Chapter PI 27

COMMENCEMENT OF SCHOOL TERM

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Note: Chapter PI 27 was created as an emergency rule effective March 13, 2002.

PI 27.01 Applicability and purpose. This chapter establishes procedures for school boards to use in requesting that a school term commence prior to September 1 as provided for under s. 118.045, Stats. This chapter also establishes criteria used in determining whether an extraordinary reason exists for granting such a request.

History: CR 01–130: cr. Register April 2002 No. 556, eff. 5–1–02.

PI 27.02 Definitions. In this chapter:

(1) "Department" means the Wisconsin department of public instruction.

(2) "Forces of nature" means an event that is outside the control of the school board and could not be avoided by exercise of due care.

(2m) "International baccalaureate program" means a pre–university course of study authorized by a high school's registration with the international baccalaureate organization, a non–profit educational organization founded in 1968 and operating out of Geneva, Switzerland, that includes a standardized curriculum and a mandatory standardized examination schedule, as required by that sponsoring organization.

(3) "School board" has the meaning defined in s. 115.001 (7), Stats.

(4) "School term" means the time commencing with the first school day and ending with the last school day that the schools of a school district are in operation for attendance of pupils in a school year, other than for the operation of summer classes.

History: CR 01–130: cr. Register April 2002 No. 556, eff. 5–1–02; CR 03–112: cr. (2m) Register July 2004 No. 583, eff. 8–1–04.

PI 27.03 Commencement of school term. (1) Except as specified under subs. (2) and (3), no public school may commence a school term until September 1.

(2) The provisions in this chapter do not prohibit a school board from doing any of the following:

(a) Holding athletic contests or practices before September 1.

(b) Scheduling in–service days or work days before September 1.

(c) Offering specialized programming for pupils before September 1. Specialized programming allows pupils to engage in specific activities such as gifted and talented classes, remedial education, migrant programs, or the early college credit program. In addition, new learning strategies to address a school in need of improvement under s. 115.38 (4), Stats., may be considered specialized programming. While this provision allows certain activities for targeted groups of pupils to begin before September 1, it does not allow the school board to officially begin its school term before September 1.

(d) Holding school year–round.

(3) (a) A school board may commence a school term prior to September 1, if it submits a written request to the department under sub. (4) asking for an earlier school start date, and such request is granted by the department. The request shall be submitted annually by January 1 prior to the beginning of the school term.

(b) If an extraordinary event occurs after the January 1 deadline, the school board shall submit the written request under par. (a) at the earliest possible time prior to the beginning of the school term.

(4) The request under sub. (3) shall be adopted as a written resolution by the school board at a school board meeting that complies with the open meetings law under ss. 19.83 and 19.84, Stats. The request and resolution shall include all of the following:

(a) The reasons and any other relevant facts relating to the request for an earlier school start date.

(b) When an extraordinary event took place or a chronology of events leading to the request.

(5) The department may grant a request only if it determines that there are extraordinary reasons for granting the request. Extraordinary reasons include any of the following:

(b) Major construction projects that cause the school term to be altered and necessitate an earlier start date for the entire district.

(c) Closure of school due to forces of nature, code violations, or environmental orders.

(d) Excessive costs associated with the transportation of pupils who attend private schools that start prior to September 1. If an earlier start date is requested under this paragraph, the school board shall provide sufficient documentation to establish that it has made a good faith effort to work with the private school to coordinate a school start date on or after September 1.

(e) Participation by a high school in the international baccalaureate program with more than 75% of the 11th and 12th grade pupils enrolled in the high school also being enrolled in one or more of the courses that are offered under the international baccalaureate program, if all of the following conditions are met:

1. The pupils in the school district are given the option of enrolling in another high school in the school district that is not subject to a request for an early start date.

2. The request applies only to the high school that is participating in the international baccalaureate program and not to any other elementary, middle, junior high, or high schools operated by the school district.

(6) (a) The department shall make its determination in writing as to whether an extraordinary reason exists and shall notify the school board of its determination. The determination shall be based on the information provided by the school board and any other information received by the department.

(b) At any time prior to the issuance of a final determination, the school board may withdraw its request.

History: CR 01–130: cr. Register April 2002 No. 556, eff. 5–1–02; CR 03–112: cr. (5) (e) Register July 2004 No. 583, eff. 8–1–04; CR 17–053: am. (1), (3) (a), r. (3) (b) 1., renum. (3) (b) 2. to (3) (b) and am., r. (5) (a) Register December 2017 No. 744 eff. 1–1–18; **CR 19–069: am. (2) (c) Register February 2020 No. 770, eff. 3–1–20**.

PI 27.04 Reporting requirements. The state superintendent shall provide, annually by November 1, a report on the operation of the rule to the assembly committee having jurisdiction over tourism and the senate committee having jurisdiction over education. The report shall include the following information:

(1) The districts that made a request.

(2) The extraordinary reason cited for each request.

(3) The department's determination and the reasons for granting or denying each request.

(4) The nature and extent of information from non−school board sources received by the department under s. PI 27.03 (6) (a).

History: CR 01−130: cr. Register April 2002 No. 556, eff. 5−1−02.