

Your Question:

You asked about state adjustments to minimum instructional time requirements for the 2020-21 school year.

Our Response:

As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, many state policymakers and school district leaders are contemplating instructional time and shifting start dates for in-person instruction for the 2020-21 school year. The following are examples of states that have adjusted the instructional time required for the upcoming school year or that have added flexibilities and adjusted the school calendar to ensure that minimum instructional time requirements are met.

State Examples

While several states waived or changed instructional time requirements for the 2019-20 school year, it appears that most states are aiming to complete the number of instructional days or hours typically required in the 2020-21 school year. States are offering flexibilities and/or altering their start dates to ensure that full instructional time can be met. Approaches include adjusting the school calendar, authorizing additional school days or half days, or utilizing various forms of instruction delivery models.

Kentucky

Jefferson County Public Schools, the state's largest school district, is [proposing to delay the start of the 2020-21 school year](#) by two weeks, from August 12th to August 26th. If approved, the delayed start will allow for multiple professional development days for teachers and staff in that two-week period. The revised calendar would still allow the district to complete the state-required 170 days of instruction.

Hawaii

The Hawaii State Department of Education [school reopening plan](#) requires the 2020-21 school year to maintain the full 180 days of instruction required by statute. The plan allows for a variety of instruction delivery models (in-class, blended learning, virtual/online) to meet the requirement.

North Carolina

As part of the state's [COVID-19 relief package](#), North Carolina schools will be required to open on August 17th, a week earlier than the usual start date, to add five days onto the 2020-21 school year. The bill requires that schools adopt a calendar that includes 190 days of instruction, up from the typical 185 days required by statute.

Oklahoma

The Oklahoma State Board of Education [voted to allow local school boards](#) to hold classes on Saturdays in the upcoming school year as an added flexibility for fulfilling educational requirements amidst the COVID-19 pandemic.

Tennessee

A Tennessee State Board of Education [emergency rule](#) requires local education agencies to develop Continuous Learning Plans for the 2020-21 school year and to implement such plans to meet the full 180 day instructional requirement as is typically required. The legislature had waived the requirement for the 2019-20 school year through [House Bill 2818](#).

Related Resources

Various organizations are tracking state reopening plans and state policies on school start dates and school calendars.

Education Commission of the States, [50-State Comparison: Instructional Time Policies](#)

For reference, this Education Commission of the States 50-State Comparison contains information on the [required minimum school days or hours](#) for each state.

Education Next, [Toward Reopening: What Will School Look Like this Fall?](#)

Education Next highlights state guidance on a variety of reopening issues for select states. The article includes a section on school schedules.

Education Week, [Data: When Will School Start This Fall?](#)

Education Week continues to compile an ongoing guide on public school start dates in each state. The resource identifies who is responsible for setting the start date in each state and includes the typical start date, the projected 2020-21 start date and links to state reopening guidance documents.

Michigan State University, [State Policies to Address COVID-19 School Closure](#)

Michigan State University's Institute for Public Policy and Social Research and Education Policy Innovation Collaborative are tracking education policy responses to the COVID-19 pandemic across all 50 states. Each state profile includes information on policy responses related to instructional hours, school closures and other related issues.