



Superintendent's Office
 510 Peach Street
 Wisconsin Rapids, WI 54494
 715-424-6701

March 5, 2019

Dear Parents and/or Guardians:

After evaluating several options to address the now seven school closure days this year, we will implement the following plan effective **Monday, March 11, 2019** to make up the time missed:

In addition to the changes already implemented and communicated prior to today, we will be starting **classes in ALL of our schools 5 minutes earlier and ending 10 minutes later each day beginning on Monday, March 11 and continuing through the end of the school year**. In addition, Monday, April 22, 2019 will be a full (normal) school day for students and staff *instead of* a Professional Development day.

Building Specific Changes beginning the week of March 11:

Lincoln High School will NO longer have the late start for students on Wednesdays.
 Mead Elementary will NO longer have the early dismissal for students on Mondays.

Modified Start/Dismissal Times:

Following are the specific start and end times by building effective March 11, 2019:

Building	Start Time	Dismissal Time
Grant Elementary	8:45 a.m.	3:50 p.m.
Grove Elementary	8:20 a.m.	3:35 p.m.
Howe Elementary	8:40 a.m.	3:45 p.m.
Mead Elementary	8:35 a.m.	3:45 p.m.
THINK Academy	8:40 a.m.	3:55 p.m.
Washington Elementary	8:35 a.m.	3:40 p.m.
Woodside Elementary	8:35 a.m.	3:45 p.m.
WR Area Middle School	7:23 a.m.	2:51 p.m.
Lincoln High School	7:25 a.m.	3:03 p.m.
River Cities High School	7:25 a.m.	2:40 p.m.

4K Program

The morning start time and afternoon dismissal times only for 4K programming will be adjusted, similar to all of the other buildings whereby morning sessions will begin 5 minutes sooner (with dismissal times remaining the same), and afternoon sessions will dismiss 10 minutes later (with start times remaining the same). *Note that Mead 4K will no longer have a Monday 12:00-2:35 p.m. schedule – it will be the same schedule as the Tuesday-Friday days (1:00-3:45 p.m.)*. Following is the modified schedule:

Site Location	A.M. Session	P.M. Session
Head Start	NO CHANGE – Head Start schedule will remain the same.	
Building Blocks	8:55 a.m. to 11:35 a.m.	12:30 p.m. to 3:15 p.m.
Lots of Tots w/BBLC	9:05 a.m. to 11:45 a.m.	n/a
Grant Elementary	8:35 a.m. to 11:20 a.m.	1:05 p.m. to 3:50 p.m.
Grove Elementary	8:20 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.	12:50 p.m. to 3:35 p.m.
Mead Elementary	8:20 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.	1:00 p.m. to 3:45 p.m. (Mon-Fri)
St. Lawrence	8:40 a.m. to 11:20 a.m.	n/a
THINK Academy	8:40 a.m. to 11:20 a.m.	1:05 p.m. to 3:55 p.m.
Woodside Elementary	8:35 a.m. to 11:15 a.m.	1:00 p.m. to 3:45 p.m.

Bus Route Times:

In general, bus times will be 5 minutes earlier for pick-up and students will be dropped off 10 minutes later each day. Bus pick-up and drop-off information will be updated in Skyward by this Friday, March 8.

Trimester/Graduation Dates:

Elementary trimester dates are not changing – trimester 2 ends as originally scheduled on March 7, 2019.

WRAMS trimester 2 has already been modified to end on March 8, 2019.

Lincoln and River Cities trimester 2 has already been modified to end on March 12, 2019.

Lincoln and River Cities graduation dates will not change (LHS: June 2, 2019 / RCHS: May 31, 2019).

Finally, any additional closures from today forward will result in days being added to the second week of June.

A quick synopsis of the changes effective Monday, March 11 and described above:

- 1) Start and end times are modified as indicated above
- 2) Monday, April 22, 2019 will be a normal full day of school for all students
- 3) Friday, June 7, 2019 will be a FULL day for students (as was communicated earlier)
- 4) Any additional closures will result in adding school days during the second week of June

Several questions have arisen as a result of this record breaking winter; please see below for additional clarifications and/or specifics.

Q & A

Why are we adding time to the day and not simply taking away spring break days and/or adding days in June?

We are making every attempt to avoid adding days to spring break and/or during the second week of June for a couple of reasons - the primary reason is for facility maintenance and upkeep plans that are scheduled or in process. We have a number of facility maintenance projects that are occurring, with more significant work scheduled to take place during spring break week and summer break which cannot be completed when students and/or staff are present. These include safety and security upgrades, building envelope upgrades, and HVAC upgrades in various facilities. In addition, we have summer programming for students that begins as early as Wednesday, June 12, 2019.

Why do we have to make up time and/or days?

Wisconsin law requires a certain number of minutes or hours of instruction for all students in the state. Districts do NOT have the ability to simply opt out of making up the contact time. There is a waiver process under statute; however, the Department of Public Instruction has indicated that they do not intend to grant any waivers, even in light of the Governor's issuance of a State of Emergency in late January. Please see the information below that was communicated to school districts on February 1st from Deputy State Superintendent Michael Thompson:

Dear District Administrators and CESA Administrators,

This email is in response to the numerous inquiries we have had about our current weather situation and the statutory requirement for hours and minutes of direct instruction. For a little context, the Wisconsin State Superintendent does not have the authority to waive hours of instruction statewide (you may have read a news story about the governor in Minnesota giving a blanket waiver to all school districts—the Wisconsin Governor also does not have this authority). School boards, under Wisconsin Stat. 118.38, may request a waiver from DPI after a public hearing is held in the district. Historically, the department has not waived the hours and minutes requirement through this process. We have in the past waived the 180-day requirement (this is no longer a requirement in statute), but never the associated hours and minutes. DPI does not anticipate approving waivers for hours and minutes due to this week's weather. Districts do have local flexibility to determine the means by which they meet the hours and minutes standards.

We appreciate the communications and input we have received from superintendents across the state and the Wisconsin Association of School District Administrators as the situation over the last week unfolded.

Sincerely,

*Mike Thompson, PhD
Deputy State Superintendent*

Are we going to build additional days into the calendar in the future to avoid this happening again?

This winter has been record breaking for many reasons; it has also been record breaking for schools as we cannot find any evidence that the District had closed seven days in one school year in the past. Oddly enough, the most closures experienced in one year (up until this year) was five, and that occurred just last year. In last year's case, days were added to the end of the school year because the last couple of closures occurred in April which did not allow us the ability to add time to school days or to have students attend on a Professional Development day because we were already too far into spring. With that said, we have three days currently built into our school calendar and have enough flexibility to pick up a fourth or even a fifth day if necessary (depending on the date(s) that the school closure occurs) without significant modifications having to be made. As a result, there are no plans to modify future school calendars because during "normal" winters, experiencing 1-4 school closure days is fairly common. In the last five winters leading up to this year, we have had the following number of closed days:

2013-14	4
2014-15	1
2015-16	1
2016-17	3
2017-18	5
2018-19	7 (thus far)

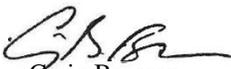
It is also important to note that Wisconsin state law requires districts to start on or after September 1st each school year, which poses some significant limitations for flexibility when calendars are developed to end school as early as possible in June in order to accommodate for summer school programming and necessary building maintenance projects.

As a parent myself, I understand that there are issues associated with virtually any plan to make up time and that no single approach is necessarily the "right" approach. If these modifications pose specific issues for you as parents and/or your child(ren), I encourage you to reach out to your child(ren)'s school(s) as we are willing to collaboratively work through just about any problem to hopefully ensure that the remainder of the school year finishes out well for all of our students.

Thanks again for your continued patience and understanding as we work through a truly unique winter. It is my sincere hope that we have no further closures; however, I will not hesitate to close school if the need arises for the safety of our students.

Please feel free to contact me with any questions.

Sincerely,



Craig Broeren
Superintendent