



Snow Day: Extended Learning

Overview of Plan

Overview of Snow Day: Extended Learning Plan Pilot Proposal

Snow Day Extended Learning refers to a practice assigning work to students to make up days when school is canceled for reasons such as inclement weather. This practice has been implemented in several states (Massachusetts, Minnesota, New Hampshire, and Ohio) and under different operational models. As a K - 12 district divided into elementary, middle, and high schools, we are looking to create a model that is flexible within the district, within schools, and even within grades to ensure that the instructional activities meet the DESE definition of structured learning time.

Each school year as the winter months settle in; schools do their best to prepare for unexpected school cancellations due to inclement weather. While many students might welcome a day off from school, cancellations pose unexpected interruptions to the teaching and learning process. Cancelled school days are added to the end of the school calendar in June, which is not optimal for timely, focused learning experiences. North Middlesex has had an average of 6.1 canceled days a year for snow over the last decade. This not only interrupts the learning for students but adds days to the end of the school year when learning is not as structured as it is in the middle of the school year.

The Snow Day Extended Learning program provides the students of NMRSD with real-time, authentic learning opportunities to replace canceled school days. Teachers will provide curriculum-based learning that their students can complete in place of a canceled school day. Assignments may be short-term, unit-based or a long-term project equal to multiple days of learning.

Although we firmly believe that the highest form of learning takes place in a classroom with a qualified teacher, support staff or specialist, we also acknowledge that days made up at the end of the school calendar are not of the same quality as those that could be offered with extended learning opportunities. Students in the twenty-first century will likely have at least one online class in college, and many will be preparing for employment set in a work-from-home environment. The extended learning opportunities help build a foundation for this type of learning and work production for the students of North Middlesex.

A group of elementary, middle and high school staff, administrators, and parents from all three member towns have researched and reviewed districts in Massachusetts that have implemented a similar plan for canceled days and created a proposal for a pilot to begin starting January 16, 2017, upon the school committee's approval. Pending approval of the pilot all district employees will be provided a Roles and Responsibilities outline, examples of structured learning activities related to their grade level and discipline and will continue to complete their contracted work time using planning, teaching, support, and correcting of assignments intended for these days.

The pilot will include extended learning opportunities for up to five snow days that take place between January 16, 2017, and April 1, 2018. If five snow days are not needed then long-term assignments will be finished during regular school hours as the structured learning time teachers have determined best fits the grade level and discipline's curriculum.

After the completion of the pilot Snow Day Extended Learning, the proposal committee will survey families and staff to determine a recommendation for full implementation beginning in the 2018-2019 school year.

For more detailed information, please visit the pages on our website listed below:

1. Frequently Asked Questions
2. Roles and Responsibilities
3. Sample Assignments
4. Slideshow as presented to the school committee
5. Communication Outline

***The Snow Day Extended Learning Proposal Committee would like to extend our thanks to Superintendent Joan Landers for her support in the proposal process and the Burlington, Wakefield, Gateway Regional and Ralph C. Maher school districts for graciously sharing their research, materials and experiences with their Snow Day Structured Learning Plans in support of creating the North Middlesex Regional School District Pilot Proposal Plan.*