Date: September 11, 2019
To: Chief School Administrators, Charter School and Renaissance School Project Leads
Route To: Principals, Teachers, School Staff
From: Abdulsaleem Hasan, Assistant Commissioner
Division of Field Services

**Delayed Opening and Early Dismissal Policies**

Pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:7F-9, New Jersey schools must be in session for 180 days to receive state aid. A day when school is in session is “a day on which the school is open, and students are under the guidance and direction of a teacher or teachers engaged in the teaching process.” (N.J.A.C. 6A:32-8.3(a)). Days in which schools are closed – including for inclement weather, teachers’ institutes, or holidays – do not count as a day in session (Ibid).

In lieu of closing, schools may sometimes have a shortened school day with a delayed opening or early dismissal. A shortened day, whether it is planned or emergent (as in the case of inclement weather), must meet certain requirements in order to count toward the 180-day requirement.

The NJDOE advises districts to consider the following when creating policies regarding early dismissals or delayed openings:

**Hour Requirements**

- When inclement weather or another reason necessitates a shortened school day, it is considered the equivalent of a full day only if school is in session for four or more hours, excluding lunch and recess. (N.J.A.C. 6A:32-8.3(e))
- The policy should detail the starting time and ending time that will define the day for each school, in the event of a shortened day.
- In preschool and kindergarten, one continuous session of two and one-half hours qualifies as a full day. (N.J.A.C. 6A:32-8.3(b); New Jersey Department of Education: School Register, 2018-2019.
- Districts are encouraged to adjust the schedule so that both the AM and PM sessions of half-day kindergarten or preschool can reach a full two and one-half hours.

**Kindergarten and Pre-School Class Size Requirements: Reminder in the Event Classes are Combined**

- Kindergarten classes should not exceed a maximum enrollment of 25 students (N.J.A.C. 6A:32-8.3(c)(3));
- Kindergarten classes in former Abbott districts may not exceed 21 students (N.J.A.C. 6A:32-8.3(c)(3));
- Preschool classes, in former Abbott districts and any district that has received Preschool Education Expansion Aid (PEEA), may not exceed 15 students (N.J.A.C. 6A:13A:4.3(a));
- Districts that received Early Childhood Program Aid may not have class sizes exceed 18 students (N.J.A.C. 6A:13A-3 [[b]](c)5-i);
- Former Early Launch to Learning Initiative districts may not have class sizes exceed 20 students (N.J.A.C. 6A:13A:4.3(a); IU 13A:3.2(c)(5)(i)).
Contact information
Districts wanting to discuss their policies can reach out to their NJDOE County Office of Education.

c: Members, State Board of Education
   Lamont O. Repollet, Ed.D., Commissioner
   NJDOE Staff
   Statewide Parent Advocacy Network
   Garden State Coalition of Schools
   NJ LEE Group