



BUILDING THE OPPORTUNITY FOR MORE COLLABORATIVE TIME

As education professionals, we acknowledge and celebrate the impact of the teacher in the academic achievement of all students. Significant research has shown that one of the most important variables in improved student achievement is increased staff development – effective, well trained teachers make for effective, well prepared students.

Staff development in academic areas specifically targeted by No Child Left Behind has become increasingly important as the district works to meet expectations for ITBS and ITED scores. The use of teaching and curriculum tools developed with scientifically based research models (as is now required by No Child Left Behind), requires increased time on the part of instructional staff due to the complexity of the models and the time required to adequately test and validate such programs. Just as importantly, we have found that ‘talking about teaching’ among our colleagues and professional peers -discussing what works and what methods/strategies are having positive impact - is also a powerful tool in helping us effectively support our students in reaching their academic achievement goals.

On this section of the website you will find more information about collaborative time including:

- How collaborative time fits in with the new district CSIP goals – p.2
- Facts about how some DCSD schools are already using various models to gain collaborative time – p. 3
- Why Now – p. 4
- The impact of No Child Left Behind on the design/implementation of staff development and curriculum development – p. 5
- Success stories and testimonials from DCSD schools currently using early dismissal – p. 6
- Sample Agendas/Minutes – p. 7
- Talking Points for Parents – p. 11



COLLABORATIVE TIME AND THE DISTRICT'S COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLAN

Creating and sustaining a high performance educational environment takes both dedication and thoughtful planning. The district's Comprehensive School Improvement Plan or CSIP is a five-year planning document, featuring specific learning goals for students. The CSIP was developed with direct input from teachers, students, parents, district leadership, Board members and interested community members. There are several key issues which need to be addressed if the district is going to achieve these goals.

- **A guaranteed and viable curriculum.**
- **Challenging goals and feedback for students**
- **Parent and community involvement**
- **A safe and orderly environment**
- **Collegiality and professionalism**

You will note that all of these key issues depend on the increased involvement and commitment of district staff, especially teachers. Increased involvement means more TIME for planning, discussion, review of data, and talking about students and their individual needs. The development of a *guaranteed and viable curriculum* involves: identifying the content considered essential for all students, sequencing and organizing the essential content in such a way that students have ample opportunity to learn, and ensuring that teachers address the essential content. Providing *challenging goals and feedback for students* requires: establishing specific and challenging goals, implementing an assessment system that provides students with timely feedback and involving students in programs that increase quality experiences. Offering more opportunities for *parent and community involvement* means: coming up with more opportunities for direct communication and finding ways for parents and the community to be involved in school activities. Ensuring a *safe and orderly environment* requires: establishing school-wide rules and expectations for behavior and offering support, counseling and specialized programming. Giving more support for *collegiality and professionalism* involves: providing more opportunities for staff participation in decision-making and giving teachers the time they need to review best instructional practices and work as a team in meeting the needs of individual students as well as classrooms.

As you can see, the need for additional collaborative time for staff is well supported in the CSIP.



CURRENT MODELS WITHIN THE DAVENPORT SCHOOLS

Several district schools are already using various models to provide more opportunities for collaborative time for their staff members. Here's a quick list of schools using this model in the 2004-2005 school year:

Buchanan Elementary – Early dismissal each week on Wednesday – 2 p.m.

Monroe Elementary – Same – 1:30 pm.

Truman Elementary – Same – 1:30 p.m.

Washington Elementary – Same – 2 p.m.

JB Young Intermediate – Same – 2:19 p.m.

Wilson Elementary - Rearranged staff arrival/departure time to create block of time each day

Fillmore Elementary – Rearranged class schedule to create a block of time each day

North High School – Two hour early dismissal once per month on Wednesdays – 12:35 p.m.

Adams and Jackson Elementary also use teacher flex schedules

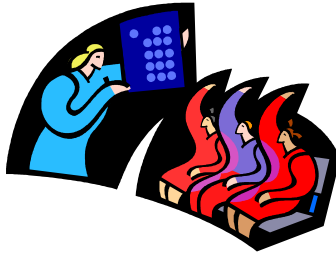
With the 2005-2006 school year, ALL district schools will be going to the one hour early dismissals on Wednesdays.



OTHER DCSD SCHOOLS REQUESTED EARLY DISMISSALS FOR 2005-2006 SCHOOL YEAR

Because of the growing need throughout the district for increased time for planning, data review and professional development, more schools at all grade levels are proposing changes to their schedules to accommodate this increased need for time. In addition to the early dismissal models, other schools adopted the balanced calendar approach currently used at Madison, Monroe and Jefferson Edison. The five intermediate schools on the SINA list have explored options to find the time to fit in the additional hours for professional development required by No Child Left Behind mandates to move themselves off the list and other elementary schools are considering the balanced calendar approach to not only build time for professional development, but to provide extra support and focus time for their students who need improvement.

This groundswell of activity sent a strong signal to district leadership – we needed to aggressively look at models that will create the opportunity for increased time for our instructional staff. With all of the requests coming in, the district reached a “critical mass”. The costs of creating all of these different schedules and making so many changes to current transportation arrangements are simply too costly to customize so many more school schedules. That is why the district eventually agreed to adopt a district-wide early dismissal schedule.



THE IMPACT OF NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND

As mentioned earlier on this site, No Child Left Behind legislation has had a significant impact on many aspects of public education. While we most frequently talk about the legislation's focus on accountability and test scores, NCLB also created some mandates regarding curriculum development and instructional practices that come into play when discussing collaborative time and professional development.

Obviously, teachers and staff need time to review individual student test scores and data. It's also important to use this data for further tracking, student guidance AND to monitor student progress with key skills on an on-going basis. Student "test talks" happening in many of our buildings are actually sharing this data directly with students – showing them their strengths and areas where they need to improve. This is in addition to regular grading, feedback, assessments and report cards.

Teachers and other instructional staff also need to time to consider teaching methods and new instructional models. NCLB requires that such reviews use a scientifically based approach. This rigorous process requires increased time on the part of staff due to the complexity of the models and the time required to adequately test and validate such programs.

Although the district has worked hard to meet the demands of NCLB, we do have schools currently on the "watch list" or "Schools in Need of Assistance" or SINA list. These schools are facing special challenges in helping their students meet the NCLB targets on ITBS/ITED. In addition to other steps they are taking to support their students, NCLB requires they spend anywhere from 20 to 40 additional hours in professional development during the coming year. This is on top of the district's current commitment, and no extra funding is provided to accommodate this need.

It's also important that staff at all of our buildings have the opportunity to sit down and discuss current teaching methods, instructional strategies, learning resources and the efforts of individual students. This time spent with peers who work with the same students can be critical for providing a well-rounded plan and environment for academic success for students.



TESTIMONIALS AND SUCCESS STORIES

“I am a guidance counselor at JB Young and would like to speak on behalf of our collaborative time. It is very beneficial to all our staff, as this is the only way to get everyone together on a consistent basis. Teaming at the intermediate level is wonderful, but at the same time tends to divide a staff due to the time constraints. There is no other way for a middle level staff to work together for the benefit of our children without this collaborative time. The benefits far outweigh any and all negatives. I strongly recommend it at all levels.”

Kay Anthony, Guidance, JB Young

“I think early outs at JB have really helped move our building forward. The benefits of this program hinge on the organization and direction of the administrative team. The time is so vital to moving initiatives forward, but you must have people that plan wisely so the time is effective. I can’t speak highly enough for it at our building – truthfully, one hour is not long enough! I appreciate the development time our building does receive.”

Melanie Wilkins, Language Arts, JB Young

“Washington Elementary has had an early dismissal program starting with the 1999-2000 school year. In terms of staff interaction, we have seen strong scores in our School Culture Survey, scoring significantly higher than both the all elementary and the all school averages on key issues such as “teachers have opportunities for dialogue and planning across grades and subjects”, “teachers work cooperatively in groups”, “teachers work together to develop and evaluate programs and projects”, and “professional development is valued by our faculty”. I believe this is directly related to the early dismissal program and the way we use that time. In addition, student scores on assessments have shown good improvement in a number of areas including phonemic awareness, fluency and comprehension – including completing closing achievement gaps with targeted groups of students.”

Sheri Schultz, Principal



AGENDAS/MINUTES

North High

In January 2004, North High School applied for a Comprehensive School Reform (CSR) Grant through Iowa Department of Education. They were awarded \$50,000 for three years to implement a reform model at the high school level. The reform design that North chose is “**High School That Works**” through *Southern Educational Regional Board* in Atlanta, Georgia. The model provides a framework of organization and coaching that is helping North change the way they run their building to encompass teacher learning teams, smaller learning communities with a focus on parental involvement. Early Release Days are one of the most important components of achieving success with this reform model. Another part of the restructuring process is having all staff participate on Focus Teams to improve, resolve, and implement target improvements within the building. All teams are interrelated and frequently team members from various teams attend each other’s meetings to support each other. North has three main targets this year: Get an Advisee/Advisor Team started, Improve Student Achievement, and get more parents involved at North High School. North’s Advisee/Advisor Program is well underway and North is working together to improve student achievement. If you want more information about North’s reform efforts, please contact Jane Petty, Principal, or Dr. Betsy Fair, Curriculum & Instruction Coordinator, at 563 388-9880.

Following are some team minutes from a recent Advisee/Advisor team meeting:

PAWS Minutes

12-8-04

2:45 p.m.-4:10 p.m.

Room 220

Present: Kim Foley-Sharp, Guy Heller, Gary Tschantz, Roger Schantz, Amy Wine, Nancy Shannon, Mary Johnson, Heather Fry, Marilyn Chernetsky
Betsy Fair & Jane Petty stopped in for discussion and to answer questions

Leaders: Kim & Guy **Recorder:** Kim **Timekeeper:** the group

Student Members: Steven Brus and Jordan Lohf have agreed to serve on our committee as student representatives.

Parent Member: Jackie Staron (mom of Sarah -12 & Shaun -10) has agreed to serve on our committee.

Kim & Guy presented the group with a timeline to work from for the rest of the school year. (Timeline is at the bottom of the minutes).

Calling Advisee parents – At least 4 members of our group have called the parents of the students on their list. Many received favorable comments back from the parents. Many parents thanked the teachers for calling to remind them about conferences. Call those parents they really do want to hear from us! It was also suggested that teachers keep a log of who they called etc.

December 15th 2004 conferences

Conferences will be held in the IMC commons area by cafeteria and the cafeteria. Teachers will be placed alphabetically with the letter **A** starting in the IMC and moving back. Student senate will still be handing out schedules in front of the IMC. Orchestra has agreed to provide music out in the cafeteria commons area. The Art Department will be holding an art show in the IMC and hopefully out in the cafeteria commons.

- **Refreshments** -The Cafeteria has graciously donated the coffee for the event. We will also have punch. Nancy Shannon has been working with Becky Pankratz of the FCS dept. Becky has agreed to let her Foods Class students make the cookies for the event. The students are bringing in favorite ethnic recipes from home. Becky might also have a few students serve the cookies for extra credit.
- **Setup** – Roger Schantz made a prototype for the teacher sign holders – Dowel rods have been ordered. Nancy Shannon is working on printing out the signs that will then be laminated. We are in the process of getting the boards needed to make the bases. The committee will meet before conferences (4:30 p.m.) to get tables and signs arranged. We also need to get the 9 folding cafeteria tables for the cafeteria commons area.
- **Data Collection** – How are we going to know how many parents show up to conferences? Jen Littig from the PD & Evaluation committee stopped in our meeting and asked if we would like them to develop a sheet for each teacher to fill out to record their number of conferences. The sheet will be placed at each teacher table. It asks the student name, parent name and the student's grade level. This will give us the baseline data needed to see if our conference numbers go up.
- **Informational Flyer** – It was decided that we need to come up with a short informational flyer explaining the PAWS program to hand out to parents at conferences. Kim will take care of this and then give it to the PR committee to publish on the web and in the school newsletter.
- **Student Survey** – Heather is putting the final touches on a survey that we will give to students on December 15th when we hand out mid terms. Please return the surveys to the box in the main office. These results will give us our baseline data for the PAWS program.

Spring 2005 PAWS Activity trial runs

We will hold trial runs of activities for the PAWS time each month beginning in January. This will help all of us to get use to format and what types of activities we utilize with our students. We will start out in January with registration & preparing for the ITEDS see the Guidance & Testing Committee notes for more specific information about their plan for registration. The PAWS program will work with the Guidance & Testing Committee to find/develop test taking

strategies to use with the students. Amy & Gary will work with Tom N. (from Guidance & Testing).

January 21st Report Card distribution – A suggestion was made we reemphasize behavior expectations for school, auditorium, activities etc. Guy will look through the handbook and come up with a few to emphasize. The group then thought this could be something that could be printed on the back of the report cards and then discussed during PAWS time as a new semester fresh start etc. We will work with the Climate and Culture committee to get this accomplished. Guy will get in touch with Esther Molyneux – Leader of Climate & Culture.

School Improvement Committee Representative: Guy Heller has volunteered to be our committee representative.

July 13-16 2005 HSTW Convention – We need a rep. to attend the national conference.

Curriculum Writing: (spring & summer) we need to break the group up to start looking at various grade level curriculums and preparing for the 2005-2006 school year. We will do this at our next meeting.

2005-2006 School Year – What we need:

Time for PAWS – It was decided that beginning with the 2005-2006 school year the PAWS program will meet **twice** a month for **28 or 32** minutes – Guy Heller will modify the bell schedule and present this to the administration for approval.

Approval for Coordinator(s) of this program – release time. This is both a building administration issue as well as one that needs to be taken to the District level to provide for adequate staffing. The PAWS committee will oversee the program, curriculum etc. The coordinator(s) will oversee the day to day operation of the program – scheduling of students, getting handbooks ready etc.

Next meeting agenda- January 5, 2005

Leaders – Kim & Guy

Recorder -

Time Keeper -

Discuss conferences successes/changes for next time

Discuss data collected

Guy report on bell schedule changes

Divide up grade levels to begin looking at curriculum/activities that we want to utilize for next year.

Begin to develop Calendar for 2005-2006.

JB YOUNG

JB Young is currently participating in a week early dismissal program. Here are examples of agendas from some of their recent meetings.

December 1, 2004

AGENDA

Technology Integration

Overview – What is technology integration (Rosanne)

Think of at least one unit/lesson that you can integrate technology into and what it would take for you to make it happen this year

History Comes alive through technology (Dave G.)

Cross-curricular applications

Power Point

Create a Learning Environment through technology (Katherine)

Use of music

Vocabulary

Student Participation

Summary and Sharing Time

AGENDA – November 11

Safe Schools Survey – (Anastasia)

Sharing by participants from the National Middle School Convention (Katherine, Melanie, Andy, Dave, Tom, Steve and Betty)

Instructional Practices (Clancy)

Curriculum and Instruction Dialogues – group discussions

TALKING POINTS FOR PARENTS COLLABORATIVE TIME DISCUSSION

- 1. Why do teachers need more time?** Research has shown the value of professional development and its direct correlation to student achievement and improved school climate. Just as with other professions and organizations, teaching staff needs to work collectively on a regular basis to learn new instructional practices and strategies. They also need a forum for discussing student issues and “best practices” – sharing what is working well in their classrooms and having an opportunity to provide on-going feedback on new programs, services, instructional materials, etc. No Child Left Behind also instituted new standards regarding the use of scientific-based models for instructional practices and strategy. These models require time for research, practice, assessment and adjustment. There’s also an increasing need for time to analyze and review student-specific data as it relates to instructional practices, student achievement and NCLB accountability targets
- 2. What are teachers going to do with this time?** Although this may vary by building based on grade level, student needs and even student demographics, schools will primarily use this collaborative time to focus on their individual school improvement plans, which are a subset of the district’s Comprehensive School Improvement Plan. Teachers may work at grade level, subject level or even across grade and subject levels on a range of curricular and instructional issues. This could mean focusing on the reading or math curriculum or discussing ways that reading and math concepts can be integrated into other classes like art and social studies. Buildings could use the time to talk about their building environment and ways to help students feel more connected and supported in school. Groups of teachers could review research or model teaching practices, getting feedback and suggestions. The time will also be used to analyze specific student data – everything from ITED and ITBS scores to other assessments, grades, attendance and disciplinary referrals – to help building staff make better identify students problems and solutions. Accountability for this time – measurable goals, progress reports, minutes from meetings, updates to parents on important achievement issues – is being built into the collaborative time schedules. This is about teachers working and learning together how to best meet student needs.
- 3. Why an early dismissal instead of a late start?** The early dismissal schedule is already a successful model at a number of other schools in our district who are currently using it. The early dismissal is an easier model to accommodate from a bus transportation standpoint and seemed to be preferred over a late start by parents. The district feels a strong need to keep the measure of providing more collaborative time for teachers budget-neutral and therefore not add hours to the teacher day. In past experience, an early dismissal is less disruptive to student routine than a late start. In addition, a group of other local school districts (Bettendorf, Muscatine and Iowa City) have successfully used an early dismissal model in recent years.

4. **Why all schools?** Teachers at all grade levels and buildings can benefit from additional time for working together on instructional strategies and solutions for meeting student needs. Currently, schools representing all grade levels in our district participate in schedules that create more collaborative time (two high schools, one intermediate and five elementary schools). Several more schools were requesting the early dismissal schedule for next school year. This created a “critical mass” in terms of the complexity of the coordination of bus transportation and the 101 routes currently used to transport students. The district felt compelled to minimize the significantly increased costs of providing additional bus routes/driver hours that would have resulted if not all 31 schools were on the same dismissal schedule.

5. **Why one hour a week? Why not another configuration once a month or every other week?** Schools need more than just two hours a month for this type of teaming; once a month doesn’t provide the same continuity between collaborative sessions. Feedback from parents has also indicated that once a month is easier to forget or lose track of in comparison to a set weekly schedule. The schools in the district who currently use this one hour per week model are also very supportive of this schedule, as are the parents at these buildings



QUESTIONS/ISSUES STILL UNDER DISCUSSION

1. What impact will this have on transportation schedules and transportation costs?

If the model is practiced the same district-wide (one hour early dismissal the same day per week), transportation schedules and costs would remain neutral. It would be similar to the one-hour early dismissals we occasionally have in the district now. If different models are implemented, or if some schools go every week and others just once a month for example, there would be adjustments to schedules and bus routes. This would lead to increases in costs. This issue can become very complicated in that bus routes are interdependent (the same bus transports students to more than one school) and include bus coverage for parochial schools in Davenport as well as the Davenport Community Schools

2. What impact will this have on sports and other extra-curricular activities/practices, etc.?

The expectation is that all instructional staff would be expected to attend these sessions. In that many of our sports teams/performing groups, etc. have coaching staff that are not teachers and/or are on supplemental contracts, this may mean that those coaches can coordinate team/group activity during the early dismissals. It might also be possible for students to participate in supervised study groups (working on homework, etc.) until the coaching staff is available. This is how it is currently handled at JB Young, for example.

3. Will schools be expected to “bank” this one-hour time slot each week? In other words, will schools be required to go 15 minutes longer on the other four days of the week?

Because we already exceed the required number of instructional hours in the district, this decision could be left up to individual schools to determine. At this point, most of our schools already have unique “instructional days” – with staggered start and end times, passing time, lunch periods, etc.

4. Who plans the agenda for these collaborative time sessions?

It is hoped that the sessions would be planned with input from the entire instructional staff – looking at specific building issues and student needs. Formal agendas, meeting

documentation and meaningful discussion is critical to the success and sustainability of the program. Buildings, however, will have flexibility regarding agenda items and how the time is used. At this time, some buildings meet as grade level teams some weeks, full staff other weeks and by subject matter or special topic at other times.

5. What about facilitation? Are these meetings going to be led by building principals?

Because these sessions are expected to be team focused, it is strongly encouraged that building staff participate in facilitation – actively working to plan agendas and conduct meetings, as well as provide training and presentations. This may require some facilitation training and the district will look into providing resources to do this.

6. How will this affect afterschool programming?

Given the importance of our afterschool activities through the 21st Century Stepping Stones and Discovery Junction programs, we are working to find ways to continue to integrate these programs with an early dismissal model. Although continued funding for these programs is questionable for the coming year, we are looking for options that would allow us not only to continue to current programs but to perhaps expand program offerings so that more schools could be involved – in part helping with the possible childcare issues an early dismissal model might create for parents.

7. How will this affect childcare arrangements for parents?

At the earliest, we would not implement this model until next school year – 2005/2006. We are hoping to make a decision well before the end of this school year – preferably before the end of April. This would allow families who may need to make different child care arrangements several months to make those changes. It is hoped the predictability of the early dismissal schedule would make these changes easier. The district is also looking towards other alternatives for providing on-site afterschool activities/childcare as an option at some schools – perhaps by working with other partners in the community.

8. Is the district going to take some of this time for inservice or other programs?

This time is being set aside exclusively for building staff to work collaboratively as teams and to focus on the student achievement of the specific students within their school.

9. What about “traveling” or shared staff?

This issue may need to be decided at the building level. Consistency of participation is very key in this process, so it is hoped that traveling or shared staff would be involved in collaborative time sessions at just one school – however the planning team realizes that there needs to be flexibility with this issue.

FEEDBACK

The Collaborative Time Planning team is interested in your feedback on this issue. If you have concerns, comments, suggestions, etc., please share them by e-mailing your comments to:

feedback@davenportschools.org

You can also reach Feedback via the district website – just click on the “Email Us” link on the Homepage.

Thank you.