

Pullman Public Schools 2010-2011 Collaboration Time Proposal

Frequently Asked Questions

When would this proposed schedule change begin?

We would like to have this new schedule in place for this next school year, fall 2010.

What is your trial-period - one year?

The plan is to have this schedule in place indefinitely. The effectiveness of this schedule and the impact on student learning will be evaluated on an ongoing and annual basis. Regular updates on progress and impact on student achievement and learning will be provided to our families and the school board.

Why not do this work before or after the current school day?

The workday for teachers is limited by contract and state statutes. Teachers in Pullman currently provide instruction beyond the requirements of the law. While teachers work many hours beyond their contracted day, the district cannot legally require teachers to be in attendance beyond the contracted day. Extra time can be requested but not required. That extra time would have to be compensated at district expense.

Why is this work necessary?

As the state and federal government expect and demand improved student achievement which mandates specific standards that will be achieved and demonstrated by students, teachers must work together to develop instructional strategies and classroom assessments aligned with these growing expectations and standards. Interventions that will assure students are making achievement progress at all levels are now required. Current educational research and literature suggest that collaboration through so called "Professional Learning Communities" (<http://www.plcwashingtong.org/>) is key to accomplishing the increased expectations for teachers, students, and schools (DuFour & Eaker, 2008).

Will you plan ahead of time to make work meaningful?

The initial work will involve aligning curriculum, creating common assessments, and developing strategies for differentiating instruction to meet the learning needs of each student. This is further described in a model referred to as Response to Intervention (RTI). The expectation is that students at all levels will benefit and achieve in their learning. For more information on RTI, please see this link: <http://www.k12.wa.us/RTI/CorePrinciples/default.aspx>.

Is there no collaboration going on right now?

Many teachers do work collaboratively in a number of different ways; however, we wish to do this on a larger scale and in a more systemic way. Further, the expectation is that through the use of a framework mentioned in a previous answer,

Professional Learning Communities (PLCs), the collaborative work will be structured and focused on student learning. Research indicates that effective implementation of the PLC framework, which includes common time for teachers and administrators to work together, improves student learning and achievement (DuFour & Eaker, 1998, 2008), (Schmoker, 2004), (Fullan, 2005). For more on PLCs see <http://www.plc-washington.org/>.

The current daily schedule in the district's schools do not allow for common time for teachers to work together on a regular basis.

What will this do to each of our schools' schedules?

The day will begin one hour later than usual twice each month at each school including morning kindergarten. Elementary classes will be one hour shorter. Instructional time for morning kindergarten would continue to meet state requirements for instructional minutes. The daily schedule at LMS and PHS on these Fridays will be the same except each period will be shorter.

How would this schedule impact zero period at LMS and PHS?

Zero period will not take place on the one-hour late start Fridays. To make up for the lost time, 5 minutes will be added to each day that zero period does take place.

What will be the impact on instructional time and the school day and year?

The district currently provides about 10% more instructional time than is required by state law. The plan for collaboration time would utilize a portion of this excess instructional time. The remaining instructional time will still be in excess of the state requirements. This holds true for morning kindergarten as well. Therefore, the school day or year will not be extended. We have left enough flexibility in our total instructional time so that in the event of snow delays or closures, we will still meet the state requirements for instructional hours at each grade level.

The PHS schedule is already confusing.....why not do an afternoon?

The afternoon was considered; however, many teachers and students are involved in after school activities. This would make it difficult to have all teachers participate in the collaborative work. Also, an early release would mean students would have to wait until 3:30 or after to begin their practices or club activities. Also, many athletic and some academic competitions away from home require that students and coaches, many of whom are teachers, leave early to allow for the travel time. Sometimes this means leaving as early as 12:00 noon. Again, this would prevent full teacher participation in the collaborative work.

Can clubs and groups meet?

Yes, clubs and other student groups will still be able to meet after school as usual. There may also be opportunity for the student clubs to meet during the early time prior to the late start.

What will it do to Running Start schedules?

Running Start schedules will not be affected. Students who qualify, and wish to, will enroll in Running Start as they normally do.

Will the district breakfast program continue to be offered?

Yes. It will begin an hour later than usual at each of our schools.

Why Friday?

The committee explored many possibilities including other days of the week. The committee decided that Friday would work because it posed the least disruption to the school week. In addition, students and parents can be reminded about the late start throughout the week.

Will students be allowed at school during collaboration time?

We are aware there will be students whose families have to bring them to school at the usual time due to work schedules. Schools will be open to these students. We are currently working with community partners to explore how we can support our students before school on late-start days. However, having significant numbers of students minimally supervised would not be desirable. We trust families will make arrangements for students to arrive on hour later on these days whenever possible.

How will this affect childcare/supervision?

This proposal has been presented to local community childcare providers. The YMCA has also proposed a plan for providing structured learning activities and supervision at schools for children whose families have to bring them to school earlier than the hour late-start time. There would be a cost to families for this service and scholarships may be available for some families.

What about transportation?

Buses will run one hour later than usual on late-start days. We are also working with our transportation department to explore ways in which we can support the needs of students who may be in unique situations that require them to be picked up at the usual time.

Who will guide the collaborative work and who will direct it?

Each school's principal will work together with the school staff to determine the content and how the work will be accomplished. Documentation for the work completed and the impact on students' learning will be an expectation.

How will information or results from this work be shared with parents?

We will communicate information about the work and the results with our families via newsletters/email and each schools' website. Reports to the school board will be provided on a regular basis. Information will be posted on the District's website and also shared in the Pullman Community Update.