

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Proposed DPI rule provides districts additional flexibility, autonomy on school start date

Public hearings seeking feedback to be held

MADISON – The Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction will hold a virtual hearing on a proposed rule that would provide local education agencies additional flexibility to better meet their communities' needs in commencing a school term prior to Sept. 1.

[Clearinghouse Rule 24-026](#) expands the types of extraordinary reasons for the DPI to grant exemptions to the existing rule. This includes factors that pertain to student graduation rates, reading and mathematics proficiency, school attendance, coordination with postsecondary institutions for dual or concurrent enrollment, mental health of students and staff, and recruitment and retention strategies for educators. CR 24-026 would also allow school boards to submit exemption requests by March 1 instead of by Jan. 1, as the rule currently requires.

Initial feedback received by the DPI shows the existing rule, originally promulgated in May 2002, is inflexible and outdated. Additionally, the DPI has experienced a large increase in the quantity of school districts that have applied for a start date exemption, showing a need for greater autonomy to meet the needs of local communities.

The hearing to accept public testimony on the proposed rule will be held via conference call at 9:30 a.m. on Monday, March 25, 2024. To join the conference call, call 608-620-9781 and when prompted, enter Conference ID 595 960 120#. The DPI anticipates holding additional hearings at a later date. To submit feedback on CR 24-026 online, [visit the Wisconsin State Legislature's comment form](#).

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NOTE: This news release is available online on the [Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction's website](#).