**School Calendar Policy Booster: Policy Update (School Calendar Policy is a Required Policy)**

Iowa law allows school boards to set a calendar based on a minimum of 1,080 hours or a minimum of 180 days. The board has authority to require more than those minimums, but must choose either hours or days.

With many snow days/hours to make up this year, we thought it would be prudent to recirculate this policy change. Districts with the calendar based on hours had the flexibility to lengthen the day by adding more minutes to each day, whereas districts with a calendar based on days had to add days.

We also have spotted a few policy manuals that still have the old start date references including asking for a waiver from the DE to start before Sept. 1. That language is also outdated given start date legislation applying to calendars set after the 2015-16 school year. A school district may still request a waiver from DE for a year-round school under certain conditions, and that year-round-calendar is prohibited from use for high school grades. Please contact us if you have questions about year-round calendar options.

With any amendment to a school calendar, or any consideration in setting a calendar in the first place, Iowa Code [279.10](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/docs/code/279.10.pdf) requires the school board to hold a public hearing.

We’ve attached sample Board Policy 601 with placeholders for either days or hours, as appropriate, and including a sentence about requiring the public hearing, for your reference, (two versions, with one showing the changes and the other with the changes incorporated.) Contact margaret@iowaschoolfinance.com with questions.

***The “dot your I’s and cross your T’s” disclaimer:*** *This Policy Booster is not a substitute for legal advice, but rather, the impetus to get the local ball rolling. Check with your local school attorney and consider the impact this policy will have on other policies, handbooks, bargaining agreements, administrative procedures and forms in the district.*

**601 SCHOOL CALENDAR (Changes Tracked)**

601 SCHOOL CALENDAR

The school calendar shall accommodate the education program of the school district. The school calendar shall be for a minimum of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ days or \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ hours (*pick one*) and include, but not be limited to, the days or hours for student instruction, staff development, in-service days, and teacher conferences.

The academic school year for students shall be for a minimum of one-hundred and eighty days or one-thousand eighty hours in the school calendar. The academic school year for students may not begin prior to August 23. ~~September 1 but may begin in the week in which September 1 falls unless a waiver is obtained from the Iowa Department of Education. Should September 1 fall on a Sunday, school may begin any day during the calendar week which immediately proceeds September 1.~~ Employees may be required to report to work at the school district prior to this date.

Special education students may attend school on a school calendar different from that of the regular education program consistent with their Individualized Education Program.

The board, in its discretion, may excuse graduating seniors from up to five days or 30 hours of instruction after the school district requirements for graduation have been met. The board may also excuse graduating seniors from making up days or hours missed due to inclement weather if the student has met the school district's graduation requirements.

It shall be the responsibility of the superintendent to develop the school calendar for recommendation, approval, and adoption by the board annually.  The board may amend the official school calendar when the board considers the change to be in the best interests of the school district's education program.

The board shall hold a public hearing prior to adoption or amendment of the school calendar.

**601 SCHOOL CALENDAR (Clean Version-Days)**

601 SCHOOL CALENDAR

The school calendar shall accommodate the education program of the school district. The school calendar shall be for a minimum of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ days and include, but not be limited to, the days for student instruction, staff development, in-service days, and teacher conferences.

The academic school year for students shall be for a minimum of one-hundred and eighty days in the school calendar. The academic school year for students may not begin prior to August 23rd. Employees may be required to report to work at the school district prior to this date.

Special education students may attend school on a school calendar different from that of the regular education program consistent with their Individualized Education Program.

The board, in its discretion, may excuse graduating seniors from up to five days of instruction after the school district requirements for graduation have been met. The board may also excuse graduating seniors from making up days missed due to inclement weather if the student has met the school district's graduation requirements.

It shall be the responsibility of the superintendent to develop the school calendar for recommendation, approval, and adoption by the board annually.  The board may amend the official school calendar when the board considers the change to be in the best interests of the school district's education program.

The board shall hold a public hearing prior to adoption or amendment of the school calendar.

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**601 SCHOOL CALENDAR (Clean Version-Hours)**

601 SCHOOL CALENDAR

The school calendar shall accommodate the education program of the school district. The school calendar shall be for a minimum of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ hours and include, but not be limited to, the hours for student instruction, staff development, in-service days, and teacher conferences.

The academic school year for students shall be for a minimum of one-thousand eighty hours in the school calendar. The academic school year for students may not begin prior to August 23rd. Employees may be required to report to work at the school district prior to this date.

Special education students may attend school on a school calendar different from that of the regular education program consistent with their Individualized Education Program.

The board, in its discretion, may excuse graduating seniors from up to 30 hours of instruction after the school district requirements for graduation have been met. The board may also excuse graduating seniors from making up hours missed due to inclement weather if the student has met the school district's graduation requirements.

It shall be the responsibility of the superintendent to develop the school calendar for recommendation, approval, and adoption by the board annually.  The board may amend the official school calendar when the board considers the change to be in the best interests of the school district's education program.

The board shall hold a public hearing prior to adoption or amendment of the school calendar.