

Time Requirements for a School Year Frequently Asked Questions

Q: What are the minimum hours required in a school term?

A: As outlined in SDCL 13-26-1 and ARSD 24:43:09:05, they are as follows:

- Kindergarten: 437.5 hours
- Grades 1-5: 875 hours
- Grades 6-12: 962.5 hours

Q: These required hours are exclusive of intermissions. What is an intermission?

A: As noted in SDCL 13-26-1, an intermission is the time when pupils are at recess or lunch.

Q: Can I count parent-teacher conferences toward meeting the time requirement?

A: Per SDCL 13-26-4, a school may have parent-teacher conferences during the school year, and not more than 16.5 hours may be counted as hours in session.

Q: Can I count in-service training toward meeting the time requirement?

A: Per SDCL 13-26-4.1 and 13-26-2:

A school board may designate a maximum of 5.5 hours of the 16.5 hours allowed for parent-teacher conferences as in-service training.

School boards are encouraged to provide time within the regular school term for curriculum and staff development which shall be in addition to the time required in this section. Each school board shall determine the appropriate amount of time for this activity and how best to use the time based on local needs for program development, increased parent participation, student contact, teachers' preparation, or other needs of the schools in the district.

In-service time cannot count toward meeting the minimum time requirements, other than described in the first paragraph underneath this question.

Q: What about make-up time?

A: Per SDCL 13-26-2, a school is not required to make up time for school closing because of weather, disease or emergency once it has reached the minimum number of hours in the school term as required by state law.

Q: Because of inclement weather, my district had a late start and early dismissal. Does this time have to be made up?

A: No. According to SDCL 13-26-2, if classes have been convened and then are dismissed, or if classes convene at a time later in the day than normal, because of inclement weather, that day constitutes a school day in session equal to the number of hours planned for that day as established in the local school district calendar for the year.



Q: My district added some make-up days after graduation. Do the graduating seniors have to attend school on these make-up days?

A: According to SDCL 13-26-2, graduating seniors are excused from make-up time if the make-up time occurs after the students have graduated or after graduation exercises have been held.

Q: Can graduating seniors be dismissed before the end of the regular school term?

A: According to SDCL 13-26-2, a local school board *may* release graduating seniors before the end of the regular school term. This is a local decision.