

SCHOOL CALENDAR LAW GUIDELINES

1. North Carolina law establishes a school calendar with a total of 215 days. This includes state requirements for:
 - 180 days and 1,000 hours of instruction
 - 15 teacher workdays
 - 10 days of annual leave
 - 10 legal holidays
2. Five of the teacher workdays in the calendar must be “protected” to allow teachers to complete instructional and classroom administrative duties. One of these days must be at the beginning of the school year and there must also be one of these days at the end of each quarter. Teachers may take accrued annual leave on protected workdays.
3. In years when Christmas falls on a Tuesday, Wednesday, or Thursday, employees receive one additional holiday and one less work day.
4. November 11 must be a holiday for students and staff (Veterans Day).

Frequently Asked Questions about the School Calendar Law **(G.S. 115C-84.2)**

1. **Doesn't the state school calendar law require schools to start no earlier than August 25 and end by June 10?**

That's true for most districts, but Watauga County and a handful of other counties are exempt from these requirements. The exemption is granted to school systems that have missed eight or more days of school for weather related reasons for at least four or more of the previous ten years. Watauga County has always met this standard.

2. **Can school systems obtain a waiver from the state calendar law requirement for 180 days and 1,000 hours of instruction?**

Only if the system is closed for 20 or more days for inclement weather during a school year. In that case, the school system can comply with the law if it provides 180 days or 1,000 hours of instruction instead of having to provide both 180 days and 1,000 hours of instruction. We can normally meet the 1,000 hour requirement even if we shorten the school year by 5 or 10 days.

3. **Can Saturdays and Sundays be included in the school calendar?**

Saturdays can be used as instructional days or teacher workdays. Sundays cannot be used for instruction or workdays.

- 4. What is the latest closing date possible for the Watauga County Schools?**
For 2010-11, it is on or about June 27. All school days must fall within the same fiscal year and the fiscal year ends on June 30th. In addition, there must be at least 42 consecutive days on which teacher attendance is not required. The first required day for teachers in 2011-12 is a mandatory workday on August 8, which is 42 days after June 27.
- 5. Which holidays can be scheduled as school days?**
Any holiday can be used as a school day except Veteran's Day (November 11).
- 6. Can we use a scheduled protected teacher workday as a make-up day?**
No, but protected teacher workdays can be rescheduled as long as there is one at the beginning of the year and one at the end of each academic quarter.
- 7. Do the employees of the central office have to make-up their time too?**
Employees of the central office, as well as other 12 month employees in the maintenance and transportation departments and some school offices, are expected to work on days when schools are closed for snow. They are directed to use their best judgment about whether it is safe for them to report for work. If they do not work, they are expected to make up the time by using vacation days, leave without pay, or working extra time on other days.