

State Board Policy Chapter 9, Rule 9.3

**Chapter 9: Attendance Reporting**

*Rule 9.3 Designated School-Wide/District-Wide Virtual Learning Days*

**Beginning with the 2021 – 2022 school year** all districts shall resume providing face-to-face in-person instruction. Process Standard 13 of the current edition of the *Mississippi Public School Accountability Standards* mandates that both students and teachers are present for scheduled classroom instruction during the minimum of 180 days. Additionally, Process Standard 13.3 provides that no more than two (2) of the 180 days may be 60% days. Both teachers and pupils must be in attendance for not less than 60% of the normal school day.

In the event of unplanned/unforeseen circumstances, districts may opt to utilize designated school-wide or district-wide virtual learning days throughout the year; however, the districts shall ensure that virtual learning days include the minimum 330 minutes of actual teaching as required by Miss. Code Ann. § 37-13-67 and comply with State Board Policy Chapter 56 Rule 56.2: *Virtual Students*. Teachers shall provide instruction to students during each virtual learning day. Therefore, lesson plans shall include daily synchronous/interactive instruction and dialogue. Districts shall ensure that students who access instruction virtually from off-campus have instruction provided and access to the assigned teacher(s) including any special services teachers/providers during the scheduled time for each course.

State Board Policy Chapter 9, Rule 9.3: *School-Wide and District-Wide Virtual Learning Days* eliminated the hybrid (a combination of virtual and traditional instructional modes) scheduling option for the 2021 – 2022 school year.

However, due to the increased number of diagnosed COVID cases in school-aged children at the beginning of the 2021 – 2022 school year and in consultation with Mississippi State Department of Health officials, a district or school(s) within a district may utilize the hybrid scheduling option effectively August 19, 2021, through October 31, 2021.

Based on another surge in COVID-19 cases, districts may utilize the hybrid scheduling option from January 20, 2022, through March 11, 2022.

The use of the hybrid scheduling option is only available for use in response to the COVID pandemic. During this time, a district/school shall adhere to all requirements outlined in this policy and State Board Policy Chapter 56 Rule 56.2: *Virtual Students*.

Districts shall not use virtual learning days for the purpose of allowing students to remain off-campus to provide additional planning time, professional development opportunities, testing, or to attend athletic events.

In the event of any audits conducted by the MDE, all process standards (i.e., student-teacher ratios, instructional practices, planning time, compulsory attendance, teacher evaluations, etc.,) for virtual learning will be held to the same standards as in-person learning.

Districts shall ensure students, parents, and staff are notified in advance of any virtual learning days so that students and staff are familiar with equipment, online platforms (learning management systems) and district-wide policies regarding student-issued devices. Districts shall identify and have alternate plans in place *only* for individual students who do not have access to internet services and shall ensure that the instruction is equivalent to his/her peers.

### **Virtual Learning Days vs. Inclement Weather Days**

Districts shall provide sufficient notice (before the close of the prior school day) to staff and students for any weather-related or other unforeseen virtual days. Refer to Miss. Code Ann. § 37-13-64 regarding the authority of local school superintendents/boards to determine if a district will make-up missed days for weather-related school closures. When instances occur, such as wide-spread power outages, that make virtual learning impractical, districts shall either make up any missed days to ensure that teacher-led instruction occurs or use the days as weather days as allowed under Miss. Code Ann. § 37-13-64.

In accordance with State Board Policy Chapter 56, Rule 56.1: *Distance Learning, Blended Learning, and Online Courses*, districts may allow individual students to utilize distance learning for specific courses, or on an as-needed basis (i.e., illnesses) based on local school board policy.

*See also* State Board Policy Chapter 9 Rule 9.2, *Reporting Attendance for Virtual Learning*

*See also* State Board Policy Chapter 56 Rule 56.2, *Virtual Students*

Miss. Code Ann. §§ 37-1-3, 37-13-63, 37-13-64, 37-13-65, 37-13-67. (Adopted 6/2021, Revised 8/2021)