

# School Policies & Documented Practices for 2020-21 Instructional Time and Attendance

## Sample Language & Considerations

In response to the [CDE Policy on Instructional Time and Student Attendance for the 2020-2021 Academic Year](#) and related [FAQs](#), CSI has drafted:

- Sample policy language for CSI school boards to consider when amending or adopting a policy to maximize flexibility in school schedules and attendance policies as needed to provide instruction during the pandemic.
- Sample statements and explanations for Bell Schedules Equivalency Statements and Explanations of Teacher-Pupil Instruction during instances of remote learning.

This document is for guidance purposes only. Schools should consult their attorneys in preparing their local policies.

## **A Note on the Sample Policies and Statements**

The policies and statements listed below must be established for the 2020-21 school year to maximize flexibility in school schedules and attendance policies during the pandemic. This may mean amending an existing board policy or developing a new board policy or amending an existing practice or developing a new practice. **Failure to do so can impact October Count funding eligibility.**

The following pages include the sample policies and statements.

- **Orange text** identifies text that is unique to each school and will need to be updated by your school.
- **Highlighted text** identifies text that will ensure your school can take advantage of remote flexibilities offered by the state for 2020-21 due to COVID-19. For schools with existing policies in place, use the highlighted text to identify potential amendments to existing policies.
- For additional information about standard calendar and instructional hour guidance, please visit the CSI website: <https://resources.csi.state.co.us/calendar-and-instructional-hours/>

## **School Implementation Checklist**

The following checklist may be used by schools to confirm they have the appropriate policies and documented practices in place to utilize remote learning for the 2020-21 school year and have it counted when determining student funding eligibility during the October Count. Please note that schools are still required to adhere to the [2020 CDE October Count Audit Guide](#) to ensure funding eligibility and appropriate documentation for various student types.

### **Sample Policy Language**

*To be adopted (or existing policies amended) as applicable by school boards for the 2020-21 school year*

- School Calendar** (page 3)
- Instructional Time** (page 4)
- Attendance** (page 5)

### **Sample Statements/Explanations**

*To be developed (or existing documented practices adjusted) as applicable by schools for use this year*

- Explanation of Teacher-Pupil Instruction during Remote Learning** (page 6)
- Bell Schedule Equivalency Statement** (page 6)

Note: If you have made changes to your 2020-21 calendar or bell schedule since your June submission to CSI, please send the updated version to [Submissions\\_CSI@csi.state.co.us](mailto:Submissions_CSI@csi.state.co.us).

#### **Submission Deadline: August 31, 2020**

To streamline the submissions process for schools, this submission will be added to the existing Organizational Submissions Process.

To ensure adequate time to review and, if necessary, make revisions, prior to Count Day (October 1, 2020), **CSI is requesting schools to submit applicable policies and documented statements/explanations by August 31<sup>st</sup>**. There is limited flexibility of this deadline but please reach out if you know additional time is required and we will do our best to accommodate.

## School Calendar – Sample Policy Language

It is the expectation of the Board that each [Month/Season; ex: Spring], the [Title; ex: Head of School] will annually develop a calendar for final adoption for the upcoming school year.

The school calendar should be no less than 160 days as specified in state law unless annually requested by the school and approved by the state.\*

[For schools with home-based enrichment programs, add “Further, a separate school calendar shall be set for students participating in home-based enrichment programming, which specifies attendance days.”]

The school calendar shall include the dates for all professional development programs scheduled for the coming school year.

A copy of the calendar shall be available to all parents/guardians of students enrolled in [School Name].

Any change in the calendar except for emergency closings or other unforeseen circumstances shall be preceded by adequate and timely notice. Each time a calendar is amended, an updated copy shall be submitted to CSI.

For the 2020-21 academic year, student contact days may include remote learning days as implemented as a result of public health and safety measures.

If school is closed due to emergencies, which results in student-teacher contact time being reduced below the minimum hours/minutes allowed by state law and provided for in the calendar, the [title of position; ex: Head of School, Director of Instruction] shall adjust the calendar to make up for the lost time. Notification by email shall be made to Charter School Institute on the dates that the school closed and the planned make up dates.

---

\* Schools may consider including language from their charter or current policy that states that the school calendar will have at least XXX of instructional hours/days. Schools may want to consider including language clarifying that although their charter states a certain number of hours, those hours may be adjusted for the 2020-21 school year so long as they remain in line with state-required [minimum instructional hours](#).

## Instructional Time – Sample Policy Language

The Board defines “actively engaged in the educational process” as time when students are working toward achieving educational objectives under the supervision of a teacher, including:

- Classroom instruction time
- Individual student work time while at school, including study hall and library research
- School-related field trips
- Independent study
- Assemblies
- [Any other types of learning that may be unique to the school]

For in-person instruction, calculations for contact time may include passing periods\* between classes. Time calculated as “actively engaged in the educational process” shall not include:

- Lunch
- Teacher preparation time
- Passing between lunch and a class.

For the 2020-21 school year, in response to COVID-19 and the flexibilities made available by the state, the Board expands its definition of “educational process” to include:

- Instruction delivered electronically
- Independent, remote work time for students that is directed and monitored by educators

For remote instruction, calculations for contact time may be based off of academic content covered, student demonstrations of learning, estimated times for students to complete independent work, and/or other methods identified by the school to compare in-person learning to remote learning. Additional information about how teacher-pupil instruction will occur during remote learning days as well as a bell schedule equivalency statements shall be further detailed in [identify document; ex: Family Handbook, Course Manual; 2020-21 Learning Plan, 2020-21 Remote Learning Plan].

---

\*Even though passing periods can be included in determining instructional hours, CSI encourages schools to omit passing periods in case there are unexpected closures during the school year that would cause the school to fall below the calendar day/instructional hour requirements.

## Attendance – Sample Policy Language Considerations

For 2020-21, schools may choose to amend their attendance policies to expand the way in which attendance may be documented, so long as students in attendance are still “engaged in the educational process” as defined by the school board. **Because attendance policies can vary across schools, CSI has not drafted sample policy language but instead has compiled the following considerations and sample language from CDE.**

### Policy Considerations

Schools are required to track attendance once daily, even if remote learning is utilized. When drafting changes to your attendance policy, consider:

- How will you track attendance in online environments and what attendance calculation will you use to appropriately document attendance for state reporting purposes?  
<https://www.cde.state.co.us/datapipeline/onlineattendanceguide2020>
- What examples of attendance are permissible (e.g. in-person classroom attendance, remote/video classroom attendance, login to online platform, pick-up or drop-off of instructional packets, email or phone correspondence with instructors)?
- What constitutes excused and unexcused absences in a remote environment?

### Sample Attendance Policies (from [FAQs: CDE Policy on Instructional Time and Student Attendance for the 2020-21 Academic Year](#))

- *Elementary Example:*  
Remote learning offers some flexibility regarding when and where students complete coursework. Nevertheless, they are held fully accountable for meeting all state-mandated attendance requirements. Attendance is expected to be recorded by the parent daily and is verified by teachers to ensure the school is properly calculating and adequately monitoring that students complete a minimum of 12.5 hours per week or 450 hours per year in kindergarten, 27.5 hours per week or 990 hours per year for students in grades 1-5, and 30 hours per week or 1,068 hours per year for students in grades 6-12 based on an 180 instructional day school calendar year.

These hours are accumulated through a variety of methods including:

- Completion of lessons assigned through the learning management system as documented with student login and lesson participation;
  - Completion of assignments provided through external sites with access and login only available through direct links;
  - Completion of offline work documented by parent;
  - Attendance at a synchronous live session;
  - In-person testing such as CMAS, PARCC, CoAlt, or other required state exams;
  - Online assessments such as Scantron accessed through students accounts; and/or
  - In-person attendance in which attendance is taken by the teacher on-site.
- *Secondary Example:*  
Attendance is monitored daily. Reports are used to show school login data, in addition to each unique course log-in and time spent in course. Synchronous class attendance is monitored by each teacher and also logged into reports. The school calculates attendance in the following way:
    - Attending 5+ hours daily in their online course curriculum;
    - Course progress in curricular assessments; and/or
    - Attending live class sessions for each course as per the schedule.

## Explanation of Teacher-Pupil Instruction during Remote Learning – *Sample Statements*

The sample Instructional Time policy language above references additional details about how teacher-pupil instruction will occur during remote learning days. The following provides sample information that should be provided in this explanation.

In many instances, the following information may be found in the school's 2020-21 Learning Plan or Remote Learning Plan. In these instances, CSI will include the school's Remote Learning Plan that is on file at CSI for Audit Documentation. (If substantial changes are made to the school's Learning Plan following submission to CSI, please resubmit. **An Explanation of Teacher-Pupil Instruction during Remote Learning that must be submitted to CSI for the October Count Audit.**

An explanation of teacher-pupil instruction during remote learning should include:

- Platform(s) to be used during remote learning
- Types/frequency of synchronous learning
- Types/frequency of asynchronous learning

## Bell Schedule Equivalency Statements – *Sample Statements*

The sample Instructional Time policy language above references a Bell Schedule Equivalency Statement. The purpose of a bell schedule equivalency statement is to define the equivalent amount of teacher-pupil instruction and contact time students would receive if taking the course in an in-person setting.

The following include sample Bell Schedule Equivalency Statements. **Bell Schedule Equivalency statements must be submitted to CSI for the October Count Audit.**

*Resource: The examples below are from the [2019 October Count Audit Guide](#).*

- ABC School follows a semester calendar structure. For each semester-long course into which the student is scheduled as of the pupil enrollment count date, the equivalent teacher-pupil instruction and contact time is 60 minutes/day per course.
- ABC High School follows a quarter calendar structure that allows for students to complete traditional semester-long courses within a calendar quarter. In order to meet semester-course requirements with the quarter calendar structure, the equivalent teacher-pupil instruction and contact time is 120 minutes per day per course. In the event a student is scheduled to complete a semester-long course over two quarters, then the equivalent teacher-pupil instruction and contact time is 60 minutes per day per course.

*Resource: The examples below are from the [CDE Policy on Instructional Time and Student Attendance for the 2020-21 Academic Year](#).*

- In order to document full-time or part-time status for secondary students, districts may submit on-site bell schedules even when students are required to engage in remote learning as a result of public health and safety requirements. If remote learning does occur, districts should also provide a statement of bell schedule equivalency that is in line with the district's policy for teacher-pupil contact and teacher-pupil instruction.
- For example, a district adopting a hybrid learning model, which consists of a combination of in-person and remote learning as a result of public health and safety requirements, could have an equivalency statement indicating that for each course for which a student is scheduled, a portion of the teacher-pupil contact will occur remotely and that remote portion will be equivalent to X minutes per day of on-site teacher-pupil instruction.