



State of Rhode Island
DEPARTMENT OF ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION
Shepard Building
255 Westminister Street
Providence, Rhode Island 02903-3400

Angélica Infante-Green
Commissioner

April 21, 2023

By email: (Messorem@barringtonschools.org)

Michael B. Messore, III
Superintendent of Schools
Barrington Public Schools
283 County Road, P.O. Box 95
Barrington, Rhode Island 02806

Re: Variance Request re Scheduled June 4 High School Graduation Date

Dear Superintendent Messore:

We have received your request for a variance with respect to the provision in the *Regulations Governing the School Calendar and Length of the School Day* (the “Regulations”) that requires that the school year for a high school senior “shall be a minimum of one hundred seventy-one (171) instructional days,” and which also provides that school districts schedule graduations “any time after the completion of the one hundred seventy-one (171) instructional days.” See *id.*, 200-RICR- 20-05-1.10 (adopted December 9, 2015). As you informed me yesterday, if the Barrington High School graduation goes forward as planned on June 4, 2023, graduating seniors will not have received the minimum mandated 171 instructional days.

Since March 2020, all districts needed to modify their instructional delivery model in the wake of the pandemic. Indeed, the state remains under a state of emergency at least until May 5, 2023 “due to the dangers to health and life posed by SARS-CoV-2.” See the Governor’s Executive Order 23-04 (April 10, 2023). Moreover, Barrington’s school calendar provides for a total of 1,185 school hours and 1,047 instructional hours; the calendar thereby exceeds the statutorily-mandated minimum of 1,080 school hours and 990 instructional hours.

Thus, a Barrington senior graduating on June 4, while receiving instruction for 164 days, will have received approximately 954 instructional hours. This is 14 more hours than required for 171 days of instruction if the district had adopted a school calendar which only minimally satisfied the statutory minimum number of hours.

Therefore, I hereby grant your requested variance for the 2022 – 2023 school year, so that the Barrington High School graduation can go forward as planned on June 4, 2023.

Sincerely,

Angélica Infante-Green
Commissioner of Education

AIG/crb

cc: Lisa Odom-Villella