

**TITLE:** School Day Schedule Requirements and Schedule Change Requests for Regular, Minimum, Shortened, Banked-Time, and Pupil-Free Days

**NUMBER:** BUL-6144.4

**ISSUER:** Frances Baez, PhD  
Chief Academic Officer  
Division of Instruction

John Vladovic, EdD  
Executive Director, Secondary Instruction

Maricela Sánchez Robles  
Executive Director, Elementary Instruction

**DATE:** May 16, 2025

**POLICY:** This bulletin contains the policy of the Los Angeles Unified School District.

**MAJOR CHANGES:** This bulletin replaces BUL-6144.3, *School Day Schedule Requirements and Schedule Change Requests for Regular, Minimum, Shortened, Banked-Time, and Pupil-Free Days*, issued on April 22, 2024. The major changes include:

- The instructional calendar will include two Pupil-Free Days and procedures for moving the Spring Semester Pupil-Free Day.
- There is a food service requirement under Education Code section 49051.5 that schools must schedule breakfast and lunch for students on minimum days. Schools do not have the option of opting out of either.

**GUIDELINES: I. INSTRUCTIONAL DAY DEFINITIONS AND PURPOSES**

**A. Regular Instructional Day**

A regular instructional day is devoted entirely to instruction and represents most days in the school year calendar. Students are not released early these days.

Minimum, shortened, and professional development banked-time days are days, when students are released from school earlier than on a regular instructional day to enable school-site staff to

**ROUTING**

Deputy Superintendent of Instruction  
Region Superintendents  
Administrators of Instruction  
Administrators of Operations  
Region Directors  
Principals  
UTLA Chapter Chairs

engage in professional activities, focused on school or instructional improvement.

Minimum and shortened days may not be combined with the professional development banked-time days. Principals must keep a record of all early release days used; therefore, these days must be reflected in the online bell schedule system.

**B. Scheduling Minimum and Shortened Days**

Shortened/minimum days may be scheduled as required for local school program planning, professional development, parent-teacher conferences, curriculum planning, preparation for Back-to-School Night, Open House, or other school-community activities.

Region Superintendents have the option to schedule uniform professional development days as part of the authorized allotment.

The remaining shortened/minimum days will be at the principal's discretion, with prior approval of their respective Region Superintendent.

**C. Schedule for Professional Development Banked-Time Day**

Professional development bank-time days are for site-based professional development focused on the District instructional outcomes and priorities. Professional development days are scheduled on Tuesdays during the school year. The memoranda detailing banked-time day schedules and use are found in the Related Resources section of this bulletin.

## **II. DEFINITIONS OF INSTRUCTIONAL TIME**

**A. Actual Classroom Instruction**

Actual classroom instruction is any regularly scheduled classroom activity offered under the direct supervision of a properly credentialed teacher employed by the school district for the number of minutes established by the District. Only the time when courses are available to all pupils is counted when determining instructional time offered. Classroom time in optional class periods (e.g., Period 0 or Period 7 in a regular 6-period schedule) is not included when determining instructional time.

**B. Actual Passing Time**

Passing time is that portion of the time between class periods in the same educational program in the same school day that is

actual and necessary for students, as a group, to pass from the locations of their authorized as immediately preceding class sessions to the locations of their immediately following class sessions. Secondary schools are to adhere to the following guidelines:

1. Only one passing time is instructional time for the periods before and after the lunch and nutrition breaks, and students must return to an instructional activity after the passing time.
2. The passing time before or after the break must be the same duration as the normal passing time.
3. Passing time must not exceed 10 minutes between classes and must be equal between all classes for each day of the week.
4. Passing time to go from a regular K-12 program to a non-K-12 program (e.g., Regional Occupational Program, Adult Program, college class on college campus, etc.) is not counted towards instructional time.
5. Passing time is expected to be the same as the prior year's unless there is a valid reason for the increase or decrease.

C. Recess, Nutrition and/or Lunch

For grade levels TK-12, recess, lunch, or other nutritional periods are not counted as instructional time. Under Education Code section 49501.5, school districts shall make a nutritionally adequate breakfast and lunch available, free of charge, with adequate time to eat during each day to any pupil who requests a meal.

Elementary schools providing recess for grades TK-5/6 shall ensure recess is at least 30 minutes on regular instructional days and at least 15 minutes on early release days. This requirement does not apply to students on days in which they are participating in a field trip or other educational program.

Recess at elementary schools may be provided in one or more designated periods. It may follow or precede physical education courses and mealtimes (Education Code section 49056). "Recess" means a period of the time during the school day, separate and distinct from physical education courses and mealtimes, when pupils are given supervised and unstructured time for any of the following:

- (1) Physical activity
- (2) Play
- (3) Organized games

(4) Social engagement with peers

For more information about recess requirements, including limitations or restrictions on participation in recess, please see Attachment A.

All schools—both elementary and secondary schools, including Continuation, Opportunity, and Community Day schools—must schedule breakfast and lunch for students on a daily basis, including minimum days. Schools do not have the option of opting out of either. This lunch requirement on minimum days supersedes the policy, which allows lunch to be served after the school day. Schools are to adhere to the following:

1. The designated lunch period for students must be a minimum of 20 minutes, and teachers must have an uninterrupted lunch period of no less than 30 minutes.
2. All schools must schedule lunch daily and in the online bell schedule for every instructional day, including minimum days.
3. There must be a minimum of 2 hours between breakfast/nutrition and lunch.
4. On minimum days, elementary schools have the option of scheduling recess with lunch, with at least 15 minutes for recess and 20 minutes for lunch. Grab-and-go lunches at the end of the day are not permissible.

D. Breakfast in the Classroom

Breakfast in the Classroom may count towards instructional minutes if students eat in the classroom during the instructional day. If schools schedule breakfast outside of the classroom, this time will not count towards instructional minutes. For schools that serve Hybrid BIC, where students are escorted to the cafeteria after the bell, and the classroom teacher provides some learning, that time will count towards instructional time.

E. Homeroom/Advisory

Homeroom/Advisory may be considered instructional activities and counted as instructional time if those activities are under the immediate supervision and control of a properly credentialed teacher employed by the District and pupils are regularly assigned with their attendance recorded and reported as part of the daily program schedule.

1. Homeroom/Advisory courses should have a duration of at least 15 minutes during a regular instructional day.
2. Homeroom/Advisory should only occur once during the school day.

- F. Activities which are not counted as Instructional Time include:
1. Paid activities (such as dances, etc.). These activities should be held after school hours.
  2. Any activity for which statutorily and are authorized admission charges are paid by pupil.
  3. Suspension or expulsion
  4. Lunch, recess, and other nutritional periods.

### III. INSTRUCTIONAL DAYS AND SCHOOL YEAR

#### A. School Year and Instructional Minutes

The following reflects the instructional time requirements for TK-12 schools. All District schools will offer 180 instructional days for the school year 2025-26. The table below indicates the minimum annual instructional minutes that will be offered at comprehensive schools. Span schools will offer instructional minutes according to their specific grade spans.

The required minimum annual instructional minutes will be 65,300 for all secondary schools.

Minimum Annual Instructional Minutes Required	
Elementary Schools (grades TK-6)	55,100
Middle Schools (grades 6 – 8)	65,300
High Schools (grades 9-12)	65,300

Options Schools: The California Department of Education does not require Continuation schools, Opportunity schools, and Community Day schools to meet minimum annual instructional minutes. However, according to District policy, these Options schools must meet the minimum daily instructional minutes.

#### B. Daily Instructional Minutes Required

The table below reflects the daily instructional minutes requirements for each type of day.

Adherence to these daily minutes and the prescribed number of days will help ensure compliance with the minimum annual minutes requirement.

Daily Instructional Minutes – Comprehensive Schools			
Type of School Day	Elementary	Middle	High
Regular Day	323	383	383
Shortened Day	288	318	318
Professional Development Day	263	323	323
Minimum Day	253	253	253

**Regardless of the total annual instructional minutes, a comprehensive school may not offer an instructional day with total daily instructional minutes that are less than the Minimum Day's requirement.**

The different types of school days do not apply to Options schools. However, these schools must offer the minimum daily instructional minutes indicated below every school day.

Type of School	Minimum Daily Instructional Minutes Required
Continuation School	250
Community Day School	360
Opportunity School	250

**C. Minimum Day**

A minimum day session contains the least amount of minutes required by law. It includes a recess/nutrition and lunch period, which does not count as instructional time. Lunch service is required to be scheduled and reflected in the online bell schedule. The number of minimum days available is dependent on the number of shortened days selected. This information is detailed in the next section.

**D. Shortened Day**

A shortened day contains the number of minutes required by the District, and the schedule includes recess/nutrition and lunch breaks.

**E. Number of Minimum and Shortened Days Available**

By action of the Board of Education, policies have been established for minimum and shortened days. The student instructional minutes have been calculated to meet the minimum annual required instructional minutes and allow for up to 10

minimum or up to 20 shortened days (or any combination of the two, not to exceed the total allowed, as noted below).

Schools may select the number of minimum and shortened days using the following table:

20 shortened days and	0 minimum days
18 shortened days and	1 minimum day
16 shortened days and	2 minimum days
14 shortened days and	3 minimum days
12 shortened days and	4 minimum days
10 shortened days and	5 minimum days
8 shortened days and	6 minimum days
6 shortened days and	7 minimum days
4 shortened days and	8 minimum days
2 shortened days and	9 minimum days
0 shortened days and	10 minimum days

School principals select the minimum/shortened day combination for Region approval through the online bell schedule system: <https://admincert.lausd.net>. The school principal should enter all planned minimum/shortened days for the school year before certifying their online bell schedule to ensure that their bell schedule meets the required minimum annual instructional minutes.

#### F. Pupil Free Days

For the 2025-2026 school year, schools are allocated two pupil-free days. Pupil-free days are provided to enable teachers and schools to prepare for the instructional semester or year and to finalize the end of the instructional year. Students do not attend or receive instruction on pupil-free days, and pupil-free days do not include instructional minutes or time. By default, pupil-free days are scheduled on the first and last days of the instructional calendar; that is, the first day of the fall semester and the last day of the spring semester.

Schools have the option to move the spring semester pupil-free day from the last day of the spring semester to the first day of the spring semester. Where this is done, the last day in the spring semester is counted as an instructional day, and the first day in the spring semester becomes a noninstructional pupil-free day. Moving the second-semester pupil-free day requires the approval

of the school principal and the Local School Leadership Council and must be approved by the Region through the Online Bell Schedule program. Transportation, the Special Education Division, the Integration Office, Food Services, and any District office impacted by the Spring semester Pupil-Free Day selection must be notified of the change in schedule. The schedule change must be cost-neutral to the District. Schools are expected to adhere to their Spring pupil-free day selection as indicated on the certified bell schedule.

- G. Professional Development (PD) Banked Time Days  
Continuing in the 2025-2026 school year, all Tuesdays will be designated as professional development (PD) days for all comprehensive schools. Therefore, depending on the instructional calendar, the number of PD days may vary from year to year.

	Number of Banked Time PD Days in 2025-2026
Elementary schools	36
Secondary schools	36

On PD days, students are released 60 minutes earlier than the Regular Day schedule.

- H. Teacher On-Site Obligations

	Minutes Before Instructional Day	Minutes After Instructional Day
Pre-K	30	10
Elementary schools (Grades TK-5/6)	17	10
Secondary schools (6-12)	5	2

#### IV. ALTERATIONS TO INSTRUCTIONAL CALENDARS

- A. School Calendars and Bell Schedules  
School calendars and bell schedules are determined by the school prior to the beginning of the fall semester, including scheduling of minimum days, shortened days, and Spring Pupil Free Day. Consultation with the Transportation Branch, the Special Education Branch, and the Office of School Integration is required. Before the beginning of the school year, principals must certify bell schedules through the Online Bell Schedule system to



determine compliance with the minimum number of instructional minutes as designated in this bulletin.

**B. Changes to Online Bell Schedules**

Once a bell schedule is Region-approved, the following may be considered during the school year:

1. change in date(s) selected for Back-to-School and/or Open House,
2. change in date(s) selected for minimum and/or shortened days,\*
3. adding minimum and/or shortened days to the calendar, \*
4. adding a special schedule, e.g., for testing, finals, etc., and
5. change in schedule – In extreme cases where the actual schedule of the regular day, professional development, shortened day, minimum day, etc., may need to be changed after the school year has started, contact the Attendance and Enrollment Section immediately for guidance on reflecting the change in the online bell schedule system, and implement the new schedule only after compliance with instructional minutes is confirmed by Attendance and Enrollment Section.

\*Parents/guardians must be notified of the change/ addition at least one month before the scheduled minimum or shortened day.

**C. Procedures for Changes to Calendar/Schedules**

1. Work with the Region Superintendent or their designee to determine the validity of the requested change.
2. For approved changes related to Minimum and Shortened Days, ensure that parents/guardians will have at least one month's notification prior to the change and that the school community and appropriate offices are notified. In addition, there is a minimum three-week period to allow for changes to crossing guard schedules. Any additional costs associated with student transportation must be paid for by the school.
3. Request the Attendance and Enrollment Section to unlock the online bell schedule(s). Reflect the changes, then re-certify the online bell schedule(s). Once the bell schedule(s) is re-certified, the Region Superintendent or their designee will be able to review and re-approve the bell schedule.
4. Inform staff that hours of work for certificated and classified staff are not affected by early release days for students.
5. Inform all parents of the purpose of early release days each time they are scheduled. Students and parents are to be

- provided with at least one month's advance notification of a shortened or minimum-day schedule, except in emergencies.
6. Inform and provide sufficient advance notice to cafeteria staff of changes in schedules.
  7. Notify the Principal of Early Education Centers if centers are on site three weeks in advance.
  8. Notify other individuals and offices at least three weeks in advance of the intended change in schedule, i.e., principals of neighboring schools, principals of sending/receiving schools, local city or county recreational facilities, after-school club sponsors, crossing guards, and itinerant program staff.
  9. Notify the Transportation Services Division
    - a. When approved by the Region Superintendent, the principal must notify the Area Bus Supervisor (ABS) or Regional Transportation Manager (RTM) of the approved minimum or shortened day.
    - b. In some cases, the scheduling of an early release day for students may not readily be accomplished because of the adverse effect that such arrangements would have on the districtwide transportation schedule, i.e., multiple trips and school combination routes.
    - c. The Transportation Services Division is not authorized to transport beyond cost-neutral on discretionary early release days without a funding source. For more information or cost estimates, school administrators should contact their Regional Transportation Manager.
  10. Adjust the Crossing Guard Schedule
    - a. When specific criteria are met, crossing guards are assigned only to schools with students in grades TK-5 or TK-6. The only change permissible in the crossing guard's regular schedule will be to add time for supervision at the early dismissal. The crossing guard is to be available at the regular time to serve those students returning from receiving schools.
    - b. It is the responsibility of the receiving school principal to inform each sending school principal of changes in the receiving school's regular schedule. This notification must reach the sending school principal at least three weeks before the change is to take place so that, if needed, adjustments to the crossing guard schedule can be made.
    - c. It is the responsibility of the receiving school principal to add time to the crossing guard's regular schedule to ensure the supervision of any transported students who

will arrive early due to an early release day at their school of attendance.

- AUTHORITY:** This is a policy of the Los Angeles Unified School District
- RELATED RESOURCES:** MEM-6128.4, Administrator Certification Online System 2025-2026 For School Sites and Offices, issued annually  
MEM-6015.5, School-Site Professional Development Priorities and Banked Time Tuesdays for Schools 2025-2026, issued March 24, 2025  
REF-068500.6 Daily and Annual Instructional Minutes Requirements and Certification of Bell Schedules for School Year 2025-2026 issued  
Instructional School Calendar (updated annually). Web pathway: [lausd.net](http://lausd.net) >> About LAUSD >> Calendar
- ASSISTANCE:** For assistance or further information, please contact your Region Director.
- For questions regarding bells schedules, please contact Aileen Santos at [aileen.santos@lausd.net](mailto:aileen.santos@lausd.net).
  - For questions regarding breakfast and lunch programs, please contact Soniya Perl, Deputy Director of Food Services, at [soniya.perl@lausd.net](mailto:soniya.perl@lausd.net).
  - Additional assistance is available through the Division of Instruction. Please contact the P-12 Unit in the Division of Instruction at 213-241-5333 or [instruction@lausd.net](mailto:instruction@lausd.net).

### **Recess Requirements for Elementary Schools**

“Recess” means a period of time during the school day, separate and distinct from physical education courses and mealtimes, but may follow or precede physical education courses or mealtimes, when pupils are given supervised and unstructured time for any of the following:

1. Physical activity
2. Play
3. Organized games
4. Social engagement with peers

Under Education Code section 49056, beginning with the 2024-2025 school year, the following requirements must be met for recess provided by a public school:

1. Recess shall be at least 30 minutes on regular instructional days and at least 15 minutes on early release days and may be provided in one or more periods. This requirement does not apply to students on days in which they are participating in a field trip or other educational program.
2. The designated lunch period for students must be a minimum of 20 minutes, and teachers must have an uninterrupted lunch period of no less than 30 minutes.
3. Recess shall be held outdoors whenever the weather and air quality permits. If outdoor space is not sufficient, recess may be held indoors.
4. Recess shall comply with a pupil’s individualized education program or a pupil’s Section 504 plan.
5. A pupil shall not be denied recess by a member of the school’s staff unless the pupil’s participation poses an immediate threat to the physical safety of the pupil or to the physical safety of one or more of the pupil’s peers. If a pupil’s recess period is denied, school staff members shall make all reasonable efforts to resolve such threats and minimize exclusion from recess to the greatest extent practicable. School staff members are encouraged to use other means of correction, such as those specified in Education Code section 48900.5.
6. Schools may provide pupils with a snack during recess.