

SCHOOL YEAR/SCHOOL DAY

School Year

The length of the school year is at least 180 teaching days or 990 teaching hours. Days on which a school or schools or all the 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 680 hours of instructional time in elementary school, except for students in half-day kindergarten, in the four academic disciplines of English, mathematics, science, and history and social science and a minimum of 375 hours of instructional time in half-day kindergarten 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 a school or schools or all the schools in the Essex County Public Schools Division or in an unscheduled remote learning day for a school or schools in the division 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 school in the school division and such school has been unable to meet the 180 teaching day requirement, the Essex County Public Schools Division may make up the missed teaching days by providing its students with instructional hours equivalent to such missed teaching days to meet the minimum 990 teaching hour requirement.

If severe weather conditions or other emergency situations result in the closing of any school in the Essex County Public Schools Division for in-person instruction, the Essex County Public Schools Division may declare an unscheduled remote learning day whereby the school provides instruction and student services that are consistent with guidelines established by the Department of Education to ensure the equitable provision of such services.

The Board of Education may waive the requirement that the school division 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 the Board of Education. The request will include evidence of efforts that have been made by the school division to reschedule as many days as possible and certification by the superintendent and chairman of the Essex County School Board that every reasonable effort for making up lost teaching days or teaching hours was exhausted before requesting a waiver. If the waiver is denied, the Essex County Public Schools Division will make up the missed instructional time.

The Board of Education 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 Essex County School Board desires such a waiver, it notifies the Board of Education and provides evidence of efforts that have been made by the Essex County Public Schools Division to reschedule as many days as possible and certification by the superintendent and chair of the Essex County School Board that every reasonable effort for making up lost teaching days or teaching hours was exhausted. After receiving such notification, the Board of Education 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 local appropriating body due to any reduction in the length of the term of any school or the schools in an Essex County Public Schools Division permitted by such waiver.

School Calendar

The Essex County School Board establishes the Essex County Public Schools Division's calendar in accordance with state law.¹ The Essex County School Board

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¹ School divisions may set the school calendar such that the first day students are required to attend is up to 14 days before Labor Day. Divisions beginning school prior to Labor Day must close from the Friday immediately preceding Labor Day through Labor Day except as follows. Divisions granted a waiver to open prior to Labor Day for the 2018-2019 school year may begin school earlier than 14 days before Labor Day but must close the Friday immediately preceding Labor Day. Divisions granted a waiver to open prior to Labor Day for the 2011-2012 school year may begin school earlier than 14 days before Labor Day and are not required to close the Friday immediately preceding Labor Day. In addition, any school board in Planning District 16 (which includes the City of Fredericksburg and the counties of Caroline, King George, Spotsylvania and Stafford) that was not granted a good cause waiver pursuant to Va. Code § 22.1-79.1 for the 2018-2019 school year but would qualify for such a waiver pursuant to Va. Code § 22.1-79.1 as it was in effect prior to July 1, 2019, for the 2019-2020 school year may set the school calendar so that the first day students are required to attend is earlier than Labor Day, including earlier than 14 days before Labor Day. Additionally, the school board of any school division located in Planning District 16 that is entirely surrounded by two school divisions that either were granted a waiver pursuant to Chapter 3 of the Acts of Assembly of 2012, Special Session I, or would qualify for a good cause waiver pursuant to § 22.1-79.1 as it was in

establishes teaching contracts in accordance with applicable regulations of the Board of Education to include contingencies for making up teaching days and teaching hours missed for emergency situations.

An advisory committee composed of teachers, parents and school administration may be utilized to recommend a proposed calendar to the superintendent. The recommendation of this committee is 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 (5-1/2 hours) unless a waiver is granted in accordance with policies defined by the School Board.

Each elementary school provides students with a daily recess during the regular school year, as determined appropriate by the school.

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 is 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 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 Essex County School Board may approve occasional shortened days for staff development, conferences, planning and other activities designed to improve the instructional program, 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.

effect prior to July 1, 2019, for the 2019-2020 school year may open schools on the same opening date as either such surrounding school division.

(footnote 1 continued)

Joint or regional schools, such as academic year Governor's Schools, may set the school calendar so that the first day students are required to attend school will be the same as the day set by any of the participating school divisions.

The Virginia Department of Education has prepared information that provides a convenient source for school divisions to determine whether they have had waivers in the past and thus which legal provisions apply to the division. That information can be found at http://www.doe.virginia.gov/boe/pre-labor-day_waiver/index.shtml.

When exceptions in the length of the daily program are necessary, the Essex County School 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 Essex County 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.

Joint or Regional Schools

School boards operating joint or regional high schools, including regional charter schools, offering a specialized curriculum leading to a high school diploma and a postsecondary credential, such as industry certification, career certificate, or degree may, by agreement, establish alternative schedules for the delivery of instruction. Those schedules may include alternatives to standard school day and year requirements, subject to the issuance of any necessary waivers by the Board of Education and relevant Board of Education regulations.

Certification

The superintendent and Essex County School Board chair certify the total number of teaching days and teaching hours each year as part of the annual report to the Board of Education.

Adopted: September 10, 2018

Revised: August 12, 2019

August 20, 2020

August 9, 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 Ref.:	BCF	Advisory Committees to the School Board
	DL	Payroll Procedures
	GAA	Staff Time Schedules
	IKF	The Virginia Assessment Program and Graduation Requirements

IKFD² Alternative Paths to Attaining Standard Units of Credit

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² Policy IKFD is an optional policy. A division which has not adopted it should not add it as a Cross Reference here.