

## **Act of God days: Overview and options**

Changing a school year calendar is a complicated topic that involves many moving parts and pieces of information.

The following is a brief overview on what's required, the process that is involved to not make up days missed beyond emergency days by requesting Act of God days, and relevant questions to consider when amending a school year calendar:

1. Each school district is required to have five (5) emergency days built into each year's calendar.
2. Once all of the emergency days have been used (which happened in the 2023-24 school year), local BOEs may request—through a formal process to the Regional Superintendent and State Superintendent—to not make up any additional days.
  - a. Neither the Regional Superintendent nor the State Superintendent are obligated to approve such requests.
  - b. On at least two occasions this school year, the Illinois State Board of Education sent information to school districts requesting that every effort be made to make up all emergency days, and that requests for Act of God days would be individually reviewed and additional information may be required to demonstrate why the days could not be made up.
3. Per school code, we as a district are charged with providing 176 days of instruction. Coupled with the information above, that leads to the following questions that may guide the BOE to a decision:
  - a. Why can't we make up the additional day(s) missed, other than preference?
  - b. Why wouldn't we make the day(s) up?
    - i. Why would we deny a student a day of learning and two meals, especially our impoverished students and special education students?
  - c. Why would we not honor our contracts and obligations for employees, vendors, and our taxpayers?

If the BOE makes the decision to request Act of God days, there is no guarantee that it would be granted. Furthermore, if Act of God days are approved, we will inevitably hear from parents and possibly staff opposed to not making up for the missed days, given how valuable we've seen in-person learning to be.