

Feb 3, 2024

Making Up Days Missed Due to Strike

Dear Families of Newton Public Schools,

I write to provide you clarity on how the district must address missed school days. We are required to hold 180 days of school and there are no exceptions or waivers from the Department of Elementary and

Secondary Education (I called and asked). Last week when I wrote a guidance memo to the school committee to help them make a decision on the best way to make up missed days, I made a recommendation for how to do this which was different than what was voted. This happened because since my recommendation, the number of days required to be made up increased to such a degree that the school committee had no choice but to utilize February break to address the missed days in addition to all available June days. Additionally, the February week being used was part of the negotiated return to work with our educator unions. Below is a graphic explaining how school make up days will work. It cannot now be altered.

Here is how it will work:

- There are 11 strike days to make up. All days must be made up by June 30th per state regulation.
- The calendar must proceed as voted by the school committee using all of the former February vacation days as school days (Feb 20, 21, 22, 23).
- The week of February 20-23, now a school week, will have the same schedule as any school week. **(4 days of strike covered by this)**
- The traditional February break is cancelled.
- February 19th is a federal holiday and will remain a day off from school. We cannot, by law, hold school on this day.
- All available June days (June 17, 18, 20, 21, 24, 25, 26) will be used to make up the additional days. **(7 days of strike covered by this)**
- All schools except for Franklin will have a last day of June 26th as their last day. As always, this day is a half day for students, a full day for staff.
- Franklin students and staff will have a full day of school on June 26th.
- Franklin school will attend school an additional day, June 27 (they missed a day when their school only had to close), this will be a half day for students and a full day for staff.
- All staff have one additional half work day on June 27 for all schools but Franklin.
- Franklin staff will work their additional half work day on the 28th.
- April break may be used to make up time corresponding to any snow days we might have to call.
- Saturdays and Sundays are not possible work days as they hit religious observance issues, youth sports, and religious and Chinese school days.

No one is thrilled by any of the options for make up, but this is the only one that

allows us to plan for possible snow days and not further disrupt the community and schedules.

Many families have plans for February break and late June days. Students also have commitments, jobs, internships, etc. We understand all of these challenges and no student will be penalized for absences due to such circumstances; high school students will not have grades or credit impacted by absences in the former February break and June days post June 24 (the prior latest possible school day under the former calendar). Our high school principals are working with MIAA to reschedule missed athletics and will be in contact with AP test coordinators on Monday to determine how to handle make up days. We ask for your patience as we sort through these matters. Your principals are the best point of contact if you have specific program or activity questions OR if there are circumstances created for your child by this calendar that need personalized attention. **High School Graduation dates will not change.** Elementary and Middle School promotion ceremonies will be revised in the coming days. Look for information from your principal. Principals cannot excuse students and cannot revise the calendar. All leaders will lead with flexibility and kindness in any way possible to support our students. As you interact with your school leaders, understand that they are also adapting to these circumstances.

Thank you,

Anna Nolin

Superintendent of Schools