



# Extended Learning Program Overview of Plan 2018-2019

## Overview of Extended Learning Program

Extended Learning refers to a practice assigning work to students as alternative structured learning on called snow days in place of adding a canceled day to the end of the school calendar. This practice has been implemented in several states (Massachusetts, Minnesota, New Hampshire, and Ohio) and under different operational models. As a K - 12 district divided into elementary, middle, and high schools, we created a model that is flexible within the district, within schools, and even within grades to ensure that the instructional activities meet the DESE definition of structured learning time. During the 2017-2018 school year, a pilot plan was created, approved, implemented and positively received as evidenced through both staff and family surveys.

Each school year as the winter, months settle in; schools do their best to prepare for unexpected school cancellations due to inclement weather. While many students might welcome a day off from school, cancellations pose unexpected interruptions to the teaching and learning process. Canceled school days are added to the end of the school calendar late into June, which is not optimal for timely, focused learning experiences. North Middlesex had an average of 6.1 canceled days a year for snow from 2007-2017. This not only interrupts the learning for students, but adds days to the end of the school year when learning is not as structured as it is in the middle of the school year.

The Snow Day Extended Learning program provides the students of NMRSD with real-time, authentic learning opportunities to replace canceled school days. Teachers will provide curriculum-based learning that their students can complete in place of a canceled school day. Assignments may be short-term, unit-based, hybrid, or longer-term projects equal to multiple days of learning.

Although we firmly believe that the highest form of learning takes place in a classroom with a qualified teacher, support staff or specialist, we also acknowledge that days made up late into June are not of the same quality as those that could be offered with extended learning opportunities. Students in the twenty-first century will likely have at least one online class in college, and many will be preparing for employment set in a work-from-home environment. The extended learning opportunities help build a foundation for this type of learning and work production for the students of North Middlesex.

A group of elementary, middle and high school staff, administrators, and parents from all three-member towns researched and reviewed districts in Massachusetts that have implemented a similar plan for canceled days and created a proposal for an initial pilot for the 2017-2018 year. This was successfully implemented as evidenced by the results of the survey responses from stakeholders.

On Monday, October 22, 2018, The North Middlesex Regional School Committee approved the District Leadership Team and the Extended Learning Committee's recommendation to implement a second pilot year of the Extended Learning Program. The second year pilot's Extended Learning will be implemented for any called snow/inclement weather days after the first five-canceled snow days are added to the end of the calendar during 2018-2019 school year. This will allow the last day of the 2018-2019 school year not to exceed Wednesday, June 19, 2019.

All district staff and families will be provided with an updated Plan Overview, Frequently Asked Questions, Roles and Responsibilities Chart, and examples of structured learning activities as outlined in the Communication Plan attached.

All district staff will continue to complete their contracted work time using planning, teaching, support, and correcting of assignments intended for these days.

If an assignment is given that exceeds the number of Extended Learning Days then these assignments will be completed during regular school hours as the structured learning time teachers have determined best fits the grade level and discipline's curriculum.

After the completion of the second pilot year of Extended Learning, a survey similar to the first year pilot will be conducted. Based on the two pilot years, the survey results and any new guidance from the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education a recommendation for future implementation will be made prior to the 2019-2020 school year.

Please visit the pages on our website listed below for information that is more detailed:

1. Frequently Asked Questions
2. Roles and Responsibilities
3. Sample Assignments
4. Communication Outline

*\*\*The Snow Day Extended Learning Proposal Committee would like to extend our thanks to the School Committee, the and the Burlington, Wakefield, Gateway Regional and Ralph C. Maher school districts for graciously sharing their research, materials and experiences with their Snow Day Structured Learning Plans in support of creating the North Middlesex Regional School District Pilot Proposal Plan.*