**Student Learning Time Waiver Application**

The intent of this waiver process is to enable districts to implement innovative programs and schedules that will *benefit students educationally and improve student learning* but [do not meet student learning time requirements](https://www.doe.mass.edu/lawsregs/603cmr27.html?section=all). This waiver is not intended for emergency cases or extraordinary circumstances that force the closing of one or more of the district's schools (e.g., natural disaster). The innovative program proposed by this waiver should focus on addressing unmet student needs in the district and may include innovative schedules. To be successful, applicants must demonstrate that their innovative program, including an innovative schedule, is supported by a sound educational rationale and includes accountability for results.

Waivers should be carefully developed by district staff. The following application must be completed for the Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education’s consideration. Submission details can be found at: <https://www.doe.mass.edu/redesign/SLTwaiver.html>

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| **General Information** |
| **District Name:** |
| **School Name:** |
| **Proposed Innovative Program Name:** |
| **Submission Date:** |
| **District Level Contact Information** |
| **Name and Title:** |
| **Email and Phone:** |

In a maximum of twelve (12) pages, please respond to each question below. Please note that Appendices A through D, are all required as part of the submission, but do not count toward the maximum page limit. Appendices include: Student Learning Time Waiver Statement of Assurances, [Appendix A](#AppA); Program Schedule Template, [Appendix B](#AppB); Evaluation Plan, [Appendix C](#AppC); and, if submitting for a virtual program, Prior Success of Virtual Programming, [Appendix D](#AppD). [Appendix E](#AppE): Contains resources that align with the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education’s vision and strategic objectives.

1. **Need for Waiver.** Briefly describe the need for a student learning time waiver, including the educational rationale for the proposed program’s departure from existing [student learning time requirements](http://www.doe.mass.edu/lawsregs/603cmr27.html?section=all).
2. **Student Population**. Provide a detailed description of the proposed students to be served by the innovative program. Who are the most affected stakeholders who would benefit from this student learning time waiver? What does the data tell you about the assets and needs of these students and how does that relate to the need for a student learning time waiver? In addition, how will this program prioritize participant outreach and enrollment based on opportunity gaps within the district? Include in the response details about the student population to be served, including:
   1. Grade levels
   2. Student ages
   3. Number of students per grade level to be served and total number of students
   4. Student enrollment criteria and process
   5. Specific student need or population(s) to be served
3. **Research Basis and Proven Record of Success**. Provide a description of the research that supports the proposed program, including links to relevant articles and websites. Please describe how the proposed program will address the needs of the student population to be served. Please provide evidence of the district’s previous success in providing similar programming. Describe the district’s capacity (resources, experience, staff, structures) that will result in continued success in implementing the proposed programming. If the district is requesting a waiver to implement a virtual program, please complete [Appendix D](#AppD): Prior Success for Virtual Programming.
4. **Alignment with State and District Initiatives/Goals**. Describe how the proposed program aligns to state *and* district initiatives and goals. How will the program meet state goals, such as:

* Cultivate systems to support the whole student and foster joyful, healthy, and supportive learning environments so that all students feel valued, connected, nourished, and ready to learn.
* Promote deeper learning so that all students engage in grade-level work that is real-world, relevant, and interactive. Districts, schools, and programs feel empowered and prepared to
* Develop and sustain a workforce that is diverse, culturally responsive, well-prepared, and committed to continuous improvement, so that all students have equitable access to effective educators.

Please see [Appendix E](#AppE) for additional resources related to the Department’s Educational Vision and Strategic Objectives.

1. **Attendance.** Describe how the program will define and monitor student attendance, including how it will verify that each student is participating in classes or courses. Describe how truancy will be defined and addressed by the school and outline goals regarding student attendance. Include how the school will analyze student enrollment, attendance, and attrition data in the aggregate and by student group. Please see [Appendix E](#AppE) for additional resources about expectations for student attendance.
2. **Enhancement of Current Educational Options**. Describe how this program will enhance or expand educational options and how the innovative methods differ from options currently available in the district.
3. **Student Schedules**. Provide the following information regarding student schedules for the program, whether requesting a waiver of the time requirements (900/990, 180 days) and/or whether requesting a waiver of the in-person requirement:
   1. Describe a day in the life of typical students enrolled in the program at various grade levels (at least one for an elementary school student, one for a middle school student, and at least one for a high school student, as applicable).
   2. Describe a day in the life of a core academic teacher.
   3. Submit the daily/weekly program calendar and yearly program schedule template ([Appendix B](#AppB): Program Schedule Template).
4. **High Quality instructional materials, methods, and curriculum**. Describe how the district evaluated the available curriculum and determined the chosen curriculum is high quality, engaging, and aligned with the Massachusetts curriculum frameworks as well as district standards. Describe the pedagogy or instructional methods that will be used to deliver the curriculum model(s). Provide evidence that the instructional materials support culturally and linguistically sustaining practices, and fosters learning experiences that are relevant, real-world, and interactive. If program implementation depends upon another entity, please describe the services or products provided by the other entity. Please see [Appendix E](#AppE), for resources related to High Quality Instructional Materials and Culturally and Linguistically sustaining practices.
5. **Promotion and Graduation Standards**. If applicable and different than existing district policies and standards, provide any proposed modifications to policies and standards for promoting students to the next grade, achievement level, or grouping level for participating students. Provide examples of graduation or “exit standards” for the school’s grade groupings (e.g., elementary, middle, high school). These exit standards should offer a clear sense of what students will know and be able to do when they complete the last grade level of the proposed program.
6. **Student Services**. Describe how the innovative program will meet the needs of all students enrolled in the program. Include a description of:
   1. How the district will provide students with disabilities and English language learners with access to the general education curriculum.
   2. If the instructional methods and supports available for all students do not result in student progress, describe the additional supports and interventions that would be implemented through a Multitiered System of Supports (MTSS). Please see [Appendix E](#AppE) for additional resources related to the MTSS.
   3. If applicable, how does the district plan to provide nutrition program services to students, including what meals and/or snacks will be served and when. Describe how the district plans to administer the National School Lunch Program, if applicable, for the students in the proposed program. [[1]](#footnote-2) Please see information in [Appendix E](#AppE) about MTSS.
7. **Supports for families/guardians.** Given that teaching and student learning will be different than traditional schooling, explain how the program will tailor supports around the specific needs of families/guardians to ensure all students are provided with high quality learning experiences. Describe how the district engaged stakeholders and how input was used to create specific supports for families/guardians. Describe how the program will then sustain effective relationships with all families/guardians and effectively communicate with them about the academic progress and social emotional well-being of students.

1. [**Draft Evaluation Plan**](http://www.doe.mass.edu/redesign/EvalPlanGuidance.html)**.** Using the template in [Appendix C](#AppC): Draft Evaluation Plan, provide an evaluation plan that describes how the district will measure the quality of the implementation and outcomes of this innovative program. Additionally, describe how staff will review disaggregated student data to evaluate program effectiveness and equitable access. Describe how these data will be regularly monitored and evaluated by district and program leadership. Explain how the instructional leadership team will work with stakeholders to engage in continuous improvement cycles and progress monitoring.
2. **Staffing**. Describe how the program will be staffed specifically to deliver high-quality instruction, adequate counseling services, attendance monitoring and engagement support, and administrative support and supervision.
3. **Collective Bargaining Agreement**. Describe the implications of the proposed program on the district’s collective bargaining agreements. Include in the description any steps that have already been taken or are planned to address any necessary departures from applicable collective bargaining agreements.
4. **Mid-year Program Request.** If applicable, describe why the proposed innovative program should be implemented during the current academic year. Describe the plan for informing all stakeholders of the proposed changes, describing any anticipated challenges and how they will be addressed.
5. **Summary Statement.** Include a statement of no more than 100 words summarizing your proposed innovative program.

**Appendix A: Student Learning Time Waiver Statement of Assurances**

**Student Learning Time Waiver - Statement of Assurances**

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| This form must be signed by a duly authorized representative of the district school committee or board and submitted with the final proposal. A final waiver request will be considered incomplete and will not be accepted if it does not include the Student Learning Time Statement of Assurances. | |
| Name of proposed innovative program: | |
| As the authorized representative of the applicant group, I certify under the penalties of perjury that the information submitted in this proposal is true to the best of my knowledge and belief; and further, I certify that, if awarded a student learning time waiver, the program/school:   1. Shall be open to all students on a space-available basis. 2. Shall comply with federal and state law and guidance, particularly those governing public schools. 3. Will be implemented as outlined in this waiver application. 4. Will request an amendment to the waiver if there is an unexpected change to the program design or structure. 5. Will not charge tuition, fees, or other mandatory payments to students for full-time attendance at the school/program, for participation in required or elective courses, or for mandated services or programs. M.G.L. c. 71, § 94(k) (specifying tuition to be paid through School Choice); M.G.L. c. 71, § 48 (requiring school districts to purchase textbooks and school supplies for students). 6. Will offer required computers, printers, software, and Internet access to students free of charge. M.G.L. c. 71, § 94(b)(30) and (31) (addressing provision of technology, materials, and technical support); M.G.L. c. 71, § 48 (requiring school districts to purchase textbooks and school supplies for students). 7. Will provide curriculum aligned with the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks (MCF). 8. Will not charge any public school for the use or replication of any part of their curriculum subject to the terms of any contract between the school/program and a third-party provider 9. Will permit families/guardians to enroll their children only voluntarily and not because they must send their children to this program. 10. Will be secular in its curriculum, programs, admissions, policies, governance, employment practices, and operation in accordance with the federal and state constitutions and any other relevant provisions of federal and state law. 11. Will adhere to all applicable provisions of federal and state law relating to students with disabilities including, but not limited to, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1974, Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, and chapter 71B of the Massachusetts General Laws. 12. Will adhere to all applicable provisions of federal and state law relating to students who are English language learners including, but not limited to, Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Equal Educational Opportunities Act of 1974, and chapter 71A of the Massachusetts General Laws. 13. Will comply with all other applicable federal and state law including, but not limited to, the requirement to offer a school nutrition program, if applicable. [M.G.L. c. 69, § 1C]. 14. Will meet the performance standards and statewide assessment requirements set by the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education for all students in public schools [M.G.L. c. 71, § 94(b)(7)]. 15. Will report all students participating in the innovative program in data collections, including SIMS (Student Information Management System) and SCS (Student Course Schedule). 16. Will submit all data required by the DESE in a timely and complete manner, Will ensure that all core academic teachers of ELs and the administrators who supervise and evaluate them earn the sheltered English immersion endorsement (603 CMR 14.07). 17. Will provide written assurance (signed letter from board chair or designee) that a criminal background check (CORI) has been performed, a check of sex offender registry information (SORI) has been completed, and fingerprints were submitted for a national criminal history check for all employees, volunteers, and other persons at the SCHOOL/PROGRAM who have the potential for direct and unmonitored contact with children (M.G.L. c. 71, § 38R). | |
| This is a true statement, made under the penalties of perjury. | |
| Digital signature of authorized person: |  |
| Name of authorized person: |  |
| Title: |  |
| Address: |  |
| City: |  |
| State: |  |
| Zip: |  |
| Telephone: |  |
| Email: |  |

## Appendix B: Program Schedule Template

The template is designed to assist districts in their design of innovative programs that may not meet the learning time requirements (900/990 hours and 180 days) of the Student Learning Time Regulations or will not meet the requirement to provide an educational program that is primarily in-person.

**Program Schedule Template**

[SCHOOL NAME and PROGRAM NAME]

[DATE of SUBMISSION]

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **ITEM 1 DAILY/WEEKLY SCHEDULE FOR STUDENTS** | | |
| **Day** | **Typical Total Hours** | **Type of Instruction[[2]](#footnote-3)** |
| Monday |  |  |
| Tuesday |  |  |
| Wednesday |  |  |
| Thursday |  |  |
| Friday |  |  |
| Other *(if applicable)* |  |  |

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **YEARLY SCHEDULE FOR STUDENTS** | | | |
| **Minimum Number of Days** | **Number of Student Hours Per Year** | **Scheduled Emergency/Snow Days** | **Total number of scheduled school days** |
|  |  |  |  |
| Please note below if the schedule includes **mandatory** special programming for **all** students, such as Saturday school or summer school. | | | |
|  | | | |

## Appendix C: Draft Evaluation Plan Template

Using the template below, provide a draft evaluation plan that describes how the district will measure the quality of the implementation and outcomes of this innovative program. Describe the quantitative and qualitative measures that will enable the program, district, and the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (Department) to ensure enrolled students make appropriate and satisfactory progress in mastering the content and attaining the other desired outcomes of the program. Districts that receive approval of their waiver will work with the Department to finalize the evaluation plan and will submit progress on evaluation plan objectives to the Department on an annual basis, if not more frequently.

**Evaluation Plan Template** (add rows as needed)

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Key Objective #1:** | | |
| **Measure:** | **What is the intended result?** |  |
| **How will the result be measured?** |  |
| **Mid-Year Target** |  |
| **End-Year Target** |  |
| **Measure:** | **What is the intended result?** |  |
| **How will the result be measured?** |  |
| **Mid-Year Target** |  |
| **End-Year Target** |  |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Key Objective #2:** | | |
| **Measure:** | **What is the intended result?** |  |
| **How will the result be measured?** |  |
| **Mid-Year Target** |  |
| **End-Year Target** |  |
| **Measure:** | **What is the intended result?** |  |
| **How will the result be measured?** |  |
| **Mid-Year Target** |  |
| **End-Year Target** |  |

**(Add additional rows as needed.)**

## Appendix D: Prior Success of Virtual Programming

If the district is requesting a waiver to implement a virtual program, please provide the following to demonstrate the district’s history of success of providing high quality virtual programs for its students.

Provide a narrative overview of the district’s history of and successes with delivering virtual instruction to students. In the narrative, please provide the following information and data:

* The number of years the district has provided virtual instruction,
* A description of how virtual instruction was delivered to students,
* A description detailing why or under what circumstances it was provided,
* The number of students who have engaged in the district’s virtual instruction program each year, over the last three to five years,
* Academic progress data (aggregated, not student specific) over the past three to five years for students who participated in virtual instruction, and
* Attendance data (aggregated, not student specific) over the past three to five years for students who have engaged in virtual instruction.

**Appendix E: Additional Resources Related to DESE’s Strategic Objectives**

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| * + 1. **Overview of Materials Aligned to the Educational Vision** |
| * Vision Catalog:   <https://www.doe.mass.edu/commissioner/vision/catalog.xlsx>   * Overview of Educational Vision and Supports:   <https://www.doe.mass.edu/commissioner/vision/vision-supports.pdf> |
| * + 1. **Resources for High Quality Curriculum and Instruction** |
| * Curriculum Matters initiative:   <https://www.doe.mass.edu/instruction/impd/default.html>.   * Kaleidoscope Collective Learning - Deeper Learning:   <https://www.doe.mass.edu/kaleidoscope/planning/default.html>   * Culturally and Linguistically Responsive Practices: <https://www.doe.mass.edu/instruction/culturally-sustaining/default.html> * ESL guidance related to curriculum:   <https://www.doe.mass.edu/ele/instruction/default.html> |
| 1. **Resources for Culture and Engagement** |
| * Culturally Responsive Social Emotional Competency Development: * <https://www.doe.mass.edu/sfs/sel/sel-all.docx> * Social and Emotional Learning in Massachusetts: <https://www.doe.mass.edu/sfs/sel/default.html> * Safe and Supportive Schools Website:   <https://www.doe.mass.edu/sfs/safety/default.html>   * Safe Schools Program for LGBTQ Students:   <https://www.doe.mass.edu/sfs/lgbtq/default.html> |
| 1. **Resources for Supporting All Students** |
| Multi-Tiered Systems of Support   * Multi-Tiered Systems of Support Academies:   <https://www.doe.mass.edu/sfss/prof-dev/default.html>  College and Career   * Designing Secondary Education & Support Systems:   <https://www.doe.mass.edu/ccte/secondary-design.html>   * Courses and Learning Experiences:   <https://www.doe.mass.edu/ccte/courses-learning/default.html>   * Pathways Strategies:   <https://www.doe.mass.edu/ccte/pathways/default.html> |
| 1. **Resources for Student Performance, Assessment, and Program Evaluation** |
| Strategic Planning and Continuous Improvement   * MA's Recommended Strategic Planning and Continuous Improvement Process:   <https://www.doe.mass.edu/research/success/default.html> |
| 1. **Resources for Attendance** |
| * General DESE’s Attendance Guidance:   <https://www.doe.mass.edu/sfs/attendance/attendance-guidance.docx> |

1. “All schools providing school lunch as provided in the National School Lunch Act, as amended, or school breakfast as provided in the National Child Nutrition Act, as amended, to make breakfast and lunch available at no charge to each attending student regardless of household income.” Mass. General Laws c.69 § 1C [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. \***Special note for virtual programs**

   Virtual school schedules and models are varied by design to align with the specific goals, vision, context, population, and resources of the local context. For a waiver request to the requirement for in-person learning, complete this template to demonstrate weekly time on learning as well as the mode in which education is delivered (e.g. student independent work (asynchronous), small group work, live teacher direct instruction (synchronous), etc.). [↑](#footnote-ref-3)