



THE WASHINGTON STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

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November 22, 2013

Dear school administrators and stakeholders:

As you know, the Washington Legislature mandated changes to the basic education instructional hour requirement, beginning in the 2014-15 school year. The changes are part of the Legislature's response to the *McCleary* case and the implementation of ESHB 2261 (2009), the landmark piece of legislation redefining basic education and the funding for it. It is the first necessary change to implement a meaningful 24 credit diploma framework. I want to discuss these changes with you, and make you aware of some helpful materials now available on SBE's website.

A detailed explanation of the legislation is available in the attached materials. In short, there are two main changes. The first is that districts must provide 1,080 hours of instruction in grades 7-12, an increase of 80 hours from the current requirement. The second is that the hour requirements in all grades now apply as minimums by grade; it is no longer a district average in which more hours in one grade can offset fewer hours in another.

Through 2013-14 "BEFORE"	District-wide annual average 1,000 hours in grades 1-12
Beginning 2014-15 "AFTER"	1,000 hours in <u>each</u> of grades 1-6 1,0<u>80</u> hours in <u>each</u> of grades 7-12

It is important to note that no changes were made to what 'counts' for hours. The legislature didn't change the definition of "instructional hours"; it simply required more of them. This is the key consideration in most of the questions we are receiving. For example, if an after-school tutoring program didn't count before, it doesn't count now. Almost all of what follows in the attached guidance, therefore, is our attempt to memorialize guidance that was just as pertinent to previous years as it is to the changes occurring after 2014-15. It is likely the change in hours required that has caused many of these questions to be re-asked.

I want to thank WASA, WSSDA, and the network of Educational Service Districts for helping us compile the questions that you have been asking. We've tried to cover all the issues in these materials, but if your question isn't answered, you should feel free to contact us.

Finally, although the legislature made this change, the Board intends to be helpful in working through implementation concerns. We have received ample testimony from districts on concerns

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about the impact on PLC professional development time currently provided through early releases and late starts, to name one example. The Legislature has already held one hearing on this topic. There may be others.

Ultimately it is our hope that discussions about the instructional calendar are guided by the needs of students, and how we can collectively prepare them for post-secondary success.

Sincerely,



Ben Rarick
Executive Director