
Education Committee

HB 1805

Brief Description: Changing the definition of "school day."

Sponsors: Representatives Magendanz and Manweller.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Modifies the definition of school day to add that it includes a minimum of six instructional hours.
- Provides that late start, early release, or partial days resulting in less than six instructional hours is prohibited unless the release is for a full school day.
- Adds that the State Board of Education or the Superintendent of Public Instruction may not grant waivers that allow a school or district to have less than six hours of instructional hours in a school day.

Hearing Date: 2/9/15

Staff: Megan Wargacki (786-7194).

Background:

Minimum Instructional Program.

In order for students to have the opportunity to develop basic education knowledge and skills, school districts must provide instruction of sufficient quantity and quality and give students the opportunity to complete graduation requirements that are intended to prepare them for postsecondary education, gainful employment, and citizenship. State statute defines the minimum instructional program that may be offered by school districts, including minimum instructional hours per year, the essential academic learning requirements, and required programs. However, the statute should not be interpreted to require individual students to attend school for any particular number of hours per day.

Instructional Hours, Days and Years.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

Each district must offer 180 school days per school year (September 1 to August 31). A school day is a day on which students are engaged in academic and career and technical instruction planned by and under the direction of the school.

Currently, districts are required to provide a district-wide annual average of 1,000 instructional hours for students enrolled in grades one through 12. In the 2015-16 school year, the minimum hours must be increased to at least 1,080 instructional hours for students enrolled in grades 9 through 12 and at least 1,000 instructional hours for students in grades one through eight, all of which may be calculated using a district-wide annual average of instructional hours over grades one through 12.

For students enrolled in kindergarten, a minimum of 450 instructional hours is being increased to at least 1,000 instructional hours through a phased-in process that will be completed by the 2017-18 school year.

Waivers.

Basic Education Program. The State Board of Education (SBE) may grant waivers to school districts from the minimum requirements of the program of basic education if the waiver is necessary to implement successfully a local plan to provide an effective education system that is designed to enhance the educational program for each student.

Educational Restructuring Programs. The SBE or the Superintendent of Public Instruction (SPI) may grant waivers to districts from provisions rules relating to:

- the length of the school year;
- student-to-teacher ratios; and
- other administrative rules that in the opinion of the SBE or SPI may need to be waived in order for a school or district to implement a plan for restructuring its educational program.

Until June 30, 2019, the SBE and the SPI may also grant basic education program waivers and educational restructuring program waivers if necessary to implement an innovation school or innovation zone, or to implement a collaborative schools for innovation and success pilot project.

Summary of Bill:

The definition of "school day" is modified; it means a minimum of six instructional hours per school day. And a late start, early release, or partial day resulting in less than six instructional hours is prohibited unless the release is for a full school day.

The SBE and SPI may not grant basic education program waivers or educational restructuring program waivers that allow a district to have less than six hours of instructional hours in a school day.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: The bill contains multiple effective dates and multiple expiration dates.