**Title: 6300 PROFESSIONAL LEARNING DAYS**

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| 24 P.S. § 15-1504  (Not direct reference for Nonpublic Schools – Refers to ACT 80 Days) | **6300 Professional Learning Days**  This policy outlines requirements for instructional time and the process for requesting Professional Learning Day exceptions.  **Basic Requirements:**  All Catholic schools are to be open each school year for at least one hundred eighty (180) days of instruction for pupils. The number of instructional hours in a school year is to be at least 450 for half-time pre-K and kindergarten, 900 for full-time pre-K and kindergarten and elementary, and 990 for secondary. Exceptions to the requirement for 180 days of instruction or to the daily school hours may be made based upon this policy.  Instructional time for pupils is defined as time in the school day devoted to instruction and instructional activities provided as an integral part of the school program under the direction of certified school employees. For the purposes of determining if an activity, other than instruction of curriculum, conducted during school hours can be counted as instructional hours in lieu of ordinary instruction, the Office of Education has defined the following:  **\*Activities which may be counted as pupil instruction time\***   1. Pupil personnel services, such as guidance and counseling services, psychological services, speech pathology and auditory services, and pupil health services conducted during school hours; 2. Opening exercises, including circle time in pre-K and kindergarten, homeroom periods, supervised study halls and time when students are eating breakfast during the regularly scheduled homeroom periods or during classroom instruction; 3. Assemblies, clubs, student councils, and similar activities conducted during school hours; 4. School, group or class educational trips, to which admission is not charged to students or parents, if accompanied by a certified school employee; 5. Civil defense, fire, or other similar drills; 6. Pre-K and kindergarten orientation activities, snack-time, and play-time if they are an integral part of the pre-K and kindergarten curriculum as long as they take place under the direction of a certified teacher and are used for students learning experiences. (Note: “Recess” time conducted with the same parameters as primary grade recess is not counted as instructional time); 7. For pupils in graduating classes, up to three days for graduation preparation within 60 days of the commencement ceremony under the supervision of certified school employee. Graduation preparation may be held on Saturdays; 8. Early dismissal and delayed opening due to inclement weather.   **\*Activities which may not be counted as pupil instruction time\***   1. Lunch period. However, an exception is made for pre-K students if lunch is an integral part of the pre-K curriculum, takes place under the direction of a certified teacher and is used for student learning experiences; 2. Recess and time passing from class to class; 3. Early dismissal or delayed opening for reasons other than inclement weather; 4. Teacher meetings dealing with routine matters, such as record keeping responsibilities, and other similar activities; 5. Transportation of pupils; for example, time spent transporting students to an area vocational-technical school; 6. Celebrating, picnicking, hunting, fishing, or harvesting crops; 7. Any activity for which admission is charged to students or parent(s)/guardian(s); 8. Viewing or reviewing material that has as its purpose the marketing of commercial products.   This policy authorizes the Director of Education/Superintendent of Schools to grant an exception to the 180-day requirement or to the daily schedule “when in her/his opinion a meritorious educational program warrants.’ The requirement for minimal instructional hours for the school year must still be met. For purposes of granting approval for Professional Learning Days exceptions for a shortened school year or shortened school day, the Director of Education/Superintendent of schools has defined the following:   1. Parent-teacher meetings; 2. Curriculum planning and development, strategic planning; 3. In-service programs dealing with new subjects or activities having an impact on the educational program; 4. Dismissal at the start of the school year for a partial group of kindergarten students while an orientation program is being conducted for another part of the group of current year kindergarten students; 5. Evaluation of graduation projects.   Request for approval of a Professional Learning Day should be made by completing Form DEO-4085 “Request for Section 1504 (PLD) Exception Form.” Procedures for requesting approval are as follows:   1. The proposed request must be approved by the Director of Education/Superintendent of Schools. The form must be completed and submitted electronically; 2. The request shall include the date of each requested exception; 3. The request shall include the reason for each exception.   SEE 6300 ATTACHMENT I  Each school is limited to two (2) PLD’s that may be requested as long as the required minimum instructional hours for the school year are met. Requests for PLD approval should be submitted by July 15th before the start of the new school year. At the time of submission, an agenda for the day must also be submitted for approval.  The approval cannot be used for time lost due to inclement weather, mechanical or power failures, or other causes not provided for in the Pennsylvania School Laws. In the event that unforeseen circumstances warrant a rescheduling of the school year and the DEO elects not to exercise its PLD approval, the number of instructional days required reverts to 180 days or 180 days minus the number of full-day PLD approvals used.  Approval will not be granted for PLD where there has been a work stoppage by teachers. In addition, PLD approved days by the DEO, including those that have already occurred, will be rescinded upon initiation of a work stoppage. |