



STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

ELLEN E. WEAVER
STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF EDUCATION

MEMORANDUM

TO: District Superintendents
Public Information Officers
Report Card/Accountability Coordinators

FROM: Jewell Stanley
Director, Office of Federal and State Accountability

Bradley Mitchell
Director, Office of Virtual Education

Dan Ralyea
Director, Office of Research and Data Analysis

DATE: February 29, 2024

RE: School Calendars and eLearning Days

The purpose of this memorandum is to provide clarifying information about school calendars as plans are being considered for the 2024–25 school year.

All statutory and regulatory requirements, including make-up days, remain in effect for the 2024–25 school year. Districts should ensure compliance with applicable state statutes and regulations as 2024–25 school calendars are developed.

Minimum Requirements

Pursuant to [S.C. Code Ann. § 59-1-425](#) of the South Carolina Code of Laws, all districts are required to establish a calendar with 190 days, which must include:

- a minimum of 180 days of instruction covering at least nine months;
- at least three days to be used as make-up days, and
- three scheduled days used for collegial professional development.

All districts, including those approved as eLearning districts, must include the make-up days in their 2024–25 school calendars.

Please note that eLearning (or virtual) days are reserved for districts that have (a) been approved as an eLearning district, and (b) experienced short-term disruptions to in-person teaching and learning (e.g., power outages, water main breaks). eLearning days may not be scheduled in advance to account for professional development days.

Half-Days

Regarding half days, there are two requirements that are often seen at odds with one another:

- § 59-1-425(E): “The instructional day for secondary students must be at a minimum six hours a day, or its equivalent weekly, excluding lunch. The school day for elementary students must be at a minimum six hours a day, or its equivalent weekly, including lunch.” (See also State Board of Education Regulations [43-231](#), [43-232](#), and [43-234](#))
- § 59-1-425(F): “Elementary and secondary schools may reduce the length of the instructional day to not less than three hours for not more than three days each school year for staff development, teacher conferences, or for the purpose of administering end-of-semester and end-of-year examinations.”

Section 59-1-425(F) permits only three partial days when the instructional minutes are reduced *below* the weekly equivalent of six hours per instructional day required by Section 59-1-425(E), i.e., when an 1,800-minute week is reduced by three hours to a 1,620-minute week. As long as the week contains the equivalent, minimum instructional minutes, a school may have more than three partial days.

Submission of 2024–25 Calendars

After receiving local board approval, the 2024–25 school calendars should be submitted to DEIM@ed.sc.gov no later than **May 13, 2024**. Districts that opt to implement a year-round modified school calendar must label the submitted school calendar as such.

The South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) does not provide approval of school calendars prior to their publication or implementation. Local school boards are responsible for approving school calendars, while the SCDE monitors them for compliance with state statutes and regulations.

The SCDE uses school calendars for a variety of purposes, including:

- Accreditation
- funding (average daily membership), reporting timelines (45th day, 90th day, 135th day), precoding, testing (e.g., last twenty days of the school year), and accountability metrics (e.g., 45th day to the first day of testing). It is important that the SCDE has the correct calendar for clear communication.

Year-Round Modified School Calendars

This memorandum is also in response to questions raised with respect to year-round modified school calendars, as permitted under state law. Pursuant to S.C. Code Ann. § 59-1-425, the South Carolina Code of Laws provides for the beginning date of school terms in South Carolina. The law states:

[b]eginning with the 2007-2008 school year the opening date for students must not be before the third Monday in August, except for schools operating on a year-round modified school calendar.

Please note that schools operating year-round modified calendars will only be funded for 180 days of instruction. Districts must also have all statewide assessments completed in accordance with the assessment schedule posted on the SCDE website for those results to be included on the school report cards issued the following fall.

eLearning

Districts that meet the criteria for an eLearning district as determined by the SCDE may use **up to five eLearning days to allow for the make-up of short-term disruptions to in-person teaching and learning interruptions** (e.g., power outages, water main breaks). An eLearning day is used on the specific day that schools would otherwise have had to close due to an unforeseen emergency or when a make-up day would normally be used. eLearning days are designed to offer more flexibility to avoid loss of instruction due to school closings or to manage necessary make-up days that are already included in the school calendar. See the [eLearning Days District Handbook](#) for more detail on how to use eLearning Days.

Pursuant to § 59-1-425 of the South Carolina Code of Laws, each district is required to build in three make-up days into their school calendars. eLearning days themselves do not appear on the planning calendar. If an eLearning district must utilize a make-up day, the district can choose to do so with eLearning. When the make-up day is used in eLearning, it counts toward the five allowed days of eLearning.

Approved eLearning districts are encouraged to include a note on the calendar about the use of eLearning for scheduled make-up days. An example of language that could be used for clarification is as follows:

District XXX is a SCDE approved eLearning district. The current provision allows the district to use up to five (5) days in eLearning. These days are for emergency situations, such as inclement weather or utility interruptions (for example, water line breaks or power outages). They are not planned days on the calendar.

If you have questions about the use of eLearning days, please contact Tammy Hegler at thegler@ed.sc.gov or Rebecca Velasquez at rvelasquez@ed.sc.gov. For questions regarding school calendars, contact CR Hall at chall@ed.sc.gov.