

Sweet Home School District Snow Makeup Day: Process and Plan

At our March 11, 2019, Sweet Home School Board Meeting, the Board gave the district direction regarding the making up of school cancelations. Some of the factors that were considered included:

- Despite the loss of five days of instructional hours, we remain in compliance with the State's minimum instructional hours standards as laid out by Division 22, with the exception of grades 9-11.
- The State Division 22 Standards incorporates parent/teacher conferences and professional development hours.
- However, maximizing direct instructional time for our students has been our priority.
- Our past practice has been to add back instructional days when we lose more than two days.
- Last year we built into the 2018-19 calendar the capacity of three days in the second trimester for inclement weather.
- It is an unusual year. We have major construction happening in Foster, Holley, and the Junior High. These schools must be operationally ready by the last week of August 2019.
- Classified staff lose hours/wages when we cancel for snow days.
- This year we have robust summer school programming: preschool to kinder, K-6 Title, Grades 5-9 CLC, High School Summer School.
- Community needs regarding previously scheduled events, such as graduation.

After a discussion of these factors, the Board was presented with two options:

Option I: Add days back at the end of the year or spring break.

- Leave the graduation date the same.

- Superintendent works with Josh Darwood, Facilities Director, and contractors regarding school construction schedules.

Option II: Use the remainder of the existing calendar to make up days

- Use two **conference dates**, grades 7 – 12 for instruction (April 25, 26).
- Use one end of year **grading day** for instruction (June 14).
- Use the last four early release Wednesdays to provide for end of year preparations.
- Use multiple **early release Wednesdays** for classified PD to also regain hours.

The board chose Option II with Option I on the table:

Details for Decision-making:

While instructional time has been a priority, given the unusual circumstances of having three facilities under construction upon the last day of school, the Board opted for the superintendent to work on Option II with the staff. I'm happy to say, we achieved an agreement to execute Option II within a week.

Although not perfect, when confronted with this season's weather challenges, we adapted to the situation with a good plan. Here are the benefits of Option II:

We gain three days back for Jr. High and High School students where we need time the most per State requirements. We gain one day for grades K-6. We end the year on time so construction can start at three sites. We regain some classified time, and we will build into the Wednesday schedule quality PD opportunities for classified staff. The current bell schedules and calendar (except for the days noted) remain the same for the community. Also, keep in mind, we have a comprehensive PreK-12 summer school plan this summer for struggling students.

I'm proud of working in a can-do community. A measure of the strength of a community and organization is when confronted with challenges, how we adapted to the situation. By many accounts, we adapted well.

If you have any questions regarding instructional hours or the decision-making process, please reach out. I would be more than happy to talk about it.

Sincerely,

Tom Yahraes