

OPTIONAL FLEXIBLE SCHOOL YEAR

Frequently Asked Questions

During the 2011-2012 school year, students in grades 3-12 in Rice Consolidated ISD can qualify to earn flex days and get out of school on May 18, if they meet all eligibility criteria for their grade level. This incentive program is made possible as part of the Texas Education Agency's Optional Flexible Year Program which allows school districts to modify their instructional calendar to provide a flexible year program to meet the educational needs of its students. (TEC 129.1029). Students who do not meet the flex day eligibility criteria will attend the 180 days of instruction of the regular school calendar.

Students who do not meet the eligibility requirements will be given small group and/or one-on-one intensive instruction in the area of need and in meeting promotion and/or graduation criteria.

1. Who is required to attend all 180 days of instruction?

All students in PreK, Kindergarten, First grade, and Second grade will be required to attend the 180 days of instruction. Students in grades 3-12 will be required to attend the 180 days of instruction if they do not meet all eligibility criteria identified by the district. The eligibility criteria for each grade level, 3-12, is posted on the district website, www.ricecisd.org.

2. If my student qualifies for the seven flex days, can they still come to school for the 180 days?

No. If they are in grades 3-12 and meet all flex day eligibility requirements they will not attend school on the additional days. The purpose of the seven flex days is to provide a much smaller teacher-to-student ratio in which personalized, targeted instruction can take place with those students not meeting the district criteria.

3. If my child passes all but one of the state assessments (STAAR/TAKS), does he/she still have to attend the full 180 days of instruction?

Yes. All state assessments given at a grade level must be passed in order for a student to be granted the flex days for early out-of-school. For example, if a 5th grade student passes STAAR Reading and STAAR Math but fails STAAR Science, he/she must attend all 180 days of instruction in order to concentrate on concepts and skills in the areas of need.

4. If my child must attend the full 180 days, how is promotion/retention determined?

Students must meet district promotion/retention guidelines. For students in grades 5 & 8, final promotion decisions will be made by the Grade Placement Committee once state assessment results are received.

5. How and when will parents be notified if their child will be required to attend the full 180 days of instruction?

Teachers and administrators will notify parents throughout the year of their student's progress based on grades, assessment data, and attendance. Previous year's assessment scores can also be

used as a progress marker. However, the final determination will not come until the state assessment results are received, as late as Friday, May 18, 2012.

6. Will special education students be under the same guidelines as regular education students?

Yes. Students who receive special education services will be under the same standards as outlined for all students. An exception applies to students whose ARD committee determines that the full 180 days of instruction are in the student's best interest.

7. Will the district still provide bus transportation and food services for the full 180 days?

Yes. Transportation and food services will continue to be provided throughout the full 180 days of instruction.

8. Can my child volunteer to help a teacher during the days of targeted instruction in the 180 days?

No. The intention is to provide intense intervention and instruction by highly qualified staff.

9. What if a student is required to attend the full 180 days of instruction but does not come back to school when the flex days begin?

Texas Education Code 25.093 states that under the compulsory attendance laws, a student who fails to attend school on ten or more days within a six-month period in the same school year or on three or more days or parts of days within a four-week period may be prosecuted for nonattendance.

10. Will an ESL or LEP exempt student be under the same guidelines?

Yes. All ESL students are under the same guidelines. Students who do not meet the eligibility criteria identified for their grade level will be required to attend the full 180 days of instruction. LEP Exempt students are given a language accommodated state test and will be required to meet the passing standard to be eligible for the flex days.

11. My child is a senior. Will he/she qualify for the flex day early release?

Yes. Seniors must meet district eligibility criteria like all other students. If they have met all graduation requirements, have a 70% passing score in core areas, meet the 90% attendance guideline, and have passed all four TAKS Exit Level tests, they qualify for the flex early release from school.