



# Rhode Island Statewide School Calendar 2020/21 “FAQ”

## 1. What is the objective of having a statewide school calendar?

- Commissioner Infante-Green has been impressed by the collective response of teachers, school leaders, students, and families to the challenge of making school happen remotely. With all the current issues our state faces, RIDE remains focused on supporting our students, families, and our school communities.
- Given the challenges posed by the ongoing pandemic, the statewide schedule emerged as a part of a comprehensive set of planning tools RIDE intends to release. It allows families to plan for the school year now. It allows teachers who teach in one district but live in another to balance the demands of work and family. It allows RIDE to act quickly to COVID-19 resurgence by facilitating local or statewide moves to distance learning.
- The calendar also allows RIDE to provide more statewide supports, for example professional development opportunities that teachers from multiple districts can attend. A common calendar also creates opportunities for innovation among districts, such as course offerings in one district being available to students from other districts, as well as increased resource coordination.
- Our goal was to provide guidance to school and district leaders for a statewide calendar for the 2020-2021 academic school year to ensure that we are better positioning schools and school districts to respond to a possible COVID-19 outbreak in fall 2020.

## 2. Is it mandatory for all school districts?

- Per the Governor’s executive order of June 10, 2020, it is mandatory for all public schools in Rhode Island.

## 3. Where will I be able to view the calendar?

- The statewide school calendar will be available on [RIDE's website](#), along with additional tools and resources for parents and families. In addition to visiting RIDE's website, please contact your local school district or school community for more information.

## 4. How will we get updates if there are any changes?

- RIDE will continuously update the COVID 19 section of our website with up to date information, and if you haven't yet, make sure to follow us on social media at Facebook/RIDeptEd, and on Twitter @RIDeptEd.
- In addition to visiting RIDE's website, please contact your local school district or school community for more information.

## 5. Who decided to have a statewide school calendar?

- Governor Raimondo and Commissioner Infante-Green have been working closely with a wide range of stakeholders, from charter leaders to local union representatives on various educational topics such as distance learning, summer learning opportunities and camps, and reopening schools. In addition, the team consults the Rhode Island Department of Health (RIDOH) to ensure that every decision that is made puts students and staff safety first.

6. My child goes to a private school. Does this apply to us?

- Governor Raimondo and Commissioner Infante-Green urge all schools, including private schools, to comply with the unified school calendar guidance for the 2020/21 academic school year. However, if your child(ren) attends a Rhode Island private school, please consult with your school's leader.

7. My child goes to a charter school. Does this apply to us?

- Yes. Charter schools will follow the statewide calendar to meet their 180 days of instruction requirement, although they may add days to the calendar if they wish. Please contact your school leaders for more details on their plans.

8. Does this mean that we will no longer have snow days?

- The current plan is to treat snow days as distance learning days.
- Several factors go into the decision to cancel school or not due to inclement weather or a building emergency; it's undoubtedly a crucial decision for district superintendents.
- Ultimately, superintendents will continue to make the call on whether or not a school should be canceled. However, since we've had success with distance learning, this is an opportunity to have virtual snow days instead of having students make up snow days at the end of the school year.
- It would be best if you continued to visit your school's website for school closings and changes, which is often posted on their website and tune into media outlets affiliated with the Rhode Island Broadcasters Association.

9. What is the schedule for teachers and students on professional development/distance learning days?

- The eight statewide professional development/distance learning days are on September 21, October 19, November 16, December 14, January 25, March 15, April 12, and May 17. These days are included as a part of the 180 minimum days of instruction for students. Districts are responsible for working with their school communities to schedule learning activities for students and professional development opportunities for teachers for the identified dates.