

**NLSchools** refers to all public K-12 English schools and school-related facilities under the jurisdiction of the Department of Education, Education Operations Branch and all employees working therein providing services and supports to such schools, including those who work in the areas of school facilities, student transportation, program implementation, student services, and procurement.

## Policy Name

Use of Instructional Time

## Policy Statement

The Department of Education will protect instructional time by ensuring activities that occur during the regular school day are directly linked to the learning outcomes as prescribed in the curriculum.

## Background

Research indicates that student achievement is positively impacted when instructional time is maximized. It is essential that instructional time be closely monitored and protected.

The Department of Education recognizes the importance of providing a holistic learning environment for all students. This includes the provision of co-curricular and extra-curricular activities as well as the promotion of physical activity, music and the arts. The department also recognizes some interruptions to instructional time are beyond the control of school staff. However, The departments will strive to ensure prescribed curriculum outcomes are effectively taught and students receive the supports they need to reach their academic potential.

## Scope

This policy governs the delivery of educational programming and services for all students and schools within NLSchools.

## Definitions

### Instructional Time

Instructional time is the time allocated by NLSchools for teaching and learning. Each instructional day is comprised of 5 hours/300 minutes. Included in the calculation are all scheduled class activities, excluding recess periods.

## Policy Directives

1. The dates for the instructional year will be set as per direction from the Minister of Education and in accordance with the [Schools Act, 1997](#) and the [NLTA Provincial Collective Agreement](#).
2. NLSchools will ensure that instructional time is used to teach the prescribed curriculum outcomes specified in the Newfoundland and Labrador provincial curriculum and other approved courses.
3. The school administrator will provide instructional leadership for the school, in accordance with Section 24 of the [Schools Act, 1997](#), by making the maximum use of time allocated for teaching and learning, and initiating actions to minimize the loss of instructional time.
4. NLSchools recognizes the importance of co-curricular and extra-curricular programming that contribute to a quality education and supports activities related to achievement of learning outcomes. However, the school administrator will ensure that instructional time is protected when planning co-curricular and extracurricular activities.
5. The school administrator will ensure adequate time for parent-teacher meetings while minimizing the impact on instructional time.
6. NLSchools will collaborate with community agencies and individuals to provide a quality education and to support activities related to achievement of learning outcomes. However, the school administrator will ensure that instructional time is not impacted when considering guest speakers and activities offered via external agencies.
7. NLSchools will communicate to community agencies and corporations (e.g., Newfoundland Power, NL Hydro, municipalities) the need to schedule power outages and other infrastructure work outside instructional time.
8. NLSchools will monitor the impact of weather-related school closures on instructional time and review weather closure protocols as deemed necessary.
9. NLSchools reserves the right to limit lost instructional time and school administrators will adjust school activities accordingly as instructional time loss occurs.

## Administrative Procedures

### 1. Dates/Hours for Instructional Year

- 1.1 The length of the school year shall be as designated in the NLTA Provincial Collective Agreement, Article 28.01.
- 1.2 Each principal or designate will ensure a five (5) hour/300 minute instructional day.

### 2. Outcomes

2.1 The principal or designate will ensure that:

- a) The school has a monitoring system in place for proper curriculum coverage and pacing.

As per the [Program of Studies](#), recommended time allotments for all programs are adhered to in the school's instructional day/schedule.

- b) Teachers have instructional plans for their courses/subjects as per course descriptors.

### 3. Instructional Leadership

3.1 The principal or designate will develop an annual plan identifying the activities the school will participate in while maximizing instructional time (e.g., music festivals, drama festivals, cultural activities, assemblies, etc.).

3.2 The school administrator or designate will monitor the following:

- a) School-wide procedures/activities which can infringe upon instructional time such as: Announcements, class start times, transition routines within the classroom, transition to and from classes, the scheduling of assemblies and activities, etc.
- b) Activities which may disrupt instruction prior to, and during, major summative assessments.
- c) All scheduled activities which may infringe upon instructional time leading up to natural breaks in the school year.
- d) The scheduling of four (4) hours of instruction on the last day of school before the Christmas break.
- e) The scheduling of a morning and an afternoon session on the final day of school in June.

#### 4. Co-curricular/Extra-curricular

4.1 The school principal or designate will ensure that:

- a) Minimal instructional time is lost for co-curricular/extra-curricular programs (e.g., multiple day swimming/skating programs, field trips, band trips).
- b) Multi-period field trips are cross-curricular in nature to minimize loss of instructional time in specific subject areas.
- c) School concert rehearsal time is scheduled to minimize loss of classroom and gymnasium instructional time (e.g., limit rehearsals to two weeks prior to the event).
- d) School leaving preparation activities occur outside of the instructional day to minimize loss of instructional time.
- e) Whenever possible, school-sponsored sports tournaments and other school-sponsored events/activities begin after the instructional day, with allowances for reasonable travel time for distant schools.

4.2 Schools have a maximum of 15 hours during the school year to support non-curricular events/activities (e.g., winter fun days, sports days, spirit days, healthy commotion days).

#### 5. Parent-Teacher Meetings

Schools can use up to five hours of instructional time per year, when coupled with evening sessions, for parent-teacher meetings.

#### 6. Access to School by Outside Groups

- 6.1 The school principal or designate will ensure that research occurring in their school has been approved by the Superintendent of Schools or designate and does not impact instructional time.
- 6.2 Guest speaker presentations during instructional time are only scheduled when the presentation supports specific curriculum outcomes. Generic presentations unrelated to specific curriculum outcomes are only to be approved for non-instructional time (i.e., recess, lunch and after school).
- 6.3 Candidates for political office (union, municipal, provincial or federal) are not permitted to campaign in a school during the school day.

## 7. Planned /Unplanned Outages

- 7.1 A school will not close for municipal or utility infrastructure installation/repairs unless it is an emergency situation or a circumstance where no alternative can be found.
- 7.2 In the event of a planned or unplanned outage, the school principal or designate will first contact the Operations Manager to discuss a plan to address student safety and to ensure minimal interruption to the instructional day. This plan will be communicated to the appropriate Director of Schools. For more information see: Weather or Facilities-Related School Closure.

## 8. Inclement Weather

Principals will establish procedures for weather-related closure decisions as per Weather or Facilities-Related School Closure.

## 9. Adjusting for the Loss of Instructional Time

- 9.1 The school principal or designate will use various sources of data to monitor the loss of instructional time.
- 9.2 If five (5) instructional days are lost due to weather or other related closures, (e.g., closures identified in Section 32 of Schools Act, 1997) the principal will consult with the school's Director of Schools on measures to be taken to compensate for the lost instructional time. Consideration will be given to suspending optional school-based professional development days and/or school sponsored activities.
- 9.3 If 10 instructional days are lost due to weather or other related closures, (e.g., closures identified in Section 32 of Schools Act, 1997) the principal will consult with the school's Director of Schools and provide a plan to preserve instructional time that includes the suspension of optional school-based professional development days and school-sponsored activities.