



eLearning Days District Handbook

1A.58. (SDE-EIA: Digital Learning Plan)

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eLearning Days Proviso

1A.58. (SDE-EIA: Digital Learning Plan) The implementation of the e-Learning program is the responsibility of the Department of Education. Those e-Learning school districts who meet the criteria for an e-Learning district as determined by the Department of Education may use up to five e-Learning days to allow for the make-up of short-term disruptions to in-person teaching and learning.

eLearning Days Parameters

Districts that meet the criteria for an eLearning district as determined by the South Carolina Department of Education (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.

An instructional day should not be classified as eLearning unless in response to emergency situations, such as inclement weather or utility interruptions that would typically cause a school closing.

When is a good time to implement eLearning?

eLearning allows districts the flexibility to continue learning when they would otherwise have to simply close, but is it always the best choice?

There are a number of things that should be in place before eLearning is carried out in a new school year.

- Have devices been distributed and/or confirmed for faculty and the student body?
- Have students been introduced to the technology? Will they be able to navigate it on an eLearning day? (Take special consideration of your youngest students.)
- Are the procedures, schedule, and expectations for an eLearning day understood by teachers and students and easily accessed by parents?

The day of school closing should also be considered.

- Are the conditions at home expected to be safe and secure? Would the event that triggered the building closure jeopardize the conditions in the home?

No one can account for all possibilities, but if there is reasonable expectation that students and teachers will be able to complete instruction at home, eLearning is an

excellent choice. If you run down these bullets and see something is not in place or question the conditions for instruction at home, a simple school closure is best.

Impact on School Calendars

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.

eLearning days may not be scheduled in advance or on professional development or teacher workdays. Therefore, districts must plan for 180 days of in-person instruction for students in their 2023-24 school calendars.

What should an eLearning Day look like?

Because eLearning days are regular workdays, teachers should be available to students and parents during school day hours. However, alternate schedules may be used to include daytime and evening hours if this better accommodates the needs of students.

For any eLearning day used, the district certifies that each eLearning day will be 5.5 hours for students in kindergarten through grade 8 and 6.0 hours for students in grades 9-12, or a minimum of 200 minutes of daily instruction. Lessons provided should require a minimum of 200 minutes of instruction (video, reading, listening); the remainder of the time is for student engagement, studying and work completion, etc. These times are cumulative across subjects.

Communication Prior to an eLearning Day

Expectations regarding schedule, access to assignments, and attendance should be in place and easily accessed by students, parents, and teachers prior to any eLearning day. In addition, it is recommended that the district publish eLearning Days expectations for students, parents, and teachers regarding items such as communication and troubleshooting.

Device Distribution

To be an eLearning District, devices do not have to be sent home every day, but a distribution plan must be in place in the event of eLearning. Questions to consider include:

- What will the cutoff time be for a school closure decision to distribute devices to conduct eLearning? or Will eLearning only be implemented on days marked on the calendar as makeup days?
- How will you distribute devices? Who is responsible and what procedures will they follow?

Communication During an eLearning Day

Multiple means of communication should be available to both students and parents regarding eLearning assignments.

- **Email:** During an eLearning day, teachers should have their email open for quick responses. An automatic reply when teachers are not immediately available will let the sender know that the message has been received and a response will follow shortly.
- **Phone:** Teachers are encouraged to provide students and parents with a way to be reached by phone.
- **Other Forms of Communication:** Other options for communicating with students and parents include platforms such as Canvas, class websites, and Class Dojo.

Reporting eLearning Days

Reporting of an eLearning Day(s) is done through PowerSchool and the Calendar and Closure System.

- **PowerSchool:** The attendance code should be set to SC-VIRM for virtual instruction related to e-learning days.
- **Calendar and Closure System:** Select “Closed – eLearning” to differentiate the closure from one with no instruction being provided.

eLearning Coordinator

Each eLearning district must appoint at least one eLearning Coordinator to manage eLearning Days. This person will be entered in the District and Entity Information Management System (DEIMS) as a contact for all eLearning Days related information. The eLearning Coordinator role can be found in DEIMS under “District Contact Role”.

Continued eLearning Designation

Beginning in 2025 and every three years thereafter, eLearning Districts must renew their status by submitting updated eLearning Days plans for approval. On years when updated plans not required, they will sign the agreement of terms that comes with the year's handbook. eLearning Districts are expected to follow the guidelines put forth in this handbook in the use of their eLearning Days. Misuse of days may result in days being added to the school calendar and the status of eLearning District being revoked.

Contacts for Questions

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Appendix A: When is an eLearning Day Appropriate? (Chart)

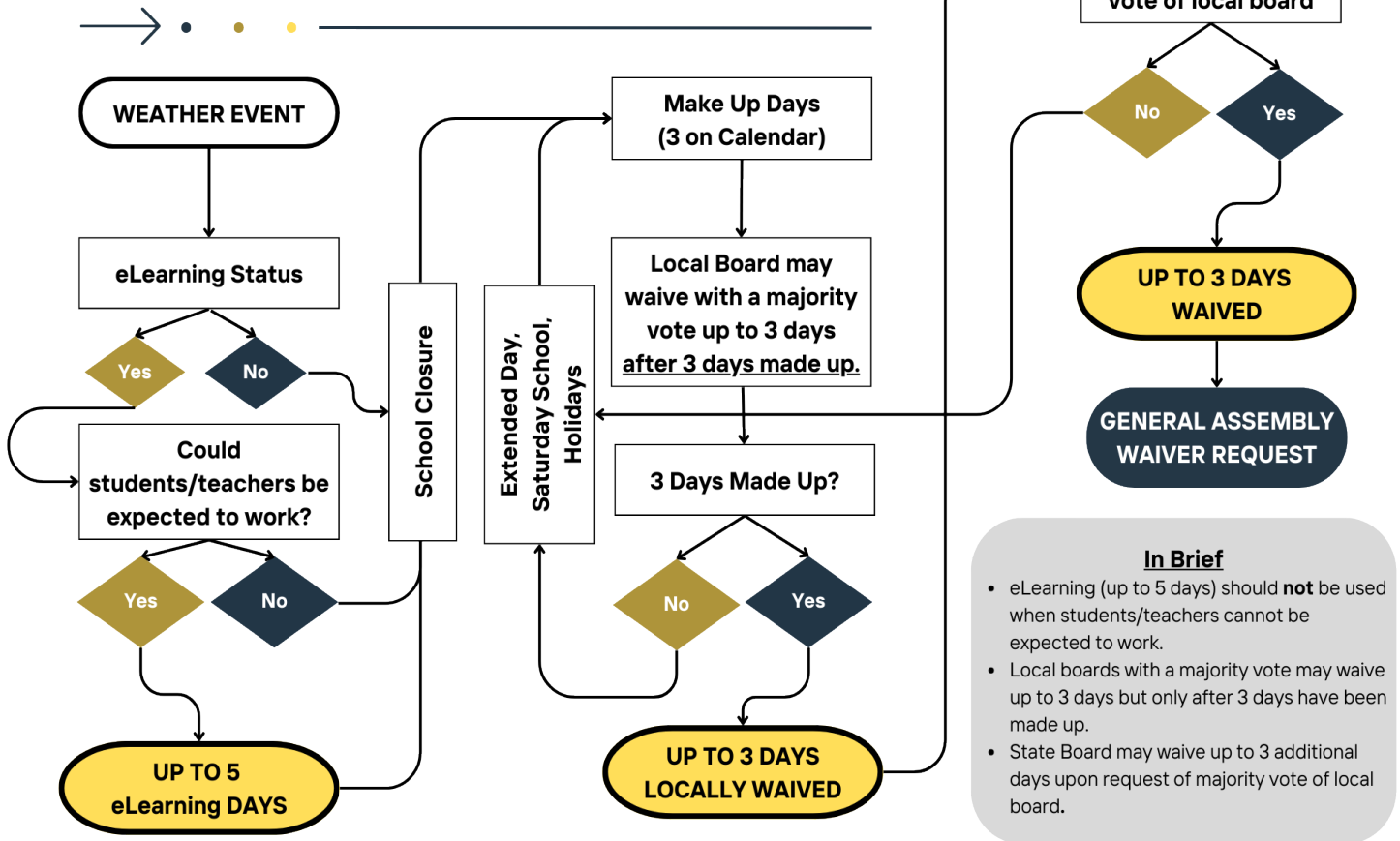
Scenario	Yes	No
We have not used any weather make-up days. It might ease attendance issues and provide ease to teachers and students to add an eLearning day before Spring Break.		eLearning Days may not be swapped with a regular instruction day.
A storm has flooded streets and/or otherwise made commuting to school dangerous.	This would be a classic example of when to use an eLearning Day.	
The high school's electrical system failed and needs to be repaired for the school to have power.	This would be a classic example of when to use an eLearning Day.	
A hurricane has caused damage, leaving much of the area without electricity and/or causing many to have to relocate.	This would be a case when eLearning should not happen on the day of missed school because there could not be the expectation that either students or teachers would be able to access work or be in conditions where work could be facilitated. An eLearning day could be implemented on the calendar make-up day if a make-up day is necessary.	

Appendix B: Flow Chart for Weather-Related School Closures



SOUTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

WEATHER-RELATED SCHOOL CLOSURES



Appendix C: Links to Related Memoranda

[School Calendar Memorandum](#)

[School Calendars and eLearning: Response and Support Following Hurricane Helene](#)

Appendix D: Frequently Asked Questions

Can a school or district request more days if the allotted five have been exhausted?

No, the proviso for eLearning Days sets the maximum number of days that may be used.

May one school in the district take an eLearning day for a building emergency?

Yes, districts may, in the case of a maintenance emergency only affecting a specific building, use an eLearning day just for that school. No school within the district may use more than 5 eLearning days. Primarily, the use of eLearning days would be district-wide in response to weather/road conditions. Effectively, that means when a school uses an eLearning day, the district as a whole has one less eLearning day to use.

May any attendance code be used on an eLearning day, except SC-VIRM?

Yes, districts are allowed to use all other attendance codes for days missed during eLearning. The primary code on an eLearning Day is SC-VIRM.

May packets be used on eLearning days?

Instruction must be provided in the form of online meetings and/or provided videos. Packets may only be used as appropriate for age or accommodations to provide materials for student work. They may not be used in lieu of virtual instruction.