

The Truth About Snow Days

Each year several members ask RCEA to do something about the thirteen “extra” days that we work and are “banked” to be used for inclement weather. It is important that members understand that these days don’t actually exist and that neither Robertson County students nor Robertson County teachers are in school any more days than are required by law.

State law requires that students attend school 180 days each year. State law also requires that teachers work for 200 days. This is also in conjunction with the RCEA contract. Each year, RCEA along with the Central Office design a school calendar that encompasses these guidelines.

State law also mandates the minimum length of a school day is six and a half hours. If any school system elects to expand the school day to a minimum of seven hours of instructional time (which is done in Robertson County) the additional time may be used to compensate for days missed due to dangerous or extreme weather conditions. It can also be used for faculty professional development. Therefore, Robertson County Schools can miss up to thirteen days (the state maximum) due to inclement weather and not have to make the days up. This is not because Robertson County Schools are in session thirteen days more than required, but simply because of a seven-hour school day for students. If we were to remove thirteen days, or any days from our school calendar, we would be in violation of state law.

Lastly, it is important to understand that the RCEA contract that is signed by all employees is for a 200 day work year. The contract also states that teacher work day is seven and one half hours (and it always has been). Several years ago, when the

elementary student day was increased to seven hours, the teacher day was not increased. Therefore, to fulfill the contract signed by all teachers, the school year calendar must consist of 200 seven and a half hour workdays.

For more information about “banked days” or minimum hour requirements for teachers and students please see Chapter 0520-1-3-.02 Minimum Requirements for the Approval of Public Schools: <http://www.state.tn.us/sos/rules/0520/0520.htm> or <http://www.state.tn.us/sos/rules/0520/0520-01/0520-01-03.pdf>