

SCHOOL YEAR/SCHOOL DAY

School Year

In accordance with the Code of Virginia, ACPS operates its schools with students in attendance a minimum of 180 teaching days or 990 teaching hours per school year. The number of teaching days within the ACPS school year may include more than the 180 days required by the State of Virginia.

Days on which a school or schools in the Division are closed due to severe weather or other emergencies are made up as provided below if necessary to meet these requirements.

Students are provided a minimum of 690 hours of instructional time in elementary school in the four academic disciplines of English, mathematics, science, and history and social science. Unstructured recreational time that is intended to develop teamwork, social skills, and overall physical fitness may be included in the calculation of total instructional time or teaching hours for elementary school, provided that such unstructured recreational time does not exceed 15 percent of total instructional time or teaching hours.

Make-Up Days

If severe weather conditions or other emergency situations result in the closing of an ACPS school or schools for

- five or fewer days, all missed days are made up by adding teaching days to the school calendar or extending the length of the school day;
- six days or more, the first five days plus one day for each two days missed in excess of the first five are made up by adding teaching days to the school calendar or extending the length of the school day.

If severe weather conditions or other emergency situations result in the closing of any ACPS school and the school has been unable to meet the 180 teaching day requirement, ACPS may make up the missed teaching days by providing its students with instructional hours equivalent to the missed teaching days to meet the minimum 990 teaching hour requirement.

The Virginia Board of Education (VBOE) may waive the requirement that ACPS provide additional teaching days or teaching hours to compensate for school closings resulting from a declared state of emergency or severe weather conditions or other emergency situations under certain circumstances. If the School Board desires a waiver, it will submit a request to VBOE. The request will include evidence of efforts that have been made by ACPS to reschedule as many days as possible and certification by the Superintendent and School Board Chair that every reasonable effort for making up lost teaching days or teaching hours was exhausted before requesting a waiver. If the waiver is denied, ACPS will make up the missed instructional time.

The VBOE waives the requirement that school divisions provide additional teaching days or teaching hours to compensate for school closings resulting from an evacuation directed and compelled by the Governor pursuant to Va. Code § 44-146.17 for up to five teaching days. If the School Board pursues such a waiver, it notifies VBOE and provides evidence of ACPS' efforts

to reschedule as many days as possible, and certification by the Superintendent and School Board Chair that every reasonable effort for making up lost teaching days or teaching hours was exhausted. After receiving the notification, VBOE grants the waiver and there is no proportionate reduction in the amount paid by the Commonwealth from the Basic School Aid Fund. Further, the local appropriations for educational purposes necessary to fund 180 teaching days or 990 teaching hours shall not be proportionally reduced by the Alexandria City Council due to any reduction in the length of the term of any ACPS school or schools permitted by such waiver.

School Calendar

The School Board establishes the Division's calendar in accordance with state law. The School Board establishes teaching contracts in accordance with applicable VBOE regulations to include contingencies for making up teaching days and teaching hours missed for emergency situations. The School Board adopts the official school calendar for the following year no later than June 1 upon the recommendation of the Superintendent. The School Board must approve any exceptions or revisions to the calendar in advance.

The Superintendent ensures that the calendar conforms to the number of actual days of employment as required by law and Board policy.

The Superintendent may convene an advisory committee composed of teachers, parents, and administrators to recommend a proposed calendar to the Superintendent. The recommendation of this committee shall be advisory.

School Day

The standard school day for students in grades 1 through 12 averages at least 5-1/2 instructional hours excluding breaks for meals and recess. The standard school day for kindergarten is a minimum of three instructional hours.

All students in grades 1 through 12 maintain a full-day schedule of classes unless a waiver is granted in accordance with policies defined by the School Board.

Each elementary school provides students with at least 30 minutes of daily recess during the regular school year in accordance with Policy IGAE/IGAF and Regulation JHCF-R.

The secondary school class schedule contains a minimum of 140 clock hours for each unit of credit. When credit is awarded in less than whole units, the increment awarded must be no greater than the fractional part of the 140 hours of instruction provided.

The time for opening and closing schools is established by the School Board upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, provided that the daily program for students in grades 1 through 12 averages at least 5 ½ hours, not including meal intermissions. If the required program length is maintained, the School Board may approve occasional shortened days for staff development, conferences, planning and other activities designed to improve the instructional pro-

gram, provided that no more than one day in each five-day week may be shortened to no less than four hours. The daily program for kindergarten is at least three hours, not including meal intermissions. No school official may dismiss classes before the scheduled dismissal hour except with the approval of the Superintendent.

The Individual Education Plan (IEP) for students with disabilities may provide for a shortened school day if appropriate to meet the needs of the student.

When exceptions in the length of the daily program are necessary, the Board requests approval by the Superintendent of Public Instruction of the exceptions by August 1 preceding the school year for which they are requested.

The length of the work day for employees is determined by the School Board. It is of sufficient length to allow for the daily program for students and additional time as may be necessary for such activities as planning, preparation, meetings, workshops, conferences, meal intermissions, or other contractual obligations.

Certification

The Superintendent and School Board Chair certify the total number of teaching days and teaching hours each year as part of ACPS' annual report to VBOE.

Adopted: January 9, 1997
Amended: July 1, 2005
Amended: June 15, 2006
Amended: June 11, 2015
Amended: June 17, 2021

Legal Refs: Code of Virginia, 1950, as amended §§ 22.1-26, 22.1-79.1, 22.1-98, 22.1-200.2.
Acts 2019, cc. 569, 570 and 637.
8 VAC 20-131-150.
8 VAC 20-131-200.
8 VAC 20-490-30.

Cross Refs.: BCF Advisory Committees to the School Board
DL Payroll Procedures
GAA Staff Time Schedules
IGAE/IGAF Health/Physical Education
IKF The Virginia Assessment Program and Graduation Requirements
IKFD Alternative Paths to Attaining Standard Units of Credit
JHCF-R Wellness Guidelines for Alexandria City Public Schools