

### Your Question:

You asked for post-hurricane best practices for schools, specifically regarding class size, class day waivers and calendar flexibility.

### Our Response:

Emergency preparedness is often addressed in a school district's school safety plan. However, natural disasters may require additional guidance and more waivers than originally planned. ECS has identified two states that have recently been subject to natural disasters and issued clear guidance on the school requirements you asked about. Below, we identify the governing authority that centralized information for school districts and outline the guidance and waivers issued.

### State Examples:

**Texas, Hurricane Harvey** | The Texas Education Agency (TEA) is the state agency that oversees primary and secondary public education in the state. In response to Hurricane Harvey in 2017, TEA centralized disaster and relief information for [schools online](#). The website provides a thorough record of memos from the Commissioner. Specific to your request, the Commissioner issued the following memos:

- **Guidance on school day waivers** ([August 29](#) and [September 1](#)): The first memo clarifies that affected districts and charter schools were eligible to apply for a missed school day waiver for the week of the hurricane. The second memo allows districts and charter schools to apply for up to an additional four days.
- **Adjustments for average daily attendance** ([September 12](#) and [October 9](#)): The first memo states that because average daily attendance (ADA) is a major component for determining funds, TEA is exploring options to adjust ADA for affected districts and charter schools that experienced a decline in enrollment. The memo also states that school districts that experience an enrollment increase of 10 percent or more, or of 30 students or more, may report these increases, as long as the increase is due to serving students displaced by the hurricane. The second memo reviews the final adjustments to ADA. The Commissioner clarified that the adjustment is a one-time adjustment only for the 2017-2018 school year. To be eligible for the adjustment, a school district or charter school must have:
  - Experienced damage resulting in an instruction disruption lasting 2 weeks or more, OR
  - Been closed for the 9 or 10 hurricane related waiver days; AND
  - Completed the Governor's Commission to Rebuild Texas Worksheet.
- **Calendar flexibility** ([minimum days of service](#)): This memo is meant to assist districts regarding paying teachers and contract personnel for the days that a school district was closed. If a district wished to reduce the number of required service days without reducing employee pay, it could request a waiver.

**Florida, Hurricane Irma and Hurricane Maria** | In response to these two hurricanes in 2017, the Florida Department of Education (FDOE) has posted school hurricane [information online](#).

- **Class size:** To ensure displaced students could attend school where ever they were living temporarily, the [DOE waived](#) residency and records requirements for school enrollment. After Hurricane Maria, the Commissioner issued [additional guidance](#) on the process to enroll additional students, guarantee displaced students are counted and schools receive accurate funding.
- **Class day waivers:** Regarding instructional time requirements, the [Commissioner authorized](#) a waiver of up to two days for closures related to Hurricane Irma. A district looking for additional waivers was required to submit a request to the FDOE.

- **Calendar flexibility:** The department also provided an [updated assessment schedule](#) to provide flexibility to affected schools, extending deadlines to ensure all requirements were met.