

NORTH MIDDLESEX SNOW DAY EXTENDED LEARNING PILOT PROGRAM UPDATE:

The snow day extended learning program used its first of a possible five days on Wednesday, January 17, 2018. We would like to thank the staff, students, and families for jumping into this pilot so quickly. There is much positive feedback from this first day, but as with any pilot, there is room for improvement.

To address some of the frequent questions received regarding the first pilot day, we have updated the Frequently Asked Questions to help give some more clarification and guidelines for all involved. The questions updated are below:

****What is structured learning time?**

Per the state of Massachusetts Structured Learning time shall mean time during which students are engaged in regularly scheduled instruction, learning activities, or learning assessments within the curriculum for study of the "core subjects" and "other subjects." In addition to classroom time where both teachers and students are present, structured learning time may include directed study, independent study, technology-assisted learning, and presentations by persons other than teachers, school-to-work programs, and statewide student performance assessments.

Guidelines from the DESE were updated recently and can be found using the following link:

<http://www.doe.mass.edu/redesign/asld-memo.html>

****How will students know what their extended learning assignment will be for the snow day?**

Teachers will determine if they will assign a short-term, unit-based or long-term assignment and will give this out to students either at the beginning of winter, before the snow day or post or email no later than 9:00 am on an extended learning snow day.

Assignments may be given in packets or hard copy, or they may be sent out using technology that the class is familiar with using at other times during the year (google classroom, Aspen, etc.). Some teachers will also post their assignments on the school or district website as well, in the event the hard copy is lost or forgotten at school.

However, if your child does not have access to technology or the technology frequently doesn't work consistently then please contact your child's teacher to request that hard copies be sent home.

****How much time should each assignment take?**

The snow day extended learning program focuses on quality of learning, not quantity. Teachers will provide assignments which meet the DESE definition of structured learning time. *Assignments will be reasonable in length for the developmental age and grade level of students, and we are mindful of the unique opportunity for family time on school cancellation days. Emphasis is placed on the quality of learning experiences, not on quantity or compliance.*

Estimated times for schoolwork completion per grade span will be:

- K-2 – approximately 60 minutes
- Gr. 3-4 - approximately 90 minutes
- Gr. 5-8 – approximately 20 minutes per subject area that would have met on the cancelled cycle day
- Gr. 9-12 – approximately 30 minutes per subject area that would have met on the cancelled cycle day

REMINDER: Some teachers may provide options for students to complete assignments over a period of time. The teacher will determine and communicate when the work is due.

****If my child is scheduled for a Special (Art, PE, Foreign Language, Music) on that day will they have assignments?**

Your child will have assignments given to them by their Specialist teacher, or it will be integrated into an assignment.

Although assignments for specials may come home before the snow day, your child is only responsible to complete assignments if they would have had that class on the Extended Learning Snow Day. They do not have to complete assignments for classes that would not have taken place on those days.

The full list of "Frequently Asked Questions" is attached or you can view it on our district website under the Extended Learning tab.

As a district, we support the Growth Mindset and believe that, as we teach our students, there is power in the word "yet". This pilot is not perfect yet, but with the professional staff at North Middlesex, our excellent students and the feedback and support of families it is our hope that it will only continue to get better.

Thank you for your continued feedback, and as a reminder, you will have an opportunity in the spring to complete a survey to help guide the committee in improving the extended learning proposal for the future.



Snow Day: Extended Learning Frequently Asked Questions

Frequently Asked Questions and Answers (updated 2/3/18)

What is snow day extended learning?

NMRSD's mission is to develop an interactive and inclusive learning community dedicated to preparing students for productive citizenship in a global society.

Snow day extended learning allows students to complete structured learning time at home under the direction of their teachers. This structured learning time will still count towards the student's learning requirements outlined by the state of Massachusetts.

****What is structured learning time?**

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Why does NMRSD have an extended learning program?

Learning happens everywhere. The snow day extended learning program allows students to develop their foundational skills needed to plan and accomplish learning in different environments. By promoting independent, hands-on/experiential learning, students are setting the stage for lifelong learning.

What do teachers do on snow day extended learning days?

Teachers will have already spent considerable time and effort developing these assignments. They will work with students on completing these assignments when they return to school, are responsible for following up with students on incomplete assignments, and must assess each student's assignment to provide a grade. Also, teachers may be working on lesson plans, content research, professional development, or other items. Additional information on the roles and responsibilities, as well as sample assignments, can be found on the website.

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However, if your child does not have access to technology or the technology frequently doesn't work consistently then please contact your child's teacher to request that hard copies be sent home.

Do all schools/students have the same lessons?

No. Each lesson will be teacher specific. They will assign their students' lesson, assignment or projects based on their grade level.

When do students have to turn in their extended learning assignments?

This decision will be determined by your student's teacher and will be communicated to your student.

Projects/assignments will never be due the first day they come back to school. Some assignments will be short term, and due as early as a week after the snow day. Some assignments will be long-term projects, and due dates for these assignments will be provided to the student by the teacher or team of teachers.

How much support should parents give their children?

The details provided for students by their teachers to complete the assignments will allow them to do most if not all of the work independently. Lessons are developed so the parents will not need to provide any more support than they would typically.

What if a parent is not able to be home to support a young child with work completion? What if a student requires IEP or ELL support services to complete curriculum assignments?

One of the reasons that end products are not due on the day following a school cancellation day is so that we can ensure that students have the time and support services they may need to successfully complete their assignments.

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REMINDER: Some teachers may provide options for students to complete assignments over a period of time. The teacher will determine and communicate when the work is due.

What if I don't have a computer for my child to use?

The assignments will not require the sole use of a computer/internet. If your child does not have access to a computer, their assignment will be given on paper, or other arrangements for the use of district technology will be arranged.

What will happen to my student if he/she does not complete their extended learning assignments?

Students who do not complete an assignment by the due date and have not sought or accepted attempts to receive support from school personnel will be marked absent for the day/class.

Who can parents/students contact if they have a question about an assignment?

As always, your first line of support will be the classroom teacher, followed by the building-level administration. Email your student's teacher, and he/she will get back to you. Also, teachers will be available to work with students upon their return to school.