Guidelines and Instructions Electronic Request by School Districts for Count Week Waiver (Revised September, 2012)

In order to implement the reporting requirements of Ohio Revised Code section 3317.03 (A), a process has been developed to facilitate the communication of information needed to appropriately assign alternate count weeks to school districts in the case when the October or February count week cannot be respected. To ensure the maximum integrity of count week data, the goal is to grant permission for as few alternative count weeks as possible and thus a high bar has been set for approving alternate count weeks. Please follow these instructions when requesting a count week waiver.

(Note: Count week waivers are not required to be submitted by non-public schools or by community schools. Community schools must provide instructional services for the number of hours specified in their CSADM profile. Non-public schools that report ADM counts as part of the ADM-1 process should contact their Area Coordinator for guidance on what count to report. Count week waivers do not apply to counts of transported students. Districts should contact the Office of Pupil Transportation for guidance as to counting transported students when the district is not in session during one or more days during count week.)

All waiver requests should be submitted by e-mail, attaching a completed Excel-based spreadsheet form available on the Department's web site (search for "Count Week Waiver form").

The e-mail with attachment should be sent from district administrative offices to the following e-mail address: CountWeekWaiver@education.ohio.gov

The Excel-based Count Week Waiver Form should be saved as:

CWW-{District IRN}-{Short District Name}-{OctYY}.xls

Example:

CWW-043802-Columbus City-Oct10.xls

The subject of the e-mail should be the name of the Excel file as specified above.

Waiver requests should be submitted as soon as it is known that an alternate count week will be required.

Count Week Waiver Types:

Waivers can be granted for the following types of circumstances:

- A. *Religious holidays (Type A):* A district that has a long standing history of observing a religious holiday that falls during October count week will be granted a waiver.
 - <u>Description Cell for a religious holiday</u>: write the name of the holiday and the number of years the holiday has been traditionally observed by the district.
- B. *Community events historically observed (Type B):* A district that has a long-standing history of observing a community event (e.g. county fair, etc.) that falls during October count week will be granted a waiver.

- <u>Description Cell for a community event</u>: Write the name of the community event and the number of years the district has had a day or days not in session in observance of the event.
- C. Year round school historic practice (Type C): A district that has buildings that have a long-standing history of being year round schools with a schedule pattern (e.g. 45/15) that would have the school out of session during October/February count week will be granted a waiver only for the buildings in question.
 - <u>Description Cell for a year round school:</u> Write the schedule pattern for the school. Provide the building IRNs in the "If NOT all bldgs: Enter building IRNs" cell.
- D. *Calamity Day (Type D):* A district may experience a calamity during October count week. A waiver will be granted for such occurrences. (A count week waiver does not serve the purpose of a calamity day waiver. Please submit a separate calamity day waiver if a calamity day occurs.)
 - <u>Description Cell for calamity day:</u> Write the type of calamity and whether it is for all buildings or selected buildings.

Requests for waivers of October count week for other reasons: (**Type E**) These will be considered on a case by case basis, but the bias will be *not* to approve such requests. In those cases where districts want to make a case for a waiver, the district is asked to provide a description of the conflict and respond to three questions:

- 1) How did the conflict arise?
- 2) Why the conflicting circumstance cannot be resolved?
- 3) What actions the district will take to avoid a similar conflict in future years?

Finally, in order to obtain a waiver, including those related to calamity days, a district must agree to the following:

- A. For October, report their student count the first full week (five days Monday through Friday) they are in session PRIOR to the official October Count week
- B. That any students in their count taken during the alternative count week but appearing in another district's count taken during the normal October Count week shall be counted **only** in the normal October Count Week district's count. This stipulation is part of our ongoing effort to eliminate the double counting (and double payment) that occurs when there are districts in close geographic proximity that have different count weeks and might have situations where students are in each district during their respective counts.

Districts counting students for less than five (5) full days will only be able to claim the proportionate amount of the students counted.

We recognize that there may be, from time to time, unusual circumstances that do not neatly fit the count week waiver types outlined above. Please direct any questions about count week waivers to your area coordinator.

Calamity Days During Count Weeks

If a calamity day occurs during a count week, a district must submit BOTH a calamity day waiver AND a count week waiver.

Kindergarten Cancellation

If the only problem during a count week is that morning or afternoon kindergarten has been cancelled due to weather, then a waiver is not required. Simply consider the half-day kindergarten students impacted as "excused." This consideration applies only for purposes of EMIS reporting. A cancelled half-day of kindergarten is still considered a missed day which would require a calamity day waiver form and contribute to the number of days missed.

Single Building Waivers

EMIS can be configured to accommodate a different count week for a single building. Therefore, a district wide count week waiver will not be granted if there is only a single building (or less than the entire district) closed. In this case, the count week waiver form should simply indicate the building for which there is a count week conflict.

This generally happens in the case of a calamity (furnace failure, water main break, etc.) or in the case where a building is a year-round school and not in session during count week.

Approval

A reply will be provided to the e-mail (to the e-mail address from which the waiver request is sent). Districts will be notified if more information is required, or if their request is approved. Please print and maintain approval e-mails for your records.

Calendar Planning Considerations

Districts should avoid scheduling discretionary activity – professional development, etc. – during count weeks. In fact, districts that are prone to having calamity days in October (heavy fog, for instance) should attempt to keep the week or two prior to count week free from discretionary days with students not in attendance.

For other information on provisions of law governing the school year, or school days, see our document entitled "Minimum School Year/School Day Summary" by going to the ODE website (www.education.ohio.gov) and searching on "minimum school day"

Questions regarding this process may be directed to your area coordinator.