

**Elementary Instructional Minutes** *updated 10/6/14 to be implemented 9/1/15*

According to the BEP (Basic Education Program) School districts must comply with the requirement to provide elementary students with five and a half (5 ½) hours (three hundred and thirty (330) minutes) of actual instructional time per school day. This time excludes lunch, recess, common planning time and other non-instructional use of time. These times are expected to be implemented with fidelity and integrity.

The following break-down of instructional times will guide a teacher’s planning of the instructional day:

| Subject                                      | Kindergarten                         | Grades 1 & 2 | Grades 3 - 5 |
|--|--------------------------------------|--------------|--------------|
| <b>Guided Reading</b>                        | 75 minutes                           | 75 minutes   | 60 minutes   |
| <b>ELA/Writing</b>                           | 50 minutes                           | 60 minutes   | 60 minutes   |
| <b>ELA/Language/Word Study</b>               | 70 minutes                           | 45 minutes   | 30 minutes   |
| <b>Math</b>                                  | 45 minutes                           | 60 minutes   | 60 minutes   |
| <b>Math Facts</b>                            | 15 minutes                           | 15 minutes   | 15 minutes   |
| <b>Science / Social Studies</b>              | (SS integrated in ELA)<br>30 minutes | 30 minutes   | 60 minutes   |
| <b>Special Subjects</b>                      | 45 minutes                           | 45 minutes   | 45 minutes   |
| <b>*Lunch Recess</b>                         | 45 minutes                           | 45 minutes   | 45 minutes   |
| <b>Non-Instructional (attendance etc...)</b> | 15 minutes                           | 15 minutes   | 15 minutes   |
| <b>Total Instructional Minutes</b>           | 330 minutes                          | 330 minutes  | 330 minutes  |
| <b>Total Student Day</b>                     | 390 minutes                          | 390 minutes  | 390 minutes  |

\*Lunch/Recess not included in instructional minutes.

The allotted time for ELA (English Language Arts) is made up of the following components:

**Guided Reading** – North Smithfield uses the Treasures Reading program for the foundation of reading instruction. Teachers use materials provided to implement a balanced literacy approach to reading instruction, (reading to, with, by) this includes Guided Reading. Guided Reading is the process a teacher uses to work with small groups of students to teach varied reading strategies (guided by the teacher) for students to learn skills and knowledge required to read increasingly difficult texts on their own. Independent reading is (of course) the goal... Guided Reading provides the structure to ensure that students are able to apply strategies in order to comprehend the material.

Guided Reading Expectations:

1. All teachers must have a Guided Reading block. During this Guided Reading block, teachers are expected to meet with all reading groups/students every day.
2. The majority of time spent during each Guided Reading lesson should consist of authentic, continuous reading.
  - All students individually read the entire text (or chapter).
  - For Grades K-3: Teacher listens to a portion of each student’s reading , makes observational notes and offers individual feedback (“Round Robin” reading in not an encouraged strategy).

- For Grades 4-5: Teacher listens to a portion of each student's reading and/or their responses and ideas of what was read, makes observational notes and offers individual feedback ("Round Robin" reading in not an encouraged strategy).
- It is required that all students with PLPs who receive services from a Reading Specialist read with the classroom teacher in addition to the time spent reading with a Reading Specialist every day.

**Writing** – Students in North Smithfield are taught to write for a variety of purposes (to inform, persuade and express ideas) and to write for a variety of audiences and in different forms (paragraph, report, essay, letter, poems etc...) Students are also taught to thoughtfully communicate knowledge in response to questions. We use a common strategy (in all grades K-12) for students to construct responses. This allows teachers to build upon the foundation from previous grades and continually increase expectations in the student responses.

Writing Expectations:

Daily writing instruction should consist of:

- **A focused mini-lesson** - teacher models proficient writing, introduces/reinforces a specific skill or writing target, teacher uses a mentor text to demonstrate writing techniques.
- **Time for Writing/Conferencing** – All students write as teacher conducts individual conferences, offering feedback and making observational notes to improve writing.
- **Sharing** – Students share writing daily with an authentic audience to get feedback from peers.

**Language/Word Study** – The Language/Word Study block can consist of some of all of the following: language, phonics/spelling, vocabulary, and penmanship.

Language:

Students are taught in a variety of ways; language is consistently reinforced and practiced throughout the day. (i.e., asking and answering questions in complete sentences both orally and in writing, using correct syntax, grammar and tense, listening to and sharing stories and events.)

Phonics/Spelling:

The teaching of the sound / symbol relationships used in decoding progressing through patterns and associations is taught in focused phonics lessons. The study of spelling through direct instruction emphasizing the phonics, reading and writing connections can be taught at this time also.

Vocabulary:

Vocabulary is the knowledge of words and word meanings. Effective vocabulary instruction includes:

- Wide or extensive reading to expand word knowledge
- Instruction in specific words to enhance comprehension of texts
- Instruction in independent word learning strategies
- Word-consciousness and word play activities to motivate and enhance learning

Penmanship: Penmanship is stressed in a formal way at the beginning of the year and subsequently practiced throughout. It is a part of each day in all that the children do with paper and pencil.

Increase in Math Instructional Minutes:

**Math-** The North Smithfield School Department elementary instructional minutes have been modified based on student achievement data-analysis and the District Strategic Plan to incorporate an additional 15 minutes per day focusing on Math Fact instruction and assessment. This modification is for the purpose of ensuring that students attain the necessary skills at their grade level, as well as, meet the learning standards set fourth in the Common Core State Standards. The CCSS (more so than the GLE's) emphasizes the accuracy, precision and mastery of math facts.