

We Need More Time! Elementary Schedules That Support the PLC Process

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Parameters for Collaborative Time

- Cannot keep the kids at home
- Cannot increase costs
- Cannot significantly impact instructional time

Making Time for Collaboration

The issue of finding time for collaboration has been addressed effectively—and often—in the professional literature and is readily available for those who are sincerely interested in exploring alternatives. The National Staff Development Council alone has addressed the issue hundreds of times in its publications, and the www.allthingsplc.info website lists over 150 schools that have created time for teachers to collaborate in ways that don't require the school to be shut down, don't cost money, and don't result in significant loss of instructional time. The following strategies do not form a comprehensive list; rather, they illustrate some of the steps schools and districts have taken to create the prerequisite time for collaboration.

Common Preparation

Build the master schedule to provide daily common preparation periods for teachers of the same course or department. Each team should then designate one day each week to engage in collaborative, rather than individual, planning.

Parallel Scheduling

Schedule common preparation time by assigning the specialists (physical education teachers, librarians, music teachers, art teachers, instructional technologists, guidance counselors, foreign language teachers, and so on) to provide lessons to students across an entire grade level at the same time each day. The team should designate one day each week for collaborative planning. Some schools build back-to-back specials classes into the master schedule on each team's designated collaborative day, thus creating an extended block of time for the team to meet. Specials teachers must also be given time to collaborate.

Adjusted Start and End Time

Gain collaborative time by starting the workday early or extending the workday one day each week. In exchange for adding time to one end of the workday, teachers get the time back on the other end of that day. For example, on Tuesdays, the entire staff of Adlai Stevenson High School in Lincolnshire, Illinois, begins their workday at 7:30 a.m. rather than the normal 7:45 a.m. start time. From 7:30 to 8:30 a.m., the entire faculty engages in collaborative team meetings. Classes, which usually begin at 8:05 a.m., are delayed until 8:30 a.m. Students who can arrange for their own transportation arrive to school then. Buses run their regular routes so that no parent is inconvenienced and deliver students to the school at 7:40 a.m. Upon their arrival they are supervised by administrative and noninstructional staff in a variety of optional activities (such as breakfast, library and computer research, open gym, study halls, and tutorials) until classes begin. To make up for the twenty-five minutes of lost instructional time, five minutes is trimmed from five of the eight fifty-minute class periods. The school day ends at the usual time (3:25 in the afternoon), and again buses run on their regular schedules. Because they began work fifteen minutes early (7:30 rather than 7:45), Stevenson teachers are free to leave fifteen minutes earlier than the normal conclusion of their workday (3:30 rather than 3:45). By making these minor adjustments to the schedule one day each week, the entire faculty is guaranteed an hour of collaborative planning without extending their workday or workweek by a single minute.

Highland Elementary School Master Schedule

Kindergarten	First Grade	Second Grade	Third Grade	Fourth Grade	Fifth Grade
Reading/Writing 8:50 – 9:50 60 minutes	Reading/Writing 8:50 – 11:25 155 minutes	Math 8:50 – 10:15 85 minutes	Specials 8:55 – 9:40 Music, Art, P.E., Library, Writing 45 minutes	Reading/Writing 8:50 – 11:15 154 minutes	Math 8:50 – 10:30 100 minutes
Specials 9:55 – 10:40 Music, Art, P.E., Library, Writing 45 Minutes	Writing 10:15 – 11:00 45 minutes	Writing 10:15 – 11:00 45 minutes	Reading/Writing 9:40 - 12:00 140 minutes	Intervention Team 9:40 – 10:20	Intervention Team 9:00 – 9:30
Reading/Writing 10:40 – 12:25 105 minutes	Specials 11:00 – 11:45 Music, Art, P.E., Library, Writing 45 minutes	Specials 11:00 – 11:45 Music, Art, P.E., Library, Writing 45 minutes	Intervention Team 11:15 – 12:00	Lunch/Recess 11:15– 12:05 50 inutes	Lunch/Recess 11:00– 11:50 50 minutes
Intervention Team 11:25 – 12:25	Intervention Team 10:20 – 11:00	Lunch/Recess 11:50 – 12:40 50 minutes	Lunch/Recess 12:00 – 12:50 50 minutes	Math 12:05 – 1:45 100 minutes	Specials 11:50 – 12:45 Music, Art, P.E., Library, Writing 55 minutes
Lunch/Recess 12:15 – 1:15 60 minutes	Reading 12:40 – 2:30 110 minutes	Reading 12:40 – 2:30 110 minutes	Math 12:50 – 2:30 100 minutes	Intervention Team 12:45 – 1:45	Reading/Writing 12:45 – 3:00 135 minutes
Math 1:15 – 2:30 75 minutes	Intervention Team 1:00 – 1:40	Intervention Team 1:00 – 1:40	Math 12:50 – 2:30 100 minutes	Science/Social Studies 1:45 – 2:15 30 minutes	Intervention Team 1:40 – 2:20
Science/Social Studies 2:30 – 3:00 30 minutes	Science/Social Studies 2:10 – 3:00 50 minutes	Science/Social Studies 2:30 – 3:00 30 minutes	Science/Social Studies 2:30 – 3:00 30 minutes	Specials 2:15 – 3:00 Music, Art, P.E., Library, Writing 45 minutes	

Intervention Team Daily Schedule

	Papallo/Casey	Whitthaus	Healy/Key	Chapman/Lee
9:00 – 9:30 am	5 th Grade Math	Planning	5 th Grade Math	
9:40 – 10:20 am	Fourth Grade	Fourth Grade	Fourth Grade	
10:20 – 11:00 am	First Grade	First Grade	First Grade	
11:15 – 12:00 pm	Third Grade	Third Grade	Third Grade	Kindergarten
12:00 – 12:30 pm	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	11:25 – 12:25
12:30 – 1:00 pm	Planning	First Grade Math	Planning	Fourth Grade Math
1:00 – 1:40 pm	Second Grade	Second Grade	Second Grade	12:45 – 1:45
1:40 – 2:20 pm	Fifth Grade	Fifth Grade	Fifth Grade	
2:25 – 3:00 pm	Planning	Planning	Planning	

Third-Grade Master Schedule for Instruction															
	Monday			Tuesday			Wednesday			Thursday			Friday		
8:00–8:15	Teacher work day begins.														
8:15–8:40	Students arrive (breakfast, morning work, take-in procedures).														
8:40–8:50	Tardy bell, morning announcements, instructional day begins														
SPECIALS	LIB	COM	GUI	MUS	PE	LIB	COM	GUI	MUS	PE	LIB	COM	GUI	ART	PE
8:50–9:20	3D			3J	3F	3J	3F	3F	3D	3J	3J	3D	3J		3F
9:25–9:55	3D						3F				3F	3D			3J
9:55–11:45	Language Arts–Social Studies														
11:45–12:15	Intervention–Enrichment														
12:20–1:15	Lunch–Recess														
1:15–2:15	Math														
2:15–3:00	Science														
3:00–3:10	Afternoon announcements and student dismissal														
3:10–3:30	Instructional staff planning														

First-Grade Master Schedule for Instruction

		Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday					
8:00–8:15	Teacher work day begins.										
8:15–8:40	Students arrive (breakfast, morning work, take-in procedures).										
8:40–8:50	Tardy bell, morning announcements, instructional day begins										
8:50–9:30	Whole-Class Language Arts										
9:30–10:00	Small-Group Guided Reading / Intervention and Enrichment										
10:00–10:30	Small-Group Guided Reading / Intervention and Enrichment										
10:30–10:50	Whole-Class Language Arts / Morning Snack										
SPECIALS		LIB	COM	GUI	MUS	PE	LIB	COM	GUI	ART	PE
10:50–11:25		1-R	1-J	1-H	1-R	1-J	1-H	1-R	1-J	1-R	1-J
11:30–12:05	Social Studies										
12:10–12:45	Lunch										
12:50–1:50	Math										
1:50–2:20	Recess										
2:25–2:55	Science										
3:00–3:10	Afternoon announcements and student dismissal										
3:10–3:30	Instructional staff planning										

Intervention and Enrichment Schedule

8:20–8:50 a.m.	Fifth grade
8:50–9:20 a.m.	Fourth grade
9:30–10:30 a.m.	First grade
10:30–11:30 a.m.	Kindergarten
11:40 a.m.–12:15 p.m.	Third grade
12:15–1:00 p.m.:	Lunch/planning
1:00–1:30 p.m.	Second grade
1:30–2:00 p.m.:	*Additional time K–5 (by request)
2:00–2:30 p.m.	Fifth grade
2:30–3:00 p.m.	Record keeping/planning

***If students in your grade level need additional intervention time, please see the principal.** (When no classes are scheduled, tutors utilize time for Remedial Record Keeping, creating new centers for Pod, and assisting students and teachers with requested tasks.)

Hi Becky,

A team from my school went to your workshop in _____. Next Thursday the building principal, two lead teachers, and the literacy specialist are getting together to create our master schedule. We're extremely nervous about being able to create a schedule that is conducive to creating Professional Learning Communities with grade level meetings, common planning times, and Intervention/enrichment time periods that fits into the teacher contract. We're a K-5 school with 214 students. We have the following stipulations:

- 8:25am Teachers get to school (kids start coming at this time too)
 - 8:40am School starts
 - Teachers need a 15 minute break "mid-morning"
 - Teachers need a 45 minute planning period five days a week
 - Teachers need a 30 minute uninterrupted/duty free lunch
 - All students need to eat lunch in the multipurpose room within a one hour time period (to permit a timely cleaning of the room to be used for PE)
- Currently half the kids eat from 12-12:30 and the other half from 12:30-1.
3:10pm School ends
3:25pm Teachers leave

I've searched www.allthingsplc.info and could not find any schools with a student population less than 250. I did email all elementary school principals with fewer than 500 students and asked for them to send me their schedules. If you have any feedback that may help us, it would be greatly appreciated.

Best

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
	PE ARTMUSCOM	PE ART LIB	PE ART LIB COM	PE MUS LIB	PE MUS LIB
8:25 - 9:00					
9:00 - 9:45					
9:55 - 10:40					
11:05 - 11:50			1M	1M	
12:00 - 1:15					
1:00 - 1:45					
1:15 - 2:00	1R	1M	1R	1R	
1:30 - 2:15		1R			
1:45 - 2:25					
2:10 - 3:00					1M
2:15 - 3:00	1M	1R		1M	1R

Master Schedule Planning Document

Schedule Priorities

- Blocks of protected time for teaching and learning in all subjects
- Intervention and enrichment block for all grade levels
- Collaborative planning for all teams
- Individual planning for all instructional staff

Requirements according to Standards of Accreditation

1. Annual instructional time required is 990 hours.
2. Seventy-five percent of time will be given to instruction in English, math, science, and history–social science.
3. Additional instructional time will be given to students each day who are not progressing in essential language arts and math skills. Enrichment will be given to students who are meeting or exceeding grade-level standards.
4. Our district recommends a minimum of 90 minutes per day of reading and 60 minutes of math instruction.
5. Students must have a minimum of 150 minutes per week of either physical education class or structured wellness activities.

Specials by Grade Level and Semester (Number per week)

	K (0)	1 (2)	2 (2)	3 (2)	4 (2)	5 (2)
P.E.		2	2	2	2	2
Library		1	1	1	1	1
Computer		1	1	1	1	1
Music		1	1	1	1	1
Art		1	1	1	1	1

Shared Classes

Combine students across two different grade levels or courses into one class for instruction. While one teacher or team instructs the students, the other team engages in collaborative work. The teams alternate instructing and collaborating to provide equity in learning time for students and teams. Some schools coordinate shared classes so older students adopt younger students and serve as literacy buddies, tutors, and mentors during shared classes.

Group Activities, Events, and Testing

Teams of teachers coordinate activities that require supervision of students rather than instructional expertise, such as watching an instructional DVD or video, conducting resource lessons, reading aloud, attending assemblies, or testing. Nonteaching staff members supervise students while teachers engage in team collaboration.

Banked Time

Over a designated period of days, extend the instructional minutes beyond the required school day. After you have banked the desired number of minutes, end the instructional day early to allow for faculty collaboration and student enrichment. For example, in a middle school, the traditional instructional day ends at 3:00 p.m., students board buses at 3:20, and the teachers' contractual day ends at 3:30. The faculty may decide to extend the instructional day until 3:10. By teaching an extra ten minutes for nine days in a row, they "bank" ninety minutes. On the tenth day, instruction stops at 1:30, and the entire faculty has collaborative team time for two hours. The students remain on campus and are engaged in clubs, enrichment activities, assemblies, and so on, sponsored by a variety of parent and community partners and cosupervised by the school's nonteaching staff.

In-Service and Faculty Meeting Time

Schedule extended time for teams to work together on staff development days and during faculty meeting time. Rather than requiring staff to attend a traditional whole-staff in-service session or sit in a faculty meeting while directives and calendar items are read aloud, shift the focus and use of these days and meetings so members of teams have extended time to learn with and from each other.

For more ideas on making time for collaboration from successful PLC schools, visit allthingsplc.info and select "Evidence of Effectiveness."

Third-Grade Master Schedule for Instruction					
	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
8:00–8:15	Teacher work day begins.				
8:15–8:40	Students arrive (breakfast, morning work, take-in procedures).				
8:40–8:50	Tardy bell, morning announcements, instructional day begins				
8:50 - 9:25					
9:25 - 9:55					
9:55–11:45					
11:45–12:15					
12:20–1:15					
1:15–2:15					
2:15–3:00					
3:00–3:10		Afternoon announcements and student dismissal			
3:10–3:30		Instructional staff planning			

Buddy Time
Collaborative Team Time

Language Arts–Social Studies

Intervention–Enrichment

Lunch–Recess

Math

Science

Master Schedule Planning Document

Schedule Priorities

- Blocks of protected time for teaching and learning in all subjects
- Intervention/enrichment block for all grade levels during the school day
- Collaborative planning for all teams
- Individual planning for all instructional staff

Requirements according to Standards of Accreditation

1. _____ of instructional time required.
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____

Specials by Grade Level and Semester (Number per week)

	Pre-K	K ()	1 ST ()	2 ND ()	3 RD ()	4 TH ()	5 TH ()	
P.E.								
Library								
Computer								
Guidance								
Art								
Music								

Friday																			
Thursday																			
Wednesday																			
Tuesday																			
Monday																			
Specials																			

