

Georgia Department of Education

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 FOR STUDENTS

(1) DEFINITIONS.

(a) Instructional time - all portions of the day when instruction or instruction related activities based on the Quality Core Curriculum (QCC) (also includes Georgia Performance Standards) are provided by or coordinated by a certified teacher or substitute teacher.

1. Rest periods, recesses, breaks, class change time, and lunch periods are not considered to be instructional time.

2. A maximum of ten clock hours of early dismissal time for parent-teacher conferences may be counted as instructional time.

160-5-1-.02 SCHOOL DAY FOR STUDENTS

(1) DEFINITIONS.

(b) School day - as specified by the local board of education, the period between the time students are **required** to be present and their dismissal.

Q: What counts as instructional time?

A: All time from the beginning of the school day for students, until the end of the school day for students, counts as instructional time except for the time set aside for recess, passing time, lunch, or parent conference time beyond that which is provided in State Board Rule 160-5-1-.02 School Day for Students. In addition, the teaching of courses not on the approved course list as defined in State Board Rules 160-4-2-.03 and 160-4-2-.20 shall not be counted as instructional time.

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.

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.

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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

Grade Levels	SBOE Rule 160-5-1-.02 Current Total Minutes of Instruction per Year	SBOE Rule 160-5-1-.02 Current Hours Minutes of Instruction per Year
Kindergarten	48,600	810
Grades 1-3	48,600	810
Grades 4-5	54,000	900
Grades 6-12	59,400	990

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) Kindergarten shall be scheduled for not less than 4 1/2 hours or 270 minutes of daily instruction.

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

(c) Any grade 1-3 shall have not less than a daily average of 4 1/2 hours or 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

(d) Any grade 4-5 shall have not less than a daily average of 5 hours or 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

(e) Any grade 6-12 shall have not less than a daily average of 5 1/2 hours or 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

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How to Calculate the Number of Instructional Minutes Needed per Day in a 160 Instructional Day Scenario

Grade Level	School Days	Total Minimum Minutes Required for Year	*Total Number Minutes Per Day Required Based on 160 Days	*Total Number Minutes Per Day Required Based on 160 Days-Rounded
Kindergarten	160	48600	303.75	304
Grades 1-3	160	48600	303.75	304
Grades 4-5	160	54000	337.5	338
Grades 6-12	160	59400	371.25	372

*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.