**Joint Rule State Board of Education / Commissioner of Education**

**Chapter 125: Basic Approval Standards: Public Schools and School Administrative Units**

**Emergency Adoption Changes to Section 5 only**

**August 24, 2020**

**Section 5. OTHER MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS**

This Section establishes minimum requirements in areas required under 20-A M.R.S. §4502(5).

**5.01 Instructional Time, Including a Minimum School Day and Week**

1. A school week is the five days Monday through Friday. Exceptions occur when schools are closed because of holidays, inclement weather, or other extenuating circumstances.
2. A “school day” means a day in which school is in operation as either an instructional day as defined in this Section, or a non-instructional day that may be used for in-service education of teachers, administrative meetings, parent-teacher conferences, records’ days or similar activities.
3. "Instructional day" means a school day during which both students and teachers are present, either in a school or in another setting, and engaged in instructional time.
4. "Instructional time" means that portion of a school day devoted to the teaching-learning process, but not including extra-curricular activities, lunchtime, or recess. Time spent on organized field trips related to school studies may be considered instructional time, but the instructional time counted for extended field trips shall not exceed a normal school day for each day of the field trip. Alternative education programs, multiple pathways, extended learning opportunities, and other innovative programs may allow students to attend outside of the regular instructional day, as outlined in the SAU Comprehensive Education Plan.
5. An instructional day for grades K-12 must be a minimum of three hours in length, ~~and for grades 1-12 must average five hours in length over any consecutive two-week period~~. Plans to use school days of varying length must be reflected in the Comprehensive Education Plan submitted by the school administrative unit pursuant to 20-A M.R.S. §4502(1). The instructional day may be extended for students who need more than the minimum day to meet the content standards of the system of Learning Results.
6. Instructional days that are canceled must be rescheduled to meet the minimum school year requirements contained in 20-A M.R.S. §4801.
7. School administrative units may not schedule make-up instructional time on days identified in 20-A M.R.S. §4802. Acceptable methods of rescheduling cancelled instructional days include:
8. Rescheduling or shortening scheduled vacation periods;
9. Postponing the scheduled closing date of school;
10. Providing up to 25 one hour extensions of the instructional day to equal a maximum of five 5-hour make-up instructional days in a school year in accordance with a plan approved by the commissioner;
11. Conducting classes on the weekend; and/or
12. Developing other ways to make up school days missed due to weather or emergency closures not included above, which will be incorporated into a plan approved by the Commissioner.
13. If an instructional day must be shortened due to circumstances that involve student health or safety, the day is considered a full day if school has been in session for at least 2.5 hours.