

Annualized FTE Enrollment Reporting Percent of Time

BACKGROUND

The state biennial budget, House Bill 59, required that state aid through the Foundation formula be based on an annualized full-time equivalent (FTE) enrollment. Per existing Ohio Department of Education policy contained in the EMIS Manual, any student enrolled for less than a full school day is reported for the percent of time that the student is enrolled. Prior to Fiscal Year 2015, the impact of this policy was limited given the student count for funding was based on a single week in October. However, for some districts, the impact may be magnified when using an annualized FTE enrollment. Under certain circumstances, a district could see a decrease in state funding for associated lower student FTE depending if the district is on the funding cap or transitional aid guarantee.

In order to generate a full FTE, students are expected to be participating in a learning opportunity for the entire day the grade is scheduled. Learning opportunities include both classroom-based and non-classroom-based activities that are recognized by law and approved by the district. This can include classes, supervised activities and approved education options. If an individual student does not participate in a learning opportunity for one or more periods of the day, then that student's percent of time reported must be adjusted accordingly.

EXCEPTIONS

Alternative School Programs

A district may seek a waiver for the minimum hourly requirement for alternative schools operated under Ohio law¹ if it can demonstrate that the minimum hourly requirements are not workable for a particular student population. These programs may continue to count students as one FTE based upon the definition of full-time enrollment that the school used in the 2013-2014 school year. The calculation of FTE may take into account time spent on campus in these programs, work done outside of scheduled instructional time and/or competency-based learning. A district that wishes to make a request for a waiver should send its request to daystohours@education.ohio.gov.

Work Release

A district may choose to release certain students for the purpose of pursuing employment. If the program is a work study program or an approved educational option for the student, then the work time counts as instructional time. If the student is being released for employment due to financial hardship, then the district has two options:

1. The district may report the student as less than a full FTE, matching their actual attendance, for purposes of enrollment. This is required for absences longer than ten consecutive days.
2. The district, under certain circumstances, can count the absence as an excused absence. This will not affect the district's funding but will impact its attendance rate. To be an excused absence, the absence must be in accordance with district policy and approved by the district superintendent as an emergency or other set of circumstances that the superintendent considers good and sufficient cause for absence from school.

¹ Ohio Revised Code 3313.533

Zero Period

Some districts have created an additional period of instruction that is optional for students. These periods do not count toward the minimum hourly requirements for a grade level. However, if a student attends zero period but is released for a period later in the school day, that particular student would still count as a full FTE if his or her school day is the same length as the regularly scheduled day for all students.

Home Instruction

If the individualized education program of a student with a disability calls for home instruction, the student is counted as a full FTE as required by law. However, if the IEP of a student with a disability does not call for home instruction but the student is enrolled for less than a full day, the student must be reported for the percent of time enrolled.

SENIOR RELEASE TIME (LATE ARRIVAL/EARLY DISMISSAL)

There is a potential funding impact associated with high school early release/late arrival policies that allow upper classmen to participate in learning opportunities for less than a full school day. Some districts allow this when students only need a few credit hours to meet their graduation requirements. Students that are regularly released from part of their school days must be reported for only the part of the day when they are present and expected to attend. This may affect a district's funding.

Districts are encouraged to arrange for additional electives, advanced courses, postsecondary options or internships for any students who have met the graduation requirements. While study halls are considered a learning opportunity, districts should offer students course alternatives such as those previously referenced.

Request for Exemption

Districts should encourage students to pursue advanced coursework in order to continue their academic growth throughout their high school careers regardless of whether they have finished coursework required for graduation. For this reason, districts may request an exemption from the state superintendent to allow for counting these students as fully enrolled if they take sufficiently rigorous courses. For example, a district could require that a student take two AP courses, two courses through a dual enrollment program, or a certain number of hours in an internship or apprenticeship and, in exchange, allows that student to not enroll in coursework for one period per day. If the exemption is approved, the district may count the student as enrolled full time for the purpose of school funding.

A district that wishes to make a request for an exemption should send its request and a draft policy to daystohours@education.ohio.gov. District policies for exemption will be considered on a case-by-case basis, although they do not need to be submitted on a student-level basis.