2013-14 Public School Calendars
Submission and Approval Assistance

Public School Districts
Regional Offices of Education (ROE)
Intermediate Service Centers (ISC)

The Proposed 2013-14 Official Public School Calendar should be submitted via the Public School Calendar system available in IWAS to the appropriate Regional Office of Education or Intermediate Service Center no later than June 15, 2013 to assure approval prior to the beginning of the upcoming school year.

Public Act 97-0742 removes School Code language that allows the first and last day of student attendance to be less than 5 instructional hours, effective June 30, 2013.

Senate Bill 2850 was signed by Governor Quinn on July 5, 2012 to become Public Act 97-0742 and has an effective date of June 30, 2013. This public act repeals Section 18-8.05 (F)(2)(b) of the School Code which allows the first and last day of student attendance to be less than 5 instructional hours. Except as otherwise provided in Section 18-8.05 of the School Code, beginning with the 2013-14 school year calendar, for Public School Calendar and General State Aid attendance calculation purposes, days of attendance by pupils, including the first and last day of student attendance, shall be counted only for sessions of not less than 5 clock hours of school work per day.

The most frequently asked question is “Can a half day be scheduled on the first and last day of school?” The answer is yes, as provided in Section 18-8.05 (F)(2)(d) of the School Code. The first day of student attendance may be scheduled as either a half day teacher in-service or half day parent/teacher conference which uses one of the 5 allowable halves. The last day of student attendance may be scheduled as a half day teacher in-service or half day parent/teacher conference, again using one of the 5 allowable halves, or, providing that adequate time has been banked, a half day school improvement day. As a reminder, on any calendar coded half day a minimum of 3 hours of instruction must be provided and only students who receive at least 3 hours of instruction may be claimed for a full day of attendance on calendar coded half days. On calendar coded half days, students who receive less than 3 hours of instruction but at least 150 minutes of instruction may be claimed for half a day of attendance. No attendance may be claimed for students who receive less than 150 minutes of instruction.

The public act does not affect scheduling Teacher Institute days at the beginning or end of the school year, as they are not considered pupil attendance days. This language only affects the first and last day of student attendance.
Holiday Waivers

Prior to August, 2009 if a public school calendar had school activities coded on a legal school holiday(s), as described in Section 24-2 of the Illinois School Code, a waiver application had to have been completed and submitted to the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) for approval. Once approved a special calendar code was entered into the calendar system to be entered on the holiday(s) for which the district/educational entity had waiver approval. The calendar system provided an error if the district/educational entity entered a calendar code on a holiday for which they did not have approval. The code had to be fixed before the calendar could be submitted to the ROE/ISC/ISBE for approval.

The enactment of P. A. 96-640, which was effective August 24, 2009 made it no longer necessary to have ISBE approval of holiday waiver for 5 legal school holidays (Martin Luther King (third Monday in January), Abraham Lincoln (February 12), Casimir Pulaski (first Monday in March), Christopher Columbus (second Monday in October), and Veterans’ day (November 11). Since ISBE does not have to approve the waiver, no special calendar code is included in the public school calendar system; therefore no error is provided even if the district/educational entity has not completed the process as described in Section 24-2 but changes the code from HOL to a different calendar code. In order to legally use a code other than HOL on a legal school holiday, the district/educational entity must:

1) recognize the person or persons honored by the holiday are recognized through instructional activities conducted on that day or, if the day is not used for student attendance, on the first school day preceding or following that day and;

2) hold a public hearing about the proposal.

The entity shall provide notice preceding the public hearing to both educators and parents. The notice shall set forth the time, date, and place of the hearing, describe the proposal and indicate that testimony will be taken from educators and parents about the proposal. Once this is done the district/educational entity has approval for exactly what the proposal stated. As long as no term dates are included in the proposal, the waiver is good for life.

Since a special code is no longer entered in the public school calendar system, district/educational entities simply code the day for what they are using it, i.e. pupil attendance day is coded as X, Full day Parent/Teacher Conference day is coded as FPT. It is advised that ROE and ISC staff approving the calendar have documentation from the district supporting that the process has been completed as well as for what the proposal request was. Then the ROE or ISC can keep a database of districts that have approval and for what the approval is, so when approving calendars they know what the entity is approved to do on those holidays. The ROEs/ISCs are not approving the waiver; they are just requesting documentation for verification of the calendar code entered when approving the calendar.

If you have additional questions regarding the Public School Calendar that are not addressed please contact Marj Beck at mbeck@isbe.net or by telephone 217/782-5256.

As a reminder, per Section 10-19 of the Illinois School Code, the calendar for the school term and any non-emergency changes must be submitted to and approved by the regional superintendent or intermediate service center before the calendar or changes may take effect. Exceptions to this are emergency changes, such as Interrupted, Delayed Start, Act of God or Emergency days. All other changes are required to have approval prior to the change taking effect.