FAQ for DA School Additional Planning Time (last updated 9.10.21)

Which teachers and paraeducators are required to participate in the administrator-directed planning meetings and are eligible to work the voluntary teacher-directed planning?

All classroom teachers should participate. Any paraeducator who supports student learning and classrooms should participate.

Any non-classroom teachers who support students and classrooms are eligible to participate.

When will the administrator-directed planning sessions and voluntary teacher-directed planning begin?

The two, mandatory administrator-directed planning days per week will begin on Monday, Oct. 18. However, schools may choose to begin the voluntary teacher-directed planning immediately.

Are all classroom teachers and instructional paraeducators required to participate in the administrator-directed planning sessions?

Yes, two days each week, classroom teachers and instructional paraeducators will be scheduled for a mandatory additional hour beyond their assigned duty day to participate in administrator-directed planning. They will receive payment for these hours at their regular rate of pay.

Why are these weekly administrator-directed planning sessions taking place?

Classroom teachers, instructional paraeducators and administrators need time to work together to determine the best strategies to boost students’ skills and target areas where students are struggling.

Will these administrator-directed planning meetings be held on campus and what happens if someone is unable to attend in-person?

Yes, these two, one-hour planning sessions with administrators will take place on campus. Classroom teachers and instructional paraeducators who have been directed to isolate or quarantine, will be permitted to participate remotely. Principals will also have flexibility to work around employees’ schedules and emergencies as well as allowing remote participation on a case-by-case basis.

Are classroom teachers and instructional paraeducators required to work up to three additional hours of teacher-directed planning each week?

No, this is totally voluntary. Classroom and instructional paraeducators are eligible to work up to three additional hours of teacher-directed planning per week. However, they are not required to work these hours. These three hours each week are available to help them accomplish their individual work and preparation for instruction while also making sure they are fairly compensated. If they choose to work these voluntary hours, they will receive payment at their regular rate of pay.
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Do these voluntary planning hours need to be worked at school and how should these hours be spent?

*These hours do not need to be worked while on campus. This initiative is meant to provide extra compensation to classroom teachers and instructional paraeducators for planning time to help them accomplish the enormous challenge of teaching at a DA school. They have autonomy to use this additional, voluntary time as they see fit to complete their work or prepare for upcoming lessons.*

What funding is being used to compensate teachers for these extra hours of planning (both the required administrator-directed and voluntary teacher-directed planning)?

*Polk County Public Schools will use money available from the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund (ESSER) – which is federal funding related to pandemic relief. As a result, this will not impact an individual school’s operating budget.*

Are all teachers required to turn in their lesson plans a week in advance?

*Yes, teachers must submit their lesson plans one week in advance for administrator review. Principals and assistant principals will be able to see how lessons are aligning with standards-based instruction.*