

SCHOOL DISTRICT OF WEST ALLIS-WEST MILWAUKEE, ET AL.
WEST ALLIS-WEST MILWAUKEE EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

JOINT MEMORANDUM

Memo To: All Teachers and Administrators
From: WA-WM District Bargaining Team
WA-WM Education Association Bargaining Team
Re: **A Response to Frequently Asked Questions**
Date: September 1, 2005

In order to respond to various questions that have been asked during previous years and to clarify some language in the negotiated agreement, we have co-authored this joint memorandum. We ask that teachers place this memo with their contracts as a source of reference.

1. How many teaching days are required by DPI?

State standards for days and hours of instruction are codified in the rules for implementing PI 8.01. "Each school district board shall schedule at least 180 school days annually. A maximum of 5 days may be counted to meet this requirement if they are used for parent conferences or if school is closed by the school district administrator because of inclement weather. The 180 days requirement may be reduced for any days during which the state superintendent determines that school is not held or educational standards are not maintained as the result of a strike by school district employees."

2. What are DPI's standards relative to instructional time?

By statute, "Each school district board shall annually schedule and hold at least 437 hours of direct pupil instruction in kindergarten, at least 1,050 hours of direct pupil instruction in grades 1 through 6, and at least 1,137 hours of direct pupil instruction in grades 7 through 12. The school hours are computed as the period from the start to the close of each pupil's daily instructional schedule. Scheduled hours under this subdivision include recess and time for pupils to transfer between classes but do not include the lunch period. No more than 30 minutes per day may be counted for recess. In computing the minimum number of instructional hours under this subdivision, days and parts of days on which parent and teacher conferences are held, staff development or inservice programs are held, schools are closed for inclement weather, or when classes are not held may not be counted."

3. ***Do we have more student contact minutes than are required by DPI?***

DPI does not use “minutes” when setting standards related to instructional time. DPI requirements are written in terms of hours per academic year to accommodate statewide variations in school calendars and length of teaching day. Language in the negotiated agreement references Teaching Schedules in minutes. DPI’s recommendations are for the minimum recommended time of instruction.

4. ***Why do other districts have fewer student contact minutes in the day than we do?***

Although all school districts must comply with state school district standards, individual school calendars are negotiated through the bargaining process. Variations in length of teaching day, scheduling days of instruction, vacation/holiday breaks, conference days, etc., are individually negotiated at each district.

5. ***Why did an extra half hour get added to HS conference time?***

The high school conference schedule was adjusted to provide equity across the District for teacher time worked and the time earned that was applied to the compensation day negotiated in the last contract agreement. This adjustment has the additional benefit of providing increased opportunities for parents to come in for parent/teacher conferences.

6. ***Isn’t a “snow day” built into the calendar? (Also see #1)***

No, but DPI has a protocol that accommodates interruptions to the established school calendar, i.e., snow days, operational emergencies such as chemical leaks, loss of power, loss of heat, etc..

The procedure involves an application from the District for special consideration based upon the natural event/emergency that precipitated the closing of school. Article XXV (J) [pg. 36] of the negotiated agreement explains the provisions for snow or other emergencies.

7. ***How are the two extra days that were bargained into the contract when we went from 190 to 192 days used?***

A change from 190 to 192 teaching days was first implemented as an outcome of negotiating the 1995-96 school calendar. In the month of January, one teacher workday and one site staff development were added. The individual teacher contract is written for 192 days of work. (Article XXV, A [pg. 35])

8. **Are Staff Development Days mandated by DPI? NCLB? If so, how many?**

Districts are required to implement mandates set by the state and the federal government so that they can receive funding. Staff development is required so that mandates can be met. Staff development days, record keeping days, holidays/breaks, and teacher work days, etc., are negotiated at the time the school calendar is addressed during bargaining.

9. **What are important dates when things must be turned in to the District (course approval, MA approval, license renewal, official transcripts for upgrade, unit verification sheets.)?**

IMPORTANT DATES:

- **Individual course approval (neon green): Must be submitted to Human Resources at least 2 weeks prior to REGISTERING for course.**
- **MA program approval (yellow): Must be submitted to Human Resources and reviewed PRIOR TO enrollment in a program of study to assure that the MA program meets district requirements.**
- **License Renewal: Submit all information to the DPI prior to the June 30th expiration date of current licensure. Copy of renewed license must be submitted to HR by September 1st or the teacher is subject to immediate termination. Questions should be directed to the Human Resources Department 604-3060.**
- **Unit verification sheets for the purpose of advancement into the next block on the salary schedule: Completed sheets (signed & dated) of proof of advancement into next block are due in Human Resources by January 25th. If you haven't completed your verification form as of this date, you may send it in by September 25th for advancement in that same teaching year. Do not attach any artifacts. Additional questions regarding applying for and earning units should be directed to your Instructional Principal or Coordinator.**
- **Early Retirement: Notify Superintendent in writing by February 1st of the preceding school year (Article XXVII, A; pg.19). Questions should be directed to the Secretary to the Superintendent (604-3005).**
- **Regular Retirement: Notify Superintendent in writing by May 15th of the current school year (Article XXVI, B; pg.17). Questions should be directed to the Secretary to the Superintendent (604-3005).**
- **Official transcriptions (for upgrade): Due in Human Resources by September 25th. Reconciliation occurs on a November payroll check. Questions should be directed to the Human Resources Department 604-3060.**

PLEASE NOTE: MEETING ANY OF THE ABOVE STATED DEADLINES IS THE EDUCATOR'S RESPONSIBILITY

10. What do I do to apply for medical leave or leave under the Family Medical Leave Acts? What information must I provide to the District when I am planning to return from a period of extended medical leave?

- **To apply request the related/required application forms from the Secretary to the Director of Human Resources (604-3060).**
- **When you are ready to return, provide a letter of release from physician indicating your fitness to return to duty.**
- **Contact benefits and/or payroll, if necessary to re-enroll or change information.**

11. How is the sick leave calculation determined for an approved leave of absence?

When an employee is approved for a leave of absence, the Business Office first reviews the employee's sick leave balance to determine how long the employee is eligible to continue receiving pay. The Business Office presumes the employee wants to apply all available sick days to the leave, unless otherwise notified.

The Business Office must then determine the number of days earned for the current school year. To do that, the Business Office prorates the number of days worked to a full teaching contract. This percentage is then applied to the ten sick days to determine the number of sick days earned for that school year. The carryover balance of sick leave days at the beginning of the year and the actual earned days for the current year are then totaled. This is done on a Contract Balance Worksheet. The total number of sick days is then paid out to the employee before the leave is converted to an unpaid leave. This is done to comply with the contract language that requires that unearned sick leave be deducted from the last salary payment.

12. What is the process for Master program approval?

The procedures for requesting approval of a Masters Degree program for the purpose of advancement on the salary schedule is unchanged. The required forms for making application for MA Program approval are available in the Department of Human Resources. Requests, approvals/denials must be completed prior to taking the first class in an MA program. The request for MA program approval form has been reformatted (now printed on neon green paper) for clarity.

13. Are mentor teachers paid by the District for being mentors? What compensation do mentors receive?

Mentor teachers earn units for their service as coaches to initial educators during the school year. Mentors are invited to join their Mentee in eight hours of August pre-service activities. Mentors are compensated at the curriculum rate for time spent with their Mentee during these pre-service days. If you are interested in becoming a Mentor contact Human Resources.

14. ***What is the protocol/practice for calculating prep time, travel time, parent-teacher conference time for teachers who are assigned to teach at multiple locations?***

Traveling teachers receive at least 15 minutes of travel time to go from one building to another. Building principals schedule the instructional time that the teacher is assigned to teach. Whenever possible, every attempt is made to align a prep prior to or after the travel. If a teacher's time (combination of travel and teaching) is beyond the contractual minutes, additional pay is given. Teachers should apportion their conference time based upon their assigned time in each location. Teachers are responsible for being accessible to parents through phone conference or alternately scheduled meeting if the fixed conference schedule can not be reconciled to accommodate the parent and teacher's needs.

15. ***Do faculty meetings have to be held on Mondays after school?***

Each building has two faculty meetings per month held on the 2nd and 4th Mondays for one hour. If this meeting is cancelled due to an emergency, snow, holiday, etc., the faculty meeting will be rescheduled for Tuesday of that week. If that day should be unavailable, the meeting will be rescheduled on the next available date selected by the building administrator and staff.

16. ***Do other scheduled meetings (i.e., District/Department/Grade Level) have to be held on Mondays after school?***

The District department meeting for elementary staff may be an all-District meeting held at one site, a Pupil Services meeting (Special Education meeting), a meeting between buildings, or meetings scheduled simultaneously at various sites to discuss District initiatives and/or grade level sharing. For elementary staff, these meetings are usually held on the third Monday of the month for one hour. However, the days that these meetings are held may vary due to the fact that there aren't enough administrators to oversee each department and attend meetings on the same day. Scheduling these meetings will vary depending on the District Coordinator's availability. These meetings will be one hour in length. Elementary teachers attend three total meetings per month after the school day.

Building/secondary department meetings are usually subject-specific and held at the individual sites chaired by a Coordinator/Department Head. These meetings will be held before school, after school, or at a time mutually agreed upon by staff, building administrator, and/or administrative team with department members and based upon the District Coordinator's availability. These meetings are also one hour in length. Secondary teachers attend four total meetings per month after the school day.

17. Do coaches and advisors have to attend faculty and department meetings?

Yes, all coaches and advisors must attend these meetings unless there is a scheduled game, performance, or event at this time. If these meetings are on a day when practice would normally be held, arrangements should be made for athletes to study during this time. These arrangements are to be made at the building site with principal and Athletic Director input. Due to daylight savings time, there may be an exception to this required attendance for one or two days in late October (for outdoor sports).

18. What should a teacher do if a scheduled meeting conflicts with a graduate class?

Teachers who are enrolled in pre-approved courses shall automatically be excused from faculty meetings which would conflict with attendance at the course. Teachers who miss faculty meetings and District department meetings for that reason shall contact their administrator prior to the meeting. It is the teacher's responsibility to find out what they missed as a result of their absence, and to complete any activities/tasks that were assigned during the missed meeting time (Article IV, D; p.4).

19. Can the District require me to meet with an administrator or a parent during my prep time?

Yes, because that is an example of one of the duties that can be performed during preparation periods. To the extent possible, meetings during prep time will be scheduled during a mutually agreed upon time within a reasonable period of the request.

20. Can IEP meetings be scheduled during my prep time?

Yes, because meeting with teachers, administrators, resource people, students, and parents are one of the duties that can be performed during preparation periods.

21. **What kind of support is provided to teachers at the elementary level who are teaching split-level classes? Are there any resources available?**

Each year instructional services has set up staff development so that teachers can meet who have split classes and share ways in which they address meeting the benchmarks for each grade level. The elementary coordinator has also provided strategies on differentiation to work with split level classes using research based and practical applications at these workshop sessions. If resources are a concern, please work through your instructional coordinator who will be assigned to your building.

22. **Why do elementary teachers in grades 3-6 have to teach a physical education class? Why isn't this class taught by a PE teacher?**

Physical education instruction at the K-6 level can be taught by or be under the direction of a licensed PE teacher. Within the framework of DPI, the District establishes guidelines for PE instruction. It is recommended that PE classes be taught three times weekly. At least one physical education class per week shall be taught by a PE teacher.

23. **What is a teacher's liability for student safety?**

There is no personal liability unless the teacher acts outside the course of normal instruction.

24. **Does the District follow DPI guidelines with respect to special education staff members & student caseloads?**

The District makes every effort to comply with DPI guidelines relative teacher: child ratios in special education. A number of factors including age of students, disability areas being serviced, severity of disabilities, constellation of support service available to students, IEP requirements, related service needs, etc. There are no absolute, fixed counts within the DPI requirements. Districts are responsible for submitting an annual plan of service for special education, that plan is reviewed and subsequently approved or disapproved at the State level. The WAWM plan meets with State approval.

25. **How is comp time handled in our District? Is it different at each building or is there a uniform policy in place?**

Pupil services staff and some special education teachers may earn compensatory time as designated in Article XXIII (paragraphs H, I and J; pg.30) of the negotiated agreement. Concerns or questions about this aspect of the contract should be brought to the attention of your Building Rep.

26. Please review current adjustments in the District's administrative staffing providing background information updates regarding these positions?

Elementary schools received another grant to pay for additional "program" support at the elementary level; aligns directly with the after-school research program to provide support in math and reading. Elementary Coordinators/Program Support Teachers include Tracy Fischer-Tubbs, Dawn Van Aacken, Mary Gottinger, & Kerry Duersteler, along with the principals at Walker, Longfellow, & Madison who will double as educational support persons. These coordinators will spend approximately 2 days per week in each school. Teachers who will be providing leadership in these instructional support roles will be in non-evaluative positions.

Deb Beyer will move to the 50/50 position between the two middle schools. Ron Simonis will remain at Hale & Jerry Braun will move to Central. All three will have the title of "Instructional Coordinating Principal." Kathy MacDonald, Jack Padek, Joan Delaney, and Marge Bozoian will remain Directing Principals of each building. Any administrative position can be evaluative and be a part of the teacher evaluation process; more accountability will be created because of people being right at the site, but placing instructional support directly at the site where teaching and the teaching process occurs should be viewed as both partnership and support.

Wright's administrative staff was reduced by one assistant principal; West Milwaukee's assistant principal will have additional assignments, allowing us to buy back some additional FTEs.

There are 3 new principals at the elementary level & one new assistant principal at Hale, all filling retirements and one job change.

Pupil Services will provide additional support through a multi-categorical model, incorporating psychologists, social workers, & guidance counselors; there will be an adjusted delivery system. Several schools will have someone who is dedicated to working with those who service special needs students.

The Community Services Grant Writing position (Marge Bozoian's old position) will be filled this year out of the Community Service budget. This position was never filled last year.

The resignation of Dan Hardwick lead to the hiring of Recreation Department supervisor; this will be a 50% position, reduced from a full-time position and funded out of the Recreation budget.

The former athletic director's position has been combined with a recreation department position; 50% of the funding for this is out of Fund 10 (school fund) & 50% comes out of the recreation fund; the hours for this position will be from noon to 9pm. [from Superintendent's report to Labor Management, minutes: August 18, 2005]

