



NEWS RELEASE

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State Board of Education Gives Districts Options to Deal With This Year's Winter Storms

Temporary rule allows flexibility for up to 14 hours of missed instructional time

(Salem, Ore.) – The State Board of Education today unanimously approved a temporary rule that will allow districts to better cope with school days lost due to weather. The Board is allowing districts to apply to the Deputy Superintendent of Public Instruction for permission to count up to 14 hours of emergency school closures as missed instructional time, something all districts were able to do prior to this school year.

“I have heard from many district officials who say that the flexibility available in previous years would be helpful this year as they cope with a much more severe winter than normal,” said Deputy Superintendent of Public Instruction Salam Noor. “We know that districts value instructional time, just as we do, but recent storms – which led Governor Brown to declare a state of emergency earlier this month – hit some districts harder than others. Ultimately it will be up to each district to come up with a plan best suited to its situation to make up as much lost class time as possible.”

The 14-hour rule was changed in order to make sure school calendars provided as much class time as possible. The State Board voted unanimously in 2015 to change the rule, starting with the current school year.

“As a Board, we know that one of the keys to increasing our graduation rate is making sure students are in class as much as possible, which is why we have focused on strengthening instructional time expectations in recent years,” said State Board Chair Charles R. Martinez, Jr. “But we also know some districts are running out of options to respond to the unprecedented weather events so far this year. With this one-time, temporary action we have ensured that there is accountability by requiring a public hearing and written justification at the district level, coupled with approval at the state level on a case-by-case basis. We trust that each community will make the best decision for students as they plan for the school year.”

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