

**Alternatives To Making Up Snow Days (Without Tears)**  
**North Dakota School Boards Association**  
**Friday, Feb. 8, 2019**

**How long is a school year?**

- Minimum of 175 classroom days
- 2 professional development days
- 2 days for parent-teacher consultation

**What is a school day?**

- Kindergarten and elementary: At least 5.5 hours
- High school: At least 6 hours

**Storm days planning requirements**

- Districts must set aside storm days in their calendar
- Add up number of days during the last five school years when class was cancelled or shortened by weather
- Divide that number by five
- That many “weather days” must be built into the calendar
- Storm days may not be included in the calendar before January

**What to do if you have too much classroom time lost?**

- Schools must make “every effort” to reschedule classes
- Schools may apply to Department of Public Instruction for storm day forgiveness
- Applications forwarded to governor
- Governor has not been inclined to waive storm days
- Districts do not receive state aid for unforgiven storm days

**What alternatives are being explored in the Legislature?**

- [SB2229](#), Schools are not required to make up early dismissal time if the early end of a school day was prompted by a National Weather Service no-travel advisory within the school district
  - SB2229 Sponsors: Sen. Joan Heckaman, D-New Rockford; Jerry Klein, R-Fessenden; Erin Oban, D-Bismarck; David Rust, R-Tioga; Reps. Alisa Mitskog, D-Wahpeton; Cynthia Schreiber-Beck, R-Wahpeton
  - Department of Transportation no-travel advisories likely to be substituted for National Weather Service
  - Question about how bill encourages travel away from school at a time when travel is being discouraged

- [HB1170](#), Allows a school to make up a canceled day of instruction by using a “virtual education plan” approved by the superintendent of public instruction. The superintendent would have authority to adopt regulations for virtual education plans.
  - HB1170 Sponsors: Reps. Jim Grueneich, R-Jamestown; Jake Blum, R-Grand Forks; Jason Dockter, R-Bismarck; Craig Headland, R-Montpelier; Bernie Satrom, R-Jamestown; and Don Vigasaa, R-Cooperstown. Senate sponsor: Terry Wanzek, R-Jamestown.
  - Applies if school is cancelled for a full day or partial day
  - At least 95 percent participation on any day or partial day by students, teachers and administrators
  - “Active instruction” required
  - Encourages use of technology for education
  - Helps students get familiar with remote learning – this is something they can already do in taking college classes and Advanced Placement courses in high school
  - Removes pressure on administrators to hold school days during inclement weather out of concern for losing state aid
  - Concerns raised about how this affects special education students and students without access to the necessary technology

**Some clamor for the governor or the superintendent of public instruction to step in**

- Superintendent of public instruction has no legal authority to order school cancellations
- Governor has authority to use emergency powers to order school cancellations, but this has rarely happened
- School administrators are trusted to use their good judgment in deciding whether to cancel or shorten a school day