

V.E.

**CONNECTICUT STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION
Hartford**

TO BE PROPOSED:

June 6, 2018

RESOLVED, That the State Board of Education, pursuant to Section 10-15 of the Connecticut General Statutes, authorizes the Danbury Board of Education, given the unusual circumstances presented, to shorten the 2017-18 school year for Hayestown Elementary, Pembroke Elementary, and Broadview Middle Schools to 178 days and to shorten the 2017-18 school year to 179 days for the remaining schools. Such authorization is contingent upon Hayestown Elementary, Pembroke Elementary, and Broadview Middle having at least 182 school days for the 2018-19 school year and the remaining schools 181 days. The State Board of Education hereby directs the Commissioner to take the necessary action.

Approved by a vote of _____ this sixth day of June, Two Thousand Eighteen.

Signed: _____
Dr. Dianna R. Wentzell, Secretary
State Board of Education

CONNECTICUT STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION
Hartford

TO: State Board of Education

FROM: Dr. Dianna R. Wentzell, Commissioner of Education

DATE: June 6, 2018

SUBJECT: 180-Day School Year Waiver Request – Danbury Public Schools

Introduction

Pursuant to Section 10-16 of the Connecticut General Statutes, each school district must have 180 days of school per year. In addition, the same law says that in the course of the 180-day school year, districts have to provide at least 900 hours of actual instruction. Section 10-15 of the Connecticut General Statutes allows the State Board of Education (CSBE) to authorize boards of education to modify the school calendar to have fewer than 180 days of school due to “unavoidable emergency.” In the past, the CSBE has rarely granted such waivers unless the school district can show that it has made every possible attempt to schedule the lost days before the end of the school year on June 30th.

The Danbury Superintendent has requested that the State Board of Education (CSBE) grant the Danbury Board of Education (Danbury) a waiver of the 180-day requirement set forth in Section 10-16 of the Connecticut General Statutes (CGS) for its schools.

Rationale

On May 15, 2018, a series of tornadoes set down in the state of Connecticut. Due to the significant storm damage in Southern Connecticut, Danbury’s public schools were closed on May 16th, 17th and 18th. The last day of school scheduled for Danbury’s schools is June 29th. If there are no further unanticipated closings, students in all but three of its schools will attend school for 179 days. In addition, three Danbury schools were closed the due to other emergencies that occurred earlier in the school year. Therefore, the Danbury Board is requesting a waiver of one additional day for the following schools: Hayestown Elementary, Pembroke Elementary, and Broadview Middle.

Recommendation

The Commissioner recommends approval of Danbury’s request due to the weather emergency on May 15, 2018, that caused the schools to be inaccessible to students from May 16th through May 18th. The Commissioner further recommends that the CSBE require the district to make up the lost day during the 2018-19 school year, which would require a minimum of 182 days for Hayestown Elementary, Pembroke Elementary, and Broadview Middle Schools and 181 days for the remaining schools.

Prepared by:
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Approved by:
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Sal V. Pascarella, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools

DANBURY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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RECEIVED
MAY 30 2018
OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER
OF STATE DEPT OF EDUCATION

May 24, 2018

Dianna Wentzel
Commissioner of Education
Connecticut State Department of Education
450 Columbus Boulevard
Hartford, CT 06103-1841

Re: Request for Waiver of 180 Day School Year

Dear Commissioner Wentzel:

In consultation with the Danbury Board of Education, I am writing to request that you grant the Danbury Public Schools a waiver from the general requirement that school districts be in session for 180 days. Pursuant to Conn. Gen. Stat. § 10-15, "The State Board of Education (1) may authorize the shortening of any school year for a school district, a school or a portion of a school on account of an unavoidable emergency." The Danbury Public Schools is currently experiencing unavoidable emergency due to the storm that occurred earlier this week. As the storm occurred so late in the school year, there is insufficient time to make up the days.

I am aware of the Circular Letters pertaining to the 180 school day requirement. In Circular Letter C-9, Acting Commissioner Coleman advises that school closures due to weather generally will not constitute unavoidable emergencies. The rationale for this position was that, "[w]hen closures due to inclement weather occur early enough in the school year (such as in the winter months), local boards will have sufficient time throughout the remainder of the school year, through June 30, to make up lost days." The current circumstance affecting the Danbury Public Schools is unique in that the inclement weather has occurred so late in the school year. At this point in the year, there is insufficient notice time to make up the days. All scheduled vacation has already occurred and the last day of school had already been pushed out to late June due to inclement weather that occurred earlier this school year.

Danbury's original calendar at the start of the school year had June 22, 2018 as the last day of school (with 5 snow days built in). The recent storm caused significant damage in the City of Danbury, such as loss of power, property damage and road closures. Due to the storm, our schools closed on May 16, 17 & 18 bringing our total to 12 closures (including May 16, 17 & 18). The District did convert our final PD Day into a makeup day for students and staff. That brings us to a total of 179 student days, therefore we are requesting a waiver for one day for all schools. Prior to the storm, the last day of school was set at June 28, 2018. As a result of these facts, the Danbury Board of Education requests a waiver of the 180 day requirement in order to permit school to close on June 29, 2018.

In addition, we had three schools that were closed due to other emergency situations. Hayestown Avenue Elementary School and Broadview Middle School were closed on April 24, 2018 due to a major water main break. Pembroke Elementary School was closed on October 30, 2017 due to a power outage. Therefore we are requesting an additional one day waiver for these 3 schools as well.

If you require any additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me. We appreciate your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,


Sal V. Pascarella, Ed.D.

cc: Allan B. Taylor, Chairperson
State Board of Education

Patrick Johnston
Chairperson, Danbury Board of Education