

TO: Indiana Superintendents, Principals, and School Leaders
FROM: Office of Accountability, Indiana Department of Education
RE: Instructional Time Requirements and Two-Hour Delays/Early Dismissals
DATE: August 28, 2020

Pursuant to IC 20-30-2-3, a school corporation shall conduct at least 180 student instructional days during each school year. This 180 instructional day requirement currently remains in place for the 2020-2021 school year. In order to count as an instructional day, a school must provide:

- At least five hours of instructional time for grades one through six; and
- at least six hours of instructional time for grades seven through 12. (see IC 20-30-2-2).

“Instructional time” is defined as time during which students are participating in an approved course, a curriculum, or an educationally-related activity under the direction of a teacher. Instructional time also includes a “reasonable amount” of passing time between classes. Instructional time does not include lunch or recess (see IC 20-30-2-1). The Indiana Department of Education (IDOE) has provided guidance on the term “reasonable amount” of passing time for the 2020-2021 school year (see June 12, 2020 memo, “[Instructional Time Requirements for SY 2020-2021](#)”).

IDOE acknowledges the implementation of two-hour delays or two-hour early dismissals by schools where it is deemed necessary for the safety and wellbeing of students and faculty. A day when a two-hour delay or two-hour early dismissal is implemented may count as a full instructional day. **Please note that the utilization of such delays or early dismissals are not to be considered as a regular scheduling practice by schools.** Additionally, if two-hour delays or early dismissals are used in circumstances where the safety and wellbeing of students and faculty are not the concern, it is possible the school day would not count towards the 180-day minimum required for full ADM funding. Schools should utilize late arrivals and early dismissals to address safety concerns.

For general guidance and information on attendance and instructional time requirements, please review the document, “[Guidance on School Responsibilities for Adhering to Instructional Time and Student Attendance Requirements.](#)”

Key considerations for instructional time requirements

- The minimum term for a school year is nine months.
- A school year must consist of at least 180 days of instruction.
- A day of instruction is one where:
 - At least five hours of instructional time is provided to grades one through six.
 - At least six hours of instructional time is provided to grades seven through 12.

- Instructional time is defined as time during which students are participating in:
 - An approved course;
 - a curriculum; or
 - an educationally related activityunder the direction of a teacher. Instructional time also includes a “reasonable amount” of passing time between classes. Instructional time does not include lunch or recess.
- What is determined to be a “reasonable amount” of passing time is established at the local level.
- Schools may provide for two-hour delays and two-hour early dismissals if it is necessary for the safety and wellbeing of students and faculty (e.g., weather-related circumstances). A day where a two-hour delay or two-hour early dismissal are implemented may count as an instructional day.
- Corporations should build in at least five “make-up” days in the case of a corporation-wide cancellation due to extraordinary circumstances.
- Corporations must report any known or suspected reason for an excessive rate of absenteeism (20 percent of enrolled students) to the local health department and state attendance officer.
- A waiver from the 180 instructional day requirement may be granted by IDOE if there has been an extraordinary circumstance that impacted less than the entire student population of a school corporation.
- Performance-qualified schools and corporations have flexibility regarding instructional time requirements. A performance-qualified school or corporation is one that received an “A” on the state accountability system. Rather than providing a set number of instructional hours per day, performance-qualified schools and corporations may provide:
 - At least 54,000 minutes (300 hours) of instructional time to grades one through six during a school year.
 - At least 64,800 minutes (360 hours) of instructional time to grades seven through 12 during a school year.
- Schools and corporations may request a waiver from the Indiana State Board of Education (SBOE) from the instructional time requirements in statute. Such flexibility is contingent upon SBOE approval.

Please direct any questions about this guidance to: schoolaccountability@doe.in.gov