

Teacher Planning and Collaboration



Problem Overview

To do their job well, and to plan for differentiated and effective instruction, teachers need time to collaborate with their teams. This can help meet the various needs of learners with various learning styles, a growing number of non-native English speakers, students with special needs, and students coming from low socio-economic backgrounds. Increasing teacher planning and collaboration time helps to alleviate teacher burnout. A 2021 survey shows that 81% of teachers who participated expressed concerns about time for work, family, and personal responses. Research shows that compared to teachers in higher-performing countries, teachers in the United States spend more time engaging in active instruction. Teachers in the United States teach for 27 hours per week, but teachers in Singapore teach for only 17 hours per week ([Benner & Partlow, 2017](#)).

Strategy Summary

Not only will teachers benefit from being given extra time for planning, but also from having [Common Planning Time](#). Beginning teachers need to learn new skills and receive feedback from experienced teachers. Only 6% of school districts provide beginning teachers with a reduced teaching load (Center for American Progress, December 2016).

Collaborative culture is crucial in retaining teachers, particularly in high-need schools. Teachers who work in isolation without support can experience burnout and lack job satisfaction, leading to high turnover rates. As a result, schools and districts have determined that they must create an environment that fosters collaboration among teachers. Innovative solutions that allow teachers additional time to plan, collaborate, and improve their practice are essential to achieving this goal (Hargreaves, 2019).

High-performing schools have implemented various strategies to promote teacher collaboration, with one of the most effective ways being to reform and redesign schedules to provide regular and dedicated time for teacher collaboration. This collaboration time enables teachers to work together on planning lessons, analyzing data, developing common expectations for student work, discussing mutual challenges, and receiving feedback from instructional leaders. Engaging in collaborative practices allows teachers to learn from each other and build a strong professional community, increasing job satisfaction and a sense of support. This [guide](#) from the National Center on Time and Learning offers additional useful ideas on strengthening teacher collaboration.

Providing teachers with more time to plan and collaborate will support new teachers who need to be coached and supported. This will contribute to teacher retention and also will open opportunities for experienced teachers to pursue leadership roles in their schools.



Examples

Corbes and Marinsky (2004, as cited in McLaurin, et al., 2009) reported that in 2002 the state of Virginia passed a regulation that specifies that all first-year teachers must have mentors. Schools in Fairfax County launched a program called "The Great Beginning." Veteran teachers meet and collaborate with new teachers in this program. They start the summer before the new teachers begin teaching and continue through their third year in the field. Guilmette Elementary School in Lawrence, Massachusetts, implemented a new schedule in 2013 by adding more than 260 hours of instructional time to the school year and built in common planning time among grade-level teams by extending the school day. This reimagining of the school day resulted in students' English language arts and math proficiency scores improving. They now outperform students in other elementary schools in the district/

Research shows that teacher collaboration improves student academic outcomes. Students taught by collaborative teachers perform better than students taught by isolated teachers.

Sources

[To Attract Great Teachers, School Districts Must Improve their Human Capital Systems](#)

Teacher Retention: Problems and Solutions (Sidney E. McLaurin, Willis Smith and Amanda Smillie, November 2009)

[Reimagining the School Day](#)

[Teacher Collaboration Guide](#)