



# NEW FAIRFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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Dr. Alicia M. Roy, Superintendent  
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**DRAFT NOT TO BE SENT UNTIL AFTER THE BOARD MEETING, IF APPROVED**

May 31, 2018

SENT VIA EMAIL AND U.S. MAIL

Allan B. Taylor, Chairperson  
State Board of Education  
Connecticut State Department of Education  
450 Columbus Boulevard- Suite 606  
Hartford, CT 06103-1841

Dianna Wentzell  
Commissioner of Education  
Connecticut State Department of Education  
450 Columbus Boulevard  
Hartford, CT 06103-1841

Re: Request for Waiver of 180 Day School Year

Dear Mr. Taylor and Commissioner Wentzell:

On May 17, 2018, I sent a letter to both of you requesting a waiver of the 180 day requirement due to the storm that New Fairfield experienced on May 15, 2018. When I wrote the letter, I knew that the storm was devastating, but I can now emphatically state that the community has never experienced a storm of the magnitude seen on that day.

Nearly every road in the Town of New Fairfield was impassable after the storm, and the electricity was cut off for all of us. Officials on site from Eversource indicated that they had never seen the destruction that we experienced on that day, resulting in extreme damage to homes, trees fallen on nearly every road in the community, a fire that destroyed a home, a fatality, and the electrical system that had to be rebuilt in many parts of Town. Volunteers support every community, but in New Fairfield they are a necessary part of our community and are needed to complete essential work, including our volunteer fire department and the volunteers needed to open the shelter at the high school, which was open for seven days. These same people, our homeowners and community members, have substantial work to undertake to bring the Town back to the condition prior to the storm.

Schools were not in session for five consecutive days as a result of the devastation caused in the afternoon of May 15th. Prior to the storm we had arranged to makeup the other eight inclement weather days we had previously experienced due to the winter. There are five school days in the month of June, the 25th-29th, during which students could attend school and the result would be that the 180 day requirement would be met. However, for the reasons stated in my first request, including the hardships and trauma experienced by the residents--families and students--the Board of Education requests a waiver of the 180 day requirement. We request that five days be waived so that we can close the school year on Friday, June 22 as scheduled.

I know that many residents have sent correspondence not only to you, but to their legislators including additional reasons that going to school the last week of June would be a hardship. I also know that the legislators experienced the trauma of the storm with us and wrote to you in support of our waiver request. As superintendent I believe in the power of education and fight to help every student learn, knowing that every minute counts. Nevertheless, due to these extenuating circumstances, I write to you for the waiver. The Chair of the New Fairfield Board of Education, Mrs. Peggy Katkocin ([katkocin.peggy@newfairfieldschools.org](mailto:katkocin.peggy@newfairfieldschools.org)), is available to attend the State Board of Education meeting on June 6 to discuss our experiences and waiver request, if her appearance and ability to communicate with you in person would be beneficial.

Thank you for your consideration of this updated request.

Sincerely,

Dr. Alicia M. Roy  
Superintendent of Schools