Defining Instructional Time and School Day for Students

**Q: What State Board Rules define instructional time and school day for students?**

A: Applicable State Board Rules include:

160-5-1-.02 SCHOOL DAY AND SCHOOL YEAR FOR STUDENTS AND EMPLOYEES

(1) DEFINITIONS.

(a) **Instructional Time** - all portions of the school day when instruction or instruction-related activities based on state approved courses are provided or coordinated by a certified teacher or substitute teacher. Instructional activities may further be defined by locally developed educational objectives but shall not include any activity expressly excluded from instructional time by this rule.

(b) **School day** – the period of time in which K-12 students are required to be present at school as approved by the Local Board of Education.

**Q: What else can qualify as instructional time beyond approved classes and courses?**

A: The following are considered instructional time:

- A maximum of ten clock hours of early dismissal time, per school year for parent-teacher conferences may be counted as instructional time.
- Testing, counseling, and health screenings are deemed to be instructional activities.
- Educational field trips which relate directly to standards are deemed to be instructional activities.
- Rest periods, recesses, breaks, class change time, and lunch periods are not considered to be instructional time.

**Q: What cannot be counted as instructional time?**

A: The following are not considered instructional time: lunch period, passing time between classes, breaks or recess.

**Q: At the elementary school level, how do specials count? For example, are Art, Music, PE and Technology counted as instructional time?**

A: Yes, they should be counted as instructional time.

**Q: At middle school, are connections classes considered instructional time? And, what about Extended Learning Time (ELT)?**

A: Yes, they should be counted as instructional time.

**Q: At the high school, I am assuming that all course time counts, given students are required to take electives for graduation already?**

A: Courses on the approved course list as defined in State Board Rules 160-4-2-.03 and 160-4-2-.20 shall be counted as instructional time.

Dr. John D. Barge, State School Superintendent
March 20, 2012 * Page 1 of 4
**Georgia Department of Education**

**Equivalent School Calendars and Instructional Time**

**Q:** Do classes held before or after the official bell schedule count as instructional time in regards to calculating instructional time for the year?

**A:** If a course is taught outside the school day, that is, the time when all students are required to be present, then that course will not count for instructional time when calculating daily average instructional minutes for the school year.

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**Awarding Course Credit**

School systems must ensure that they meet the daily average instructional time as well as the required clock hours to award a unit of credit. The examples and calculations in this document do not address the requirements for the clock hours needed to award credit for an individual course as stipulated in the various graduation rules. Currently seat time requirements are 150 clock hours of instruction per unit of credit on a traditional schedule and 135 clock hours of instruction per unit of credit on an approved block schedule.
Calculating The Number of Minutes/Hours of Instruction Needed Per School Year When the School Calendar is Comprised of the Equivalent of 180 School Days

Total number of hours and minutes per year required in current SBOE Rule (160-5-1-.02) based on 180 Days of Instruction

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade Levels</th>
<th>SBOE Rule 160-5-1-.02 Current Total Minutes of Instruction per Year</th>
<th>SBOE Rule 160-5-1-.02 Current Hours of Instruction per Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grades K-3</td>
<td>48,600</td>
<td>810</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grades 4-5</td>
<td>54,000</td>
<td>900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grades 6-12</td>
<td>59,400</td>
<td>990</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

How It Is Calculated:
Number of Instructional Minutes and Hours per year required in current SBOE Rule (160-5-1-.02) Based on 180 Instructional Days

(a) 180 days of instruction

(b) Any grades K-3 shall not have less than a daily average of 4 1/2 hours (270 minutes) of Instructional time based on the 180-day school year.

180 instructional days x 270 instructional minutes = 48,600 instructional minutes or 810 instructional hours per year

(c) Any grade 4-5 shall not have less than a daily average of 5 hours (300 minutes) of instructional time based on the 180-day school year.

180 instructional days x 300 instructional minutes = 54,000 instructional minutes or 900 instructional hours per year

(d) Any grade 6-12 shall have not less than a daily average of 5 1/2 hours (330 minutes) of instructional time based on the 180-day school year.

180 instructional days x 330 instructional minutes = 59,400 instructional minutes or 990 instructional hours per year
How to Calculate the Number of Instructional Minutes Needed per Day in a 160 Instructional Day Scenario

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade Level</th>
<th>School Days</th>
<th>Total Minimum Minutes Required for Year</th>
<th>*Total Number Minutes Per Day Required Based on 160 Days</th>
<th>*Total Number Minutes Per Day Required Based on 160 Days-Rounded</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grades K-3</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>48600</td>
<td>303.75</td>
<td>304</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grades 4-5</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>54000</td>
<td>337.5</td>
<td>338</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grades 6-12</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>59400</td>
<td>371.25</td>
<td>372</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Fractional minutes are always rounded up to the next whole number even when the fractional minutes are below .5. For example, 371.25 instructional minutes per day is the result when you divide 59,400 instructional minutes into 160 instructional days. The resulting instructional minutes must be rounded to the next whole number, which in this case would be 372.

The calculation is computed for each grade level as follows:

a) Divide the number of proposed school days by the total minutes required per year.

For Kindergarten this would be 48,600 instructional minutes divided into 160 school days = 303.75 minutes of instruction per day

b) Round all fractional minutes of instruction up to the next whole number.

For Kindergarten 303.75 minutes of instruction per day are required. Since there is a fractional minute unaccounted for, the .75, then we must round up to 304 instructional minutes per day to ensure the schedule does not fall below the minimum at the end of the school year.

Additional Questions

If you have additional questions, please contact the Policy Division at 404-657-2965 or by email at policy@doe.k12.ga.us.