



COMMISSIONER'S GUIDANCE ON INSTRUCTIONAL HOURS

Rule 11

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Matthew L. Blomstedt".

Matthew L. Blomstedt, Ph.D.
Commissioner of Education

10/26/2020

Commissioner's Guidance on Instructional Hours: Rule 11

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Topic Summary: Flexibilities for Instructional Hours

Issue Date: October 26, 2020

Expiration Date: June 30, 2021

The State Board of Education, in the Rule 62 declaratory order, directed the Commissioner to promote innovation and provide reasonable flexibility and guidance for the provisions to rules and regulations for the 2020-21 school year to school systems and school districts.

In addition to the flexibility for school systems and school districts as it relates to instructional hours for Rule 10 and 14, the Commissioner is extending that flexibility to Rule 11. School systems and school districts may utilize instructional hours for additional professional learning, teacher and/or staff work time, or time for teachers to consult with parents/caregivers and home visits, as well as the additional time needed to properly clean between sessions.

Similar to the flexibility for Rules 10 and 14, up to 12 hours per quarter (or 24 hours per semester or 48 hours per school year) may be used for those purposes. These hours should be used throughout the 2020-2021 school year and are not intended to shorten the semester or the school year. If school systems need to adjust because of COVID-19 impacts, other accommodations can be made.

Other compelling reasons for not meeting instructional hours this year due to COVID-19:

- Significant disruptions in regular school operations
- Difficulty tracking instructional hours for remote and hybrid learning environments
- Need for parent/guardian engagement with teachers or parent-teacher conferences

Each district that does not meet instructional hour requirements or chooses to use the option detailed above will still need to complete and submit an affidavit at the end of the year detailing the specifics of their case, and outlining all efforts made to reach the instructional hour/unit requirements.

During the school year, decisions impacting scheduling and modalities for learning should be documented thoroughly to ensure ease in completing the affidavit.