

** This notice is being sent a part of the state requirement for adopting an e-learning plan. At its regular monthly meeting last evening (11.18.2020, the Board voted to seek approval from the Illinois State Board of Education to have e-learning days in place of emergency days when appropriate. Information about the e-learning plan was also posted on Facebook on November 17th.

Historically, Sherrard School District cancelled classes when a situation arose that compromised the safety of the students and staff. Most commonly, the situation was snow. The missed instruction was made-up at the end of the school year. According to Section 10-20.56 of the School Code [105 ILCS 5/10-20.56], school districts may now utilize “e-learning days” in lieu of emergency days. Said simply, the students would still have school at home on snow days and they would not need to make them up at the end of the school year.

However, when circumstances arise that do not allow the staff and families enough opportunity to adequately prepare for remote learning, then an emergency day will be declared. For example, there might be a widespread power outage or an unexpected snowstorm. When these unexpected situations arise, there will be no e-learning and the missed day(s) will be made up at the end of the school year.

There is a process that must be followed to implement an e-learning program. The board held a hearing last evening (November 18) to consider the matter. The board voted to approve the plan later in the meeting.

The e-learning plan must contain the following provisions.

- Ensure and verify at least 5 clock hours of instruction or school work, as required under Section 10-19.05, for each student participating in an e-learning day
- Ensure access from home or other appropriate remote facility for all students participating, including computers, the Internet, and other forms of electronic communication that must be utilized in the proposed program
- Ensure that non-electronic materials are made available for students participating in the program who do not have access to the required technology or to participating teachers or students who are prevented from accessing the required technology
- Ensure appropriate learning opportunities for students with special needs
- Monitor and verify each student's electronic participation
- Address the extent to which student participation is within the student's control as to the time, pace, and means of learning
- Provide effective notice to students and their parents or guardians of the use of particular days for e-learning
- Provide staff and students with adequate training for e-learning days' participation
- Ensure that all teachers and staff who may be involved in the provisions of e-learning have access to any and all hardware and software that may be required for the program
- Ensure an opportunity for any collective bargaining negotiations with representatives of the school district's employees that would be legally required, and including all classifications of school district employees who are represented by collective bargaining agreements and who would be affected in the event of an e-learning day
- Review and revise the program as implemented to address difficulties confronted
- Ensure that the protocol regarding general expectations and responsibilities of the program is communicated to teachers, staff, and students at least 30 days prior to utilizing an e-learning day