



IOWA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Instructional Hours vs. Days

April 1, 2014

Overview

Effective **July 1, 2014**, districts and accredited nonpublic schools have the option to choose between 180 days or 1,080 hours of instruction according to Iowa Code section 256.7(19). School boards and authorities in charge of an accredited nonpublic school are authorized to determine the days or hours of their school calendars; however, public schools must hold a public hearing prior to adoption.

This guidance includes changes adopted in House File 2170 and signed by the governor on March 7, 2014. References to accredited nonpublic schools include independently accredited schools.

Guidance

1. Who must meet the 1,080 hours or 180 days of instruction?

Districts and accredited nonpublic schools must meet the 1,080 hours or 180 days requirement. Specially accredited schools are not required to meet this requirement.

2. When are districts and accredited nonpublic schools required to submit calendar information to the Department of Education?

The district/school's decision on 1,080 hours or 180 days will be reported in Spring BEDS.

3. Where does the 6 hour minimum come from?

House File 215 struck the 5.5 minimum hours in favor of 6 hours per day for 180 days or 1,080 hours.

4. Must a calendar based on 1,080 hours include a minimum of 6 hours in a day?

No. For districts and accredited nonpublic schools using the 1,080 hours of instruction, the district does not need to meet the 6-hour minimum day. For districts/schools using the 1,080 hours of instruction there is no minimum or maximum day length. Day length is a local district/school decision and may vary. The number to be reported is the annual sum of hours districts and accredited nonpublic schools have documented to meet 1,080 hours.

5. How does this relate to an early start date waiver?

The district's request for early start date will be submitted in Spring BEDS. This is a separate and distinct process from hours/days, but is included in Iowa Code section 279.10.

6. How does this relate to an innovative calendar waiver?

The district's request for an innovative calendar is a separate and distinct process. The application is due November 1 of the preceding school year. The request is only available for districts/schools following the instructional days model according to Iowa Code section 279.10(3).

7. Is a public hearing required before a school district establishes a calendar?

Yes. School districts are required to hold a public hearing for the calendar. This hearing may include start date and hours vs. days. Accredited nonpublic schools are not required to hold a public meeting. The public hearing must be conducted prior to certifying Spring BEDS.

8. If parent-teacher conferences are held will the time count as instructional time?

Yes. The law states, "Time spent on parent-teacher conferences shall be considered instructional time." If the district/school is using hours, the time may apply to the hours. If a district/school is using days, a 6-hour parent-teacher conference day will count as one day toward the 180 days.

9. Can schools still have a school day that is less than 5.5 hours of instruction if the previous 5 consecutive days equals 27.5 hours?

No. Due to changes in House File 2170, districts or schools which select days may use the following: If the total hours of instructional school time for grades one through twelve for any five consecutive school days equal a minimum of **thirty hours**, even though any one day of school is less than the minimum instructional hours because of a staff development opportunity provided for the professional instructional staff or because parent-teacher conferences have been scheduled beyond the regular school day, then the school can have a day of school less than the 6 hours. If the total hours of instructional time for the first four consecutive days equal at least **thirty hours** because parent-teacher conferences have been scheduled beyond the regular school day, a school or school district may record zero hours of instructional time on the fifth consecutive school day as a minimum school day.

10. What happens if a district/school encounters inclement weather?

According to HF 2170: School districts and accredited nonpublic schools that are using day, may record a day of school with less than the minimum instructional hours as a minimum school day if emergency health or safety factors require the late arrival or early dismissal of students on a specific day for districts or schools that designated 180 days per year. Districts or schools using hours may not count the time missed due to health or safety factors.

11. May a district or accredited nonpublic school count professional development toward the 1,080 hours of instruction or 6 hours toward 180 days?

No.

12. May a district or accredited nonpublic school count lunch toward the 1,080 hours of instruction or 6 hours toward 180 days?

No.

13. May a district/school count passing time toward the 1,080 hours of instruction or 6 hours toward 180 days?

Yes.

14. If a district/school has multiple attendance centers, which center is used to determine minutes of instruction per day to meet the 1,080 hours of instruction or 6 hours toward 180 days?

The center (grades 1-12) that meets the least amount of time per day will be the one that will be used to count toward the 1,080 hours or 6-hour minimum per day for districts/schools looking at 180 days.

15. Can a district with multiple buildings put some buildings on hours and some on days?

No.

16. May a district or accredited nonpublic school using the 180-day calendar that exceeds the 6-hour minimum count the extra hours toward one of the 180-day count?

No. A district or accredited nonpublic school using the 180-day calendar must meet 180 days for at least 6 hours.

17. When will these changes take effect?

July 1, 2014.

18. Is there a requirement that lunch must be served if the school is in session for a certain amount of time?

Iowa Administrative Code section 281-58.7 states a district shall provide a lunch program for all students if the school is in session for 4 or more hours.

19. Would time for students transported to a different building for class and back during the school day count toward instructional time?

No.

- 20. Our first bell rings at 8:00. However, the shuttle buses do not arrive until 8:15. Attendance and instruction does not begin until the shuttles arrive. May we start to count the minutes at 8:00?**
No. Instructional time starts when all students are under the guidance and instruction of the professional staff.
- 21. Students riding a bus leave 10 minutes before other students every day. Can we count the ten minutes at the end of each day as instructional time even though “bus students” have departed?**
No. Instructional time should be based on time available to all students.
- 22. If a school holds parent-teacher conferences for 6 hours without student instruction occurring during that day, does this count as a day toward 180 days?**
Yes. The time of 6 hours or more counts as a day toward the 180 days.
- 23. Can we still let seniors out a week early?**
Yes. Seniors may be released for up to 30 hours toward the 1,080 hours or 5 days toward the 180 days.
- 24. Can we still count recess as instructional time?**
Yes. As long as students are under the supervision of instructional professional staff, this time counts as instructional time.

Chart

	1,080 Hours	180 Days
Parent-teacher conferences	Yes.	Yes.
What is an hour and day?	Hour is 60 minutes of instruction, excluding lunch.	Day is 6 hours of instruction, excluding lunch.
Lunch	No.	No.
Passing time	Yes.	Yes.
Recess	Yes, if students are under the supervision of instructional professional staff.	Yes, if students are under the supervision of instructional professional staff.
Minimum Time	No minimums.	6 hours.
Professional Development	No, may not be counted.	No, may not be counted.
Emergency Closing for health or safety of all attendance centers (early out or late start)	Count the hours the center was in attendance.	May count attended hours as a school day.
Emergency Closing for one attendance center	The hours may count for the district/school.	The day may count for the district/school.
What building do we count when it comes to instructional hours?	The building (grades 1-12) with the least amount of instructional hours.	The building (grades 1-12) with the least amount of instructional hours. The minimum must be at least 6 hours per day.
Early start date	Must have an early start waiver.	Must have an early start waiver.
Early outs for parent-teacher conferences or professional development	Only instruction time and/or parent-teacher conferences count toward 1,080 hours.	Must provide 6 hours of instruction and/or parent-teacher conferences for the day to count.
Parent-teacher conference comp day	No.	A school or school district can record a day of instruction on the non-instructional fifth day if the total instructional hours for the first four days equal at least 30 hours because parent-teacher conferences are held beyond the regular day. This must be the fifth day of the five-day sequence counted.

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