



MTI Handbook Review Items: Teacher Planning Time

1. Issues related to insufficient staffing. Many teachers are losing planning time on a regular basis due to insufficient staffing levels. This includes the District's failure to replace staff who are temporarily absent from work, including staff who are released to attend District-related meetings. Teachers are regularly asked and/or required to cover the classes of colleagues who are absent from work or attending other MMSD meetings. This results in those teachers losing planning time during the workday and transferring that work to after-hours, on non-contract time. This practice negatively impacts instruction and increases teacher exhaustion and burnout.
 - a. Department Chairs at the high school level are increasingly used to provide class coverage, reducing the time available for them to perform their Department Chair duties. Recent changes to the Handbook have also excluded Department Chairs, and other teachers receiving additive pay, from being compensated for class covering. This is an equity issue.
 - b. Those teachers who are already assigned overloads can experience all available planning time lost on days when they are additionally asked/required to cover classes for absent colleagues.
2. While many secondary teachers continue to be provided 2 class periods per day for planning and preparation, an increasing number are finding that prep time reduced by required meeting attendance. This is a particularly acute issue for HS teachers assigned to Freshman Academy as well as those HS teachers assigned to Pathways. Additionally, when those teachers are pulled out from class to attend meetings, class coverage responsibilities typically fall on teacher colleagues who then lose their time to plan (see #1 above).
3. Many MS teachers have also experienced a reduction in the time available for planning as more meeting attendance is required during their school day.
4. Some elementary teachers have expressed concerns over the move to "soft start times" which encourage students to arrive in classrooms prior to the start of the school day. This forces teachers to arrive before the start of their contractual workday in order to prep for the day's instruction.
5. Elementary specials teachers continue to express concerns about their course load, number of transitions, and lack of transition time between classes. These work-load concerns are escalating, causing increased stress on specials teachers, and negatively impacting instruction.
6. Teachers hold a general consensus that Monday PCT time is not valuable the way that it is currently structured and that this time would be better utilized by providing teachers the professional discretion to use this valuable "non-student" time as they deem necessary.

7. Sign Language Interpreters, for decades, have been scheduled the same as the teachers in the buildings in which they work. This is to ensure that they have appropriate time to plan, which, for them means they have to review the teacher's lesson plans and ensure that they have familiarity with the subject matter to properly interpret for the students they serve.
 - a. Section 14 of Addendum A covers Interpreters and does not address this concern for middle and high school interpreters while the elementary interpreters **are** covered by the planning time guarantee of 4.5 hours per week, in half-hour lots, during the school day to plan.
 - b. For whatever reason, the District decided to change this practice earlier this year and now provides 60 minutes per day for each interpreter. While this is similar to the elementary language, it is considerably less than what they previously had for middle and high school, where the workday is longer and the curriculum often more varied and complex.
8. Individual Planning Time for ½ of Staff Only Days. SBLT who have initiated this at their buildings have been warmly received by their staff. We would like to see this reflected in the Handbook for all schools.