

1. Background

The *Time to Learn Strategy* paper (February 2002) included the recommendation that boards and their schools review time for learning in grades 7–9 in priority areas:

- ▶ mathematics (Goal: 60 minutes per day, represents 20% of instructional time)
- ▶ language arts and opportunities for literacy learning in other subject areas (part of the *Active Readers* initiative introduced in grade 7 in 2002–03, grade 8 in 2003–04, and grade 9 in 2004–05)
- ▶ physical education and physical activity programs

The *Time to Learn Discussion Paper: Instructional Time Grades 7–9* (June 2002) included the following:

- ▶ **Mathematics:** It is recommended that schools set the goal of 60 minutes daily for mathematics. This represents 20% of instructional time. This math hour will include five minutes every day of mental math.
- ▶ **English Language Arts/French Immersion Language Arts:** It is recommended that schools set the goal of 60 minutes daily (300 minutes per week) for English language arts/French immersion language arts. This represents 20% of instructional time. It is expected that at least 33% of time allotted for language arts be committed to reading instruction, reading, and related activities.

With reference to the allotment of instructional time for English language arts in extended core French programs, *Program Policy for French Second Language Programs* (1998) notes that the total amount of time allotted for the extended core French (French and social studies) should be equal to the total amount of time allotted for English language arts and social studies in the English program. [See *Program Policy for French Second Language Programs* (1998), p. 8.]

The allotment of instructional time for English language arts in grades 7 and 8 French immersion programs should equate to the time allotment for core French in the English program.

Time to Learn Discussion Paper: Instructional Time Grades 7–9 (June 2002), pp. 2–3

2. Policy

- ▶ Beginning in September 2004, 60 minutes every day will become a *minimum* requirement in grade 7 and grade 8 for instructional time allotted to mathematics and to English language arts in the English program. Beginning in September 2004, 60 minutes every day will become a *minimum* requirement for instructional time allotted in grade 7 and grade 8 to mathematics and to French language arts in the immersion program.

Public School Programs 2003–2004 (p. B-12)

- ▶ The Department will monitor implementation of these minimum time requirements in 2004–05. It is expected that boards will ensure implementation in **all** schools with grade 7 and/or grade 8 in their jurisdictions.

3. Core French

- ▶ Thirty minutes per day, or its equivalent, of instructional time allotted to core French (10%) should be regarded as a *minimum* allotment.
- ▶ Boards are required to report to the Department of Education (Director, French Second Language Division) on actions taken to comply with Public School Program requirements in this regard.
- ▶ *Program Policy for French Second Language Programs* (June 1998) noted that “Research and good practice has shown that Core French should be scheduled for a minimum of 40 minutes per day from grades 4–12 inclusively. This amount of time is required for the learner to achieve a reasonable level of second language communicative ability.” Within the current parameters of 300 minutes of instructional time per day, it is difficult to achieve this goal, which represents 13.3% of instructional time.

4. Balance

- ▶ It is important to ensure a reasonable balance of instructional time among core French, health/personal development and relationships, physical education, science, and social studies which are all compulsory subjects in the public school program for these grades and require similar allocation of instructional time requirements to enable teachers and students to address the prescribed curriculum outcomes.

5. Accountability

- ▶ It is the duty of a principal to ensure that the public school program and curricula are implemented.
[*The Education Act* 38 (2)(a)]
- ▶ A school board shall ... ensure that its schools adhere to the provincial program of studies.
[*The Education Act* 64 (2)(b)]

For further information, contact the following:

Ann Blackwood
Director
English Program Services
Nova Scotia Department of Education
PO Box 578
Halifax NS B3J 2S9

phone: (902) 424-5745
e-mail: blackwaa@gov.ns.ca
Fax: (902) 424-0613

Andrée Green
Director
French Second Language Division
Nova Scotia Department of Education
PO Box 578
Halifax NS B3J 2S9

phone: (902) 424-6327
e-mail: greenam@gov.ns.ca
Fax: (902) 424-0057