

## Administrative Procedures for Mandatory Instructional Time (Attachment for Policy No. 804)

### **Purpose**

The purpose of these Administrative Procedures is to outline requirements for the School District of Philadelphia (“District”) and school administrators related to mandatory instructional time.

### **Definitions**

**School day:** The combination of instructional and non-instructional time that makes up the total hours students participate in the educational program.

**Instructional time:** As required by the PA School Code, 900 hours for a 180 day school year at the elementary school level and 990 hours at the secondary school level. Schools that span both elementary and secondary grades (e.g., K-8 schools) adhere to the state-required instructional hours by grade.

**Non-instructional time:** lunch, recess, and student transition.

### **Procedures**

#### **Instructional v. Non-Instructional Time**

*Examples of Instructional Time (including, but not limited to)*

1. Pupil personnel services, such as guidance and counseling services, psychological services, speech pathology and audiology services, and pupil health services conducted during school hours;
2. Opening exercises, including circle time in pre-K and kindergarten, homeroom periods, supervised study halls and time when students are eating breakfast during the regularly scheduled homeroom periods or during classroom instruction;
3. Assemblies, clubs, student councils, and similar activities conducted during school hours;
4. School, group or class educational trips, to which admission is not charged to students or parents, if accompanied by a certificated school employee;
5. Civil defense, fire and other similar drills;
6. Pre-K and kindergarten orientation activities, snack-time and play-time if they are an integral part of the pre-K and kindergarten curriculum as long as they take place under the direction of a certified teacher and are used for students’ learning experiences (Note: "Recess" time conducted with the same parameters as primary grade recess is not counted as instructional time);
7. For pupils in graduating classes, up to three days for graduation preparation within 60 days of the commencement ceremony under the supervision of certified school employees. Graduation preparation may be held on Saturdays; and
8. Early dismissal and delayed opening due to inclement weather.

### *Examples of Non-Instructional Time*

1. Lunch period. However, an exception is made for:
  - a. Special education students identified as moderately to severely handicapped if their Individualized Education Program (IEP) includes teaching social and motor skills related to meal-time activities such as the use of eating utensils; and,
  - b. Pre-K students if lunch is an integral part of the pre-K curriculum, takes place under the direction of a certified teacher and is used for student learning experiences.
2. Recess and time for passing from class to class
3. Early dismissal or delayed opening for reasons other than inclement weather
4. Teacher meetings dealing with routine matters, such as record keeping responsibilities, and other similar activities
5. Transportation of pupils; for example, time spent transporting students to an area vocational-technical school
6. Celebrating, picnicking, hunting, fishing, or harvesting crops
7. Any activity for which admission is charged to students or parents
8. Viewing or reviewing material that has as its purpose the marketing of commercial products.

### *Act 80 Exceptions*

The Division of Academic Services can provide additional information about exceptions to the 180-day requirement or daily schedule. The requirement for minimum instructional hours for the school year must still be met. Depending on the amount of instructional time lost, the Division of Academic Services will work within the State's guidelines to determine whether or not time will need to be made up, and how and when that instructional time will be made up.

Please see the [Basic Education Circular](#) on this topic for more information.

### Requirements

- A. The Division of Academic Services shall fix the date of the beginning of the school term and set bell schedules in conformity with applicable law.
- B. The minimum length of an instructional school day for certain grade levels shall be as follows:<sup>1</sup>
  1. *Nursery schools*—2 hours.
  2. *Kindergarten*—2 1/2 hours.
  3. *Grades 1 through 8*—5 hours.
  4. *Grades 9 through 12*—5 1/2 hours.
- C. In grades K through 12, schools shall be in session a minimum of 180 days of instruction or the equivalent clock hour requirements containing a minimum of

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<sup>1</sup> [22 Pa. Code § 51.61](#): Instructional school day and school year.

990 secondary (grades 7-12) or 900 elementary (grades 1-6) and 450 kindergarten hours of instruction as the equivalent of 180 school days.

- D. Schools with grade level configurations that differ from those outlined in subsection (for example, K-8), are required to meet the minimum annual hourly requirements for each specified grade level.
- E. Instruction time for pupils shall be the time during the school day which is devoted to instruction and activities provided as an integral part of the school program under the direction of certified school employees.
  - 1. The Superintendent or their designee, the Division of Academic Services shall identify the required starting and ending time of a school day for students and certified staff.
- F. Represented employees shall receive break and lunch times in conformity with their applicable collective bargaining agreement and applicable law.

### Alterations to Normal Instructional Schedule

The School District of Philadelphia must follow the State guidelines regarding alterations to normal instructional schedules and emergency closures. State guidelines for Districts may differ from guidelines for charter schools and private schools.

Procedures for the District will be provided to Principals annually so that they can be clearly communicated to school staff and families.

### *Flexible Instructional Days*

Local education agencies (LEAs) access and submit the Flexible Instructional Day (FID) application using the [Future Ready Comprehensive Planning Portal \(FRCPP\)](#). The Board must approve the District's statement in the application for flexible instructional days (FID). The Superintendent also must sign the application and provide assurances for the District's program for the application to be submitted. If the application is accepted, then it is valid for three (3) years.

Completed applications for the following school year are due annually by June 1. The Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) must notify applicants by no later than August 1.

A FID may be used in place of in-person instruction for any one of the following reasons:

- a disease epidemic,
- a hazardous weather condition,
- a law enforcement emergency,
- the inoperability of school buses or other equipment necessary to the public-school entity's operation, damage to school buildings, or
- another temporary circumstance rendering any portion of a school building unfit or unsafe for use.

The District must still arrange for services to provide, or make arrangements to provide in the future, a free and appropriate education (FAPE) to students, despite the District using a FID.

Attendance must be tracked during a FID.

The District must complete an annual survey provided by PDE regarding FID usage. PDE sends the survey annually on or before April 30. The deadline to return the survey to PDE is June 30.

### *Exceptional Conditions or Extreme Weather*

When the District is compelled to close any school(s) because of contagious disease, natural disaster, or other emergency, the general procedures in the [Department of Education Basic Education Circular entitled “Emergency School Closings”](#) are to be followed in asking PDE to exercise its discretion and grant a waiver to allow the school entity to receive full subsidy reimbursement for providing less than a minimum term of 180 days because of the emergency closing.

For exceptional conditions or extreme weather, the District works with the City of Philadelphia and other partners to determine whether or not schools and/or administrative offices will have a delayed opening, early closure, or full closure. The District will determine whether or not a closure due to exceptional conditions or extreme weather becomes a full closure day or a remote day depending on the circumstance.

In the event of extreme weather, information about closure decisions, dismissal, and transportation can be found on the District’s [Inclement Weather website](#). Any impact of emergency closures on scheduled athletic activities will be communicated to schools through the Division of Athletics.

In the event that schools are closed due to extreme weather, a decision will be made in each instance as to whether administrative offices, including regional offices, will remain open. Unless it is announced that administrative offices are closed, assume they will be open.

Closure details will also be made available on all School District websites and social media platforms, on the District hotline (215-400-INFO) as well as through the City of Philadelphia’s broadcast news stations and channels.

### **Related Information:**

[PDE Flexible Instructional Day Webpage](#)

[PDE Flexible Instructional Days Guidance and Considerations](#)

[PDE Flexible Instructional Day Frequently Asked Questions](#)

[PDE Basic Education Circular - Instructional Time and Act 80 Exceptions](#)

[PDE Basic Education Circular - Emergency School Closings](#)

[Policy 805 - Emergency Preparedness](#)