



**CONFEDERATION OF OREGON SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS**

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TO: Members of the State Board of Education

FR: Morgan Allen on behalf of the Confederation of Oregon School Administrators (COSA)

RE: Board Agenda Item #8A – Instructional Time

Chair Martinez and members of the Board:

After a very thorough review and public process for stakeholder input, the State Board passed a comprehensive revision of instructional hour requirements in 2015. Beginning with the 2015-16 school year, these revisions were to be phased in over four school years. Each school year, the Board has requested an update on the implementation of these new rules from ODE and stakeholders.

On behalf of COSA's 2400+ statewide members, I am here today to share information from school district administrators and superintendents related to the implementation of instructional hour requirements.

**Implementation of Instructional Hour Rules**

At COSA, we have been asking our members for feedback on the rules and how the hour requirements have impacted students and the schools in their districts. Overall, to date, our members believe these changes have been positive for Oregon students and it appears that most school districts have been able to comply with the current requirements without major disruptions to their schools and programs. However, as we approach the fourth and final phase-in year (2018-19), there are important policy questions that we would like to bring to the Board's attention.

Beginning with the 2018-19 school year, each district is required to provide the minimum number of instructional hours to at least 92% of students district-wide and at least 80% of students at each school in the district. It is this second requirement of 80% at each school that will be challenging for many of our large districts to attain without changing their high school programs or configurations.

Generally, most school districts provide the required hours for students in grades K-11 with few exceptions. But for some juniors and many seniors across the state who have already completed their required credits to graduate (usually 24) or have a high school schedule that provides the opportunity to attain 26, 28, or even 30+ credits, many currently do not take a full schedule their entire junior or senior year.

For example in a high school that offers a 7 period schedule, a student could attain as many as 28 credits over four years. Unless that student is enrolled for 28 credits they will count against a district's 80% calculation even if they are in good academic standing and ready to graduate.

## Policy Questions for the Board to Consider

Even in the three years since the Board passed these changes, high school programs across the state are changing to implement more innovative and educationally relevant programs to meet the needs of their students. The 80% per school requirement for high schools can sometimes be at odds with innovation. The “seat time” model does not always line up with programs or emerging educational models such as:

- Proficiency based programs or courses
- Online or hybrid programs (brick and mortar and online)
- Dual credit, regional promise, expanded options and other types of accelerated learning models that expose students to post-secondary courses or programs where students are actually dual enrolled in a community college, for example
- CTE/STEM/STEAM programs that involve intern/externships and other types of work experience and travel time off campus
- Programs for at-risk students, pregnant or parenting teens or efforts to re-integrate students who have dropped out back into school

A key policy question many of our members are asking related to the 80% rule is whether it is in the best interests of all K-12 students to add required seat time for some high school seniors who have already earned, or clearly are on track to earn, enough credits for graduation. This will likely result in a redistribution of resources currently expended on students who have not yet earned enough credits to graduate or from K-8 schools to high schools since there are often not additional funds to add classes without changing budget priorities.

What could those trade-offs look like in some school districts?

- Without additional funding, some districts may change high school schedules by reducing course offerings and changing from a 7 or 8 period day to a 6 period day. This leaves little margin of error for students who are at-risk or struggling to attain 24 credits to graduate; less chances for credit, less margin of error
- It may also mean a narrowing of the curriculum for many students as districts offer fewer choices or add additional courses that may not be meaningful to students in order to meet seat time requirements
- Increased class sizes as more seniors are required to attend additional courses
- Students who want to work, or must work to support their families, may find it difficult to find a job to fit their schedule
- Districts that use staffing and resources freed up by not fully scheduling seniors who have earned enough credits to graduate to provide intervention and supports for at-risk students are concerned that this will negatively impact their efforts to support their neediest students as resources are shifted
- Shifting staff and resources from K-8 to 9-12 or from 9-11 to the senior year

Oregon’s K-12 system continues to budget under the cloud of an extremely volatile revenue system for funding our schools. In the short term, our members are concerned about the impacts of next week’s election. If Measure 101 does not pass it will jeopardize health insurance coverage for our most vulnerable students and add great budget uncertainty in the coming school year. In the 2019-21 budget cycle, we know that in order cover our increased costs that the Legislature will need to add well over \$1 billion dollars to the State School Fund just to keep pace while the state budget deficit is likely to grow beyond \$2 billion dollars.

## **Request of the State Board of Education**

As we approach the 2018-19 school year and the 4<sup>th</sup> year of Instructional Hours phase-in, COSA would ask the Board to consider delaying implementation of the requirement that 80% of students at each school be fully scheduled for one year and convene a Board subcommittee, staffed by ODE, to seek feedback from interested stakeholders and evaluate the policy questions and impacts that have been raised by our members here today.

Prior to the 2017 Session, stakeholders met to consider policy questions, trade-offs and other implications related to required instructional minutes for Physical Education passed by the Legislature in 2007 and scheduled to begin in the 2017-18 school year. After reviewing the requirements and considering policy options, the Legislature passed SB 4 delaying the PE requirements outright for 2 years, adding more flexibility for school districts and creating a new phase in schedule.

It is our hope that this model of convening stakeholders and having open dialogue about policy choices can serve as a model of successful collaboration that can be replicated in regards to instructional hours. COSA members stand ready to be part of and help convene such a process.

Thank you for your time and consideration today. I would be happy to address any questions you may have.