI Plan Application can be found here: https://modese.wufoo.com/forms/alternative-methods-of-instruction-application/.

The Office of Quality Schools and the Office of Special Education have created guidance documents to assist LEAs wishing to utilize this provision during the 2020-21 school year. The guidance documents and AMI Plan application can be found here: https://dese.mo.gov/quality-schools/alternative-methods-instruction.

For questions regarding implementing an Alternative Methods of Instruction (AMI) Plan, please contact either the Office of Quality Schools at 573-751-4104 or Special Education Compliance at 573-751-0699.