

Weather Makeup Day Frequently Asked Questions:

What's this call about?

- The survey is intended to gather input so that the administration and school board can make an informed decision.

Why now? I've never heard of this before...

- Indiana law requires 180 days of instruction, except in the case of extreme weather, in which case the state department of education can waive days. This new option to waive days if the instructional time is made up was presented by the Indiana Department of Education on Friday, February 7th.

How many snow days do we have to make up?

- We've missed 10 days and have to make up 8 (as of 2/17/14). The state granted a waiver of 2 of the 10 days but is requiring schools to make up either the other days or time equivalent to that number of days – or some combination thereof.

What happens if we miss school again?

- We are required to make up any missed days – so, we will either have to keep adding to the end of the school year, lengthen school days, or some combination of the two.

When will school end?

- The school year was originally scheduled to end on May 29th – adding 8 make-up days shifts the current end date to June 10th. If we extend the school day, we would end school on June 3rd – again, unless we have additional weather-related cancellations.

Will the additional time be added in the morning or afternoon?

- This decision has not been made.
- Although it is not possible to add all of the extra time in the morning, it is possible that up to ½ hour of the time could be added in the morning. Some or all of the time could be added in the afternoons.
- If it is the community's wish to extend the school day rather than adding additional days at the end of the school year, we will work out the details.

I have a kindergartener (or child with ADHD). I'm not sure he can handle sitting in a chair for up to another hour per day.

What will be done for students who need something different?

- Teachers are always encouraged to differentiate instruction to meet student needs.
- In the elementary setting, teachers will be encouraged to provide core instruction at the beginning of the day and use the additional time to supplement learning with meaningful activities at the end of the day.

Are there benefits to one choice or the other?

- Transportation expenses will be reduced if we extend the length of the school day and reduce the number of days in session. Fewer days of running the buses means less expense for fuel and wear and tear.
- Increased instructional time will occur prior to the second ISTEP and end-of-course assessment windows if the length of the school days is increased. If the days are added at the end of the year, the five days of instruction will occur after the state tests measuring student learning in the courses.

What priorities are there in making this decision?

- Compliance with the law
- Instructional time prior to state tests
- Impact on families
- Financial impacts

How will we find out what the decision is? And when?

- Information will be shared through notes home, the phone message system, the website, and the media.
- A decision is anticipated during the week of March 3rd.

Why didn't we have school during mid-winter break and why don't we have school on Good Friday?

- Concord’s calendar was built a year in advance; the built-in makeup days were scheduled at the end of the school year and are shown as the dates up until June 3rd. This year’s unprecedented weather has surpassed the expectation for needed snow days. Because families may have planned personal business around the scheduled holiday breaks, we did not adjust the calendar with such little notice.

Why doesn’t Concord build in snow days like other neighboring districts?

- Concord does build in snow days. They are scheduled at the end of the school year so that school can end sooner if there are fewer than three cancellations. Neighboring districts have also exceeded their built-in snow days and have to make the same decision that Concord is making.
- All schools are required to have 180 days of instruction. Some schools add snow days in the middle of the school year which extends their school years regardless of whether or not they have weather cancellations. Building in snow days after the last scheduled day of school and prior to the summer break allows summer break to start sooner and be longer if there are no weather-related cancellations during the regular school year.

Is this the beginning of longer days beyond this school year?

- The state mandates 180 days of attendance, so – barring severe weather and a state exception as provided here – we have no intention of lengthening the school day in the future.

Is this related to the referendum?

- It is not related to the referendum – this is a new option provided by the Indiana Department of Education for this year only.
- There could be some financial impact based on either choice; however, it is not our primary motivation.
- Because this is not a long-term option, it will have no significant impact on the district’s need to make up for the losses resulting from the property tax caps.