



MINISTERIAL DIRECTIVE STRENGTHENING TEACHER INSTRUCTIONAL PRACTICES (2020)

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 This directive is to provide direction to education bodies, in accordance with section 2(3) of the *Academic Year and School Attendance Regulations*, regarding the hours of non-instructional time (Strengthening Teacher Instructional Practices (STIP) hours) that must be established by education bodies for a) planning for student assessment and reporting; and b) professional planning and learning.
- 1.2 STIP is intended to improve student learning and achievement through strengthening teachers' professional practices.

2. SCOPE

- 2.1 This directive applies to all education bodies, as defined in section 1(1) of the *Education Act*
- 2.2 This directive sets out:
 - a. The minimum number of hours of non-instruction (STIP hours) that must be established by education bodies, up to the maximum of 100 hours set out in the Regulations;
 - b. The allocation of STIP hours between: a) planning for student assessment and reporting (Individual STIP time); and b) professional planning and learning (Collaborative STIP time);
 - c. The purpose of STIP hours, and the types of activities for which the time may be used; and



- d. The distribution of STIP hours throughout the academic year and the school day.

3. DEFINITIONS

Act: *The Education Act.*

Collaborative STIP time: Collaborative STIP time is the non-instructional time for professional planning and learning that education bodies must establish under paragraph 2(1)(b)(ii) of the *Regulations*. Collaborative STIP time must be developed, scheduled and implemented in accordance with this directive, and should consider the promising practices described in section 6.

Individual STIP time: Individual STIP time is the non-instructional time for planning for student assessment and reporting that education bodies must establish under paragraph 2(1)(b)(i) of the *Regulations*. Individual STIP time must be developed, scheduled, and implemented in accordance with this directive, and may include the types of activities described in section 6.

Professional Learning Community: A Professional Learning Community is an ongoing process in which educators work collaboratively to improve professional practice and enhance student learning and achievement.

Regulations: *The Academic Year and School Attendance Regulations.*

Strengthening Teacher Instructional Practices: Strengthening Teacher Instructional Practices (STIP) is a research based initiative to improve students' academic results by providing teachers with more structured time within the school day to develop skills, plan, and assess student learning. This time is to be used for planning for student assessment and reporting, and professional planning and learning, in accordance with this directive.

4. CONTEXT



- 4.1 In 2017, the Act was amended to reduce the hours of instruction by up to 100 hours in order to align with other Canadian jurisdictions, and redirect that found time towards STIP.
- 4.2 In December 2019, following consultation with education bodies, the Regulations were amended to more clearly capture STIP.
- 4.3 This directive sets out the purposes behind the STIP hours by outlining how the time may be used, scheduled, and allocated between Individual and Collaborative STIP time.
- 4.4 This directive was developed in consultation with education bodies and the Northwest Territories Teachers' Association (NWTTA).

5 PRINCIPLES

- 5.1 Evidence shows that the development of professional learning communities in schools strengthens teacher instructional practices and results in improved student achievement.
- 5.2 A key to improved learning for students is continuous job-embedded learning for educators.
- 5.3 Teacher wellbeing is increased by having adequate time for preparation, planning and reporting within the regular work day.
- 5.4 When scheduling STIP time, all possible efforts should be made to ensure minimal disruption for families.
- 5.5 When scheduling STIP time for schools participating in teaching and learning initiatives which include other schools, such as Northern Distance Learning, all possible efforts should be made to minimize disruption to student learning.

6 PURPOSE OF STIP TIME AND TYPES OF ACTIVITIES



6.1 **Individual:** Individual STIP time is for teachers to engage in individual planning and learning activities, and carry out their professional duties. Individual teachers will determine how they use this time, which must be in accordance with this directive. These professional duties and activities must be conducted in the school setting, unless prior approval is given.

The types of activities may include:

- Planning and co-planning of student learning activities and lessons;
- Engaging in student assessment practices;
- Preparing of assessment tools;
- Marking and providing feedback on student assessment;
- Preparing student report cards;
- Completing Student Support Plans or Individual Education Plans;
- Completing required administrative reports;
- Organizing their classroom;
- Communicating with parents, students, community members and/or outside agency professionals working with the school;
- Engaging in professional reading;
- Developing professional growth plans; and
- Developing integrated year planning.

6.2 **Collaborative:** Collaborative STIP time is for ongoing collaborative planning and learning, such as the development of professional learning communities, for the purpose of improving student learning outcomes. Divisional education bodies will determine and coordinate how this time is used, which must be in accordance with this directive.

Promising practices for effective Collaborative STIP time:

- Involves the school and district staff in the planning of collaborative activities;
- Encourages distributed leadership practices;
- Establishes common goals and priorities, focused on student learning and instructional improvement;
- Supports achievement of professional learning goals of staff;



- Supports achievement of the School Improvement Plan;
- Puts planning and research into action;
- Focuses on collaboratively working to improve instructional practices;
- Engages in planned collaborative activities in the allotted time; and
- Applies lessons learned.

Collaborative STIP time should not be used for operational activities.

7 NUMBER OF HOURS

- 7.1 The Regulations require that education bodies establish up to 100 hours of non-instruction time in the academic year for Individual STIP time and Collaborative STIP time.
- 7.2 The Regulations also allow for a minimum number of STIP hours to be directed by the Minister. The total STIP time that must be established may not be less than 52 hours¹.

8 ALLOCATION OF HOURS

- 8.1 The hours allocated to STIP shall be:
- a. 50% for Individual STIP time; and
 - b. 50% for Collaborative STIP time.

9 SCHEDULING

- 9.1 To best meet the objectives of the initiative, the scheduling of STIP hours is determined by education bodies, in accordance with the following:
- a. A full STIP day should be equivalent to the number of instructional hours in a regular school day.

¹ The minimum of 52 hours represents the difference between the previously legislated minimum instructional hours for elementary students (997) and the current legislated instructional hours (945).



- b. *School Closures*: Scheduling of STIP hours must minimize impact on parents.
- c. *Transition Planning (start of school year)*: At least one full day, or equivalent time, of Collaborative STIP time must be scheduled at the beginning of the school year for student transition planning.
- d. *Transition Planning (end of school year)*: At least one full day, or equivalent time, of Collaborative STIP time must be scheduled within the last 60 days before the end of the school year for student transition planning.
- e. *Reporting Periods*: At least one full day, or equivalent time, of Individual STIP time must be scheduled within 7 working days before submission of marks to the principal for each reporting period.
- f. All remaining STIP time may be scheduled by education bodies, in a manner that best meets local requirements and aligns with the principles of this directive.

10 REPORTING

- 10.1 Education bodies will report on the number of Individual and Collaborative STIP hours and on the use of Collaborative STIP time in accordance with the Accountability Framework submitted to the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment.
- 10.2 NWTTA members will not be required to formally report on use of Individual STIP time.
- 10.3 NWTTA members are accountable to their supervisor on use of STIP time.

11 AUTHORITY



11.1 The authority for this directive is in section 2(3) of the *Academic Year and School Attendance Regulations* under the *Education Act*.

12 EFFECTIVE DATE

12.1 This directive takes effect on February 10, 2021.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R.J. Simpson', written over a horizontal line.

R.J. Simpson
Minister
Education, Culture and Employment