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GUIDANCE MEMORANDUM 26-06

TO: School District Superintendents
Charter School Sponsors, Management Organizations, and Executive Directors

FROM: Dr. Victor Wakefield, Superintendent of Public Instruction 

DATE: March 13, 2026

SUBJECT: School Calendar Requirements, Applications, Amendments, and Validations

BACKGROUND

Pursuant to Nevada Administrative Code (NAC) 387.120, local education agencies (LEAs), consisting of school districts, charter schools, and university schools for profoundly gifted students, must submit their school calendar annually for approval by the Superintendent of Public Instruction. Calendar applications are due to the Nevada Department of Education (NDE) no later than May 1 of each year. The Office of Division Compliance is responsible for receiving and reviewing each unique calendar to ensure it meets the minimum qualifications identified in Nevada Revised Statute (NRS) 388.090-110 and NAC 387.120-153. This Guidance Memo includes updated information on the calendar application process and calendar policies, to include changes required by Senate Bill (SB) 460 and contemplated in the Legislative Counsel Bureau file numbers [R078-25](#) and [R086-25](#).

CALENDAR CONFIGURATIONS

LEAs may implement a traditional or alternative calendar under NRS 388.080-090 and NAC 387.120-125. An LEA may choose to group schools based on community, location, or need, under different calendar configurations; there is no limit to how many configurations an LEA elects to apply for and implement. Please note that alternative calendars have additional application and reporting requirements, detailed under *Annual Calendar Submissions*.

Calendar Requirements	Traditional Calendar	Alternative Calendar
School Year Period	July 1 – June 30	July 1 – June 30
Days in Session	180	Flexible #
Instructional Minutes	Minutes per Day	Minutes per Year
Contingent Days	3	3
Professional Development Days	5	5
Short Days	5	Flexible #

POLICIES APPLICABLE TO ALL CALENDARS

The following policies apply to all calendars and are proscribed by NAC 387.120-151. Additional information

regarding the application and approval process of these elements is detailed under *Calendar Management*.

Instructional Minutes Use and Limitations

School districts and charter schools have the ability to schedule beyond the minimum instructional time, identified in NAC 387.131 and NRS 389.040. The minimum daily period under a traditional calendar, the equivalent annual minute requirements under an alternative calendar, and the minutes required for a high school credit hour are as follows:

Instructional Minute Requirements

Grade Band	Daily Instructional Minutes	Annual Instructional Minutes	Supplemental Testing Minutes Cap	Minutes per Credit Hour, Grades 9-12
Kindergarten through 2nd	240	43,200	864	
3rd through 6th	300	54,000	1,080	
7th through 12th	330	59,400	1,188	7,200

Passing time is defined as the time between activities and qualifies as instructional time for all grades. However, please note the following guidelines regarding passing time:

- Time between activities constitutes moving from one academic activity to another. Passing from class to lunch and back does not count toward passing time, nor does the time arriving to and departing from school.
- Passing time, while instructional, does not contribute to the required minutes per credit hour for grades 9-12.

The following activities do not qualify as instructional time:

- Lunch and/or nutrition breaks
- Open or unassigned periods
- Sport, team, or club activities
- Study halls that do not provide at minimum tier-one instruction or high-impact tutoring

Pursuant to SB460, Sections 34-35, no more than 2% of the total number of minimum instructional minutes as defined in Section 14-15 of [R078-25](#) for preparation and completion of supplemental testing as described in Section 1 of [R086-25](#) may be used to prepare for and administer assessments. Please note that these limitations do not apply to federally mandated tests, screening exams, or tests for advanced placement, international baccalaureate, career and technical education, or Read by Grade 3. Quizzes, tests, reviews, and evaluations developed and/or initiated by a teacher for the purposes of assessing content standard and/or course competencies do not apply, as these are not required under federal, state, or local mandates.

The Department will issue further guidance regarding the new Use of Time on Assessments report, first due from schools to boards of trustees on July 1, 2027, for school year 2026-2027. For planning purposes, this report must detail the aggregate amount of instructional time used for preparing and conducting each exam required under federal, state, or local mandates, regardless of exceptions under the 2% cap.

Early Release Days

Any time that students are released earlier than their minimum daily period (or, if the school is providing minutes in excess of the minimum, any release earlier than their typical daily period) is a short day. While LEAs may use a combination of terms to represent a short day (including minimum day, early release, etc.), these qualify under NAC 387.105 and require a minimum length of 50% of the scheduled daily period. If an LEA uses a combination of abbreviated days, (i.e., a minimum day is 200 minutes, while an early release is 275 minutes, etc.) a bell schedule must be provided for each type of day in order to appropriately account for the instructional minutes.

Under a traditional calendar, no more than 5 short days may be scheduled; these days must be pre-approved by NDE. Under an alternative calendar, there is no restriction on the number of short days available, provided they are appropriately documented in the calendar application, approved by NDE, and adhere to all short-day requirements.

Professional Development

Up to 5 professional development days may be requested as a day in session. These days must be pre-approved by NDE, and the professional development must be the equivalent number of hours as the scheduled school day and received from an approved provider. An LEA may schedule additional professional development days at their discretion; however, these days will qualify as non-instructional days for students. When scheduling a professional development day in session, these may be scheduled as full-day assignments or partial-day assignments meeting the equivalent number of required minutes.

Pursuant to SB460, Section 15.5, all elementary schools must schedule at least 4 days of professional development, 3 of which must be devoted to training on methods and skills necessary to achieve the goals of the school improvement plan. Whether these intersect with the 5 professional development days in session or are otherwise scheduled among the contracted days is at the district's discretion; however, these days must be identified on the school calendar application regardless of whether they are reflected in the school calendar as instructional days in session.

Professional development days as days-in-session may not be scheduled prior to the first day of school for students, and may not be scheduled during the last 20 school days of the school year, barring possible activation as a contingent day due to extenuating circumstances.

Kindergarten Assessments & Parent-Teacher Conferences

Up to 2 days of kindergarten assessments may be requested as a day in session; these days must be pre-approved by NDE. Outside of these approvals, kindergarten assessments do not qualify as instructional time.

Please note that Parent-Teacher Conferences, while important, do not qualify as instructional time or professional development and must be scheduled accordingly; these should be reflected on the school calendar.

School Closures

All school calendars must include three contingent days in the event of school closures. Schools have several options as it relates to the scheduling of contingent days to include:

- Scheduling 3 full days of school
- An equivalent number of minutes of instruction added to any scheduled day of instruction in increments of no less than 30 minutes
- Any combination of these options

Please note that all contingent days or contingent minutes must be planned during the annual application process to ensure that schools are able to alert families at the beginning of the year of their plan for making up canceled school days, and families may plan for the possibility that the school day or school year will extend. Whether under a traditional or alternative calendar, schools must activate their three scheduled contingent days prior to utilizing excess minutes.

Please note that if a school certified and was approved to provide 65,000 minutes of instruction to their students, all efforts must be made to make up lost time and maintain the certified 65,000 minutes, even if this is in excess of the minimum requirements set forth in NAC 387.131.

Contingent days must be activated if a threshold of schools are rendered inaccessible or unusable by inclement weather, uncontrollable circumstances, an accident, or if a legal holiday is declared by the Governor not

anticipated in the original school calendar. Please note that even if the Governor declares a snow day or law enforcement request a closure, these days qualify as regular closures and must align with the requirements set forth. If fewer than the threshold of schools are rendered inaccessible or unusable, the LEA may request an emergency day in session for the affected schools subject to Department approval.

Please note that school districts in a county whose population is less than 100,000 must activate a contingent day if 33% or more of their schools are rendered inaccessible, and school districts in a county whose population is greater than 100,000 must activate a contingent day if 50% or more of their schools are rendered inaccessible.

Should an LEA exhaust all of its scheduled contingent days and continue to face school closures, they may apply for distance learning as a school day in session or request an emergency day in session; both are subject to Department approval. Further information regarding the application for an emergency day in session or distance learning as a day in session is included under *Calendar Management Requirements throughout the School Year*.

ANNUAL CALENDAR SUBMISSIONS

LEAs must submit their school calendar annually for approval by the Superintendent of Public Instruction. Calendars are due to NDE no later than May 1 of each year, with applications opening in February; early submissions are encouraged. The Office of Division Compliance is responsible for receiving and reviewing each unique calendar to ensure it meets the minimum qualifications identified in NAC 387.120-153. The [School Calendars Dashboard](#) serves as a central repository for guidance, submissions, and progress updates on submitted applications or requests.

Smartsheet Submission

Using the [School Calendar Annual Application Form](#), LEAs will submit the following information for each calendar application:

- The School Calendar Annual Application Template, in Excel or CSV format (Excel preferred)
- Infinite Campus Days Calendar(s) for at least one school representing each grade band and/or configuration under the calendar
- Infinite Campus Calendar Days Report
- Infinite Campus Calendar Minutes Report
- Attestation for Calendar Submission
- Relevant contact information

Infinite Campus reports and attestations must be attached to all submissions. Template attestations are available on the Calendar dashboard and linked on NDE's website. Supporting guidance documentation is available for the development and management of calendar reports in Infinite Campus; see "*Infinite Campus Calendars and Bell Schedule Guidance*". Templates are available on the [School Calendars Dashboard](#).

Excel Application

Using the *School Calendar Annual Application Template*, LEAs must provide the following information for each calendar application:

- Type of Calendar Requested
- Calendar Name
- All schools under the Calendar, listed by name
- Total number of schools under the Calendar
- Total number of students under the Calendar
- The first and last day of school
- The dates of scheduled contingent days
- The total number of full-length instructional days, and the instructional minutes per day by grade band

- The total number of early release days, differentiated by type as applicable, the instructional minutes per each type by grade band, and the dates for each; under the alternative calendar, a brief description of the use for early release is required
- The total number of professional development days requested as days in session and the dates for each
- The dates for all elementary school professional development, regardless of day-in-session status, and identifying those scheduled to address the school improvement plan
- The total number of parent-teacher conferences, a summary of how these are scheduled, and the dates for each
- The total number of kindergarten assessment days as days in session and their dates
- The total number of instructional days
- The total number of non-instructional days
- The total daily and annual minutes by grade

If an alternative calendar is selected, additional information will be requested regarding:

- Whether the Calendar will implement a 4-day schedule
- Why the LEA is applying for an alternative calendar
- What difficulties the LEA hopes to alleviate or support through the use of an alternative calendar
- A letter from the local teachers association agreeing to the alternative schedule (applicable to school districts only)

Calendars for Programs of Adult High School, Alternatives, Distance Education, Independent Study, Juvenile Detention, or Other

The Department anticipates integrating the calendar approval process and the school programs application process into a single, streamlined effort effective July 1, 2026. This will not affect the calendar or program application process for SY26-27 but will affect all approvals effective for SY27-28.

CALENDAR MANAGEMENT REQUIREMENTS THROUGHOUT THE SCHOOL YEAR

Any change to an approved calendar must be submitted to NDE for approval. In the event of foreseeable changes, such as professional development, early release, or changes in instructional days, requests should be submitted to NDE at least 10 business days prior to the requested change. In the event of unforeseeable changes, such as snow delays and emergency closures, requests should be submitted to NDE no later than 10 business days after the event. Please note that all actions impacting the school calendar are subject to NDE approval, and actions taken without appropriate notification may be denied, requiring use of contingent days or the scheduling of additional school days; this includes the use of excess minutes.

All calendar amendments should be submitted via the [School Calendar Amendment Form](#) available on the Calendar dashboard and our website. The LEA must provide the following information:

- The type of calendar approved
- Reason for amendment, and a summary / justification for the amendment request
- Infinite Campus Month Calendar
- Relevant contact information
- Attestation for Calendar Submission

CONCLUSION

The Office of Division Compliance anticipates scheduling a recorded office hour in early March, and invites schools and districts to reach out and request one-on-one technical assistance as needed via sidcompliance@doe.nv.gov. School Calendar Submissions are due by May 1, 2026, and may be submitted via the [School Calendar Annual Application Form](#) beginning March 16, 2026. If you have any questions, please reach out to Mario Salinas at sidcompliance@doe.nv.gov.