

## Proposal for Amendments to Level 5 School Turnaround Plans

Dever Elementary School

May 17, 2016

### **We propose the following change to the Dever Elementary School turnaround plan:**

We propose to modify the 2016-17 school calendar in order to incorporate more time for weekly staff professional development and collaborative planning. This entails the following changes to the turnaround plan: 1) the addition of a weekly early release for students that would be used for professional development for teachers and 2) expansion of the yearlong calendar (to a total of 186 instructional days) in order to ensure we are meeting goals for expanded learning time. The proposed calendar will continue to provide students with 20 percent more instructional time than their peers in the district while maintaining a 9-hour workday for teachers as set forth in the working conditions of the turnaround plan.

This revised calendar is in response to teacher and leader feedback and site visit data indicating that there is a need for more frequent staff professional development and collaborative planning in order to maximize the effectiveness of instructional time. This change is also intended to address the Measurable Annual Goal (MAG) of Narrowing Proficiency Gaps in ELA and Math for All Students. Dever did not meet its 2015 Composite Performance Index (CPI) targets for this MAG and extended time for staff professional development will be used to build staff capacity to plan and deliver rigorous, data-driven instruction in order to improve all students' proficiency rates and use allocated time well.

A weekly early release for professional development will allow for more frequent and in-depth staff professional development and collaborative planning and continued alignment with the working conditions set forth in the turnaround plan. This model of weekly professional development has proven effective in other Blueprint partner schools and in other Level 5 schools. Professional development topics will include: supporting English Language Learners, differentiating instruction, checking for understanding, increasing rigor, and using data to improve instruction. This time will also allow for vertical planning across grade-levels.

The proposed calendar includes:

- 1) 186 instructional days and 5 make-up days, for a total of 1368 hours. Students' day would be 7:30am-3:30pm four days per week 7:30am-12:30pm one day per week. Teachers' work day would continue to be 7:15am-4:15pm, Monday through Friday. This change was approved by the School Site Council, which includes teacher and parent representatives.
- 2) Early release days for students will allow for weekly 3-hour sessions for faculty meetings, professional development, and collaborative planning during teachers' contracted work day. Blueprint will work with BPS to ensure bus transportation on the early release days. An after-school program at the nearby Boys & Girls Club is available to families.

- 3) 200 hours of professional development for new teachers and 188 hours for returning teachers, an increase of 56 hours in professional development time over the 2015-16 school year. This includes 10 full days of professional development in the summer for new teachers and 8 days for returning teachers as well as 40 weekly 3-hour sessions after-school.
- 4) Students in Grades 1-5 will start August 30th, 6 days before Boston Public Schools (Pre-K and K will start September 12<sup>th</sup> with the rest of the district). This will provide more time upfront to set expectations and strengthen school culture.
- 5) Whenever possible, the calendar for 2016-17 is synched with the district's calendar. This decision is based on attendance data and feedback from families.

Please see the attached calendar for more details.

**The existing language/content in the turnaround plan about this issue says:**

The Dever Level 5 turnaround plan states that "Using the authorities provided in statute for chronically underperforming schools, Blueprint will redesign Dever's day, week, and year to include additional time for student learning. Students will be provided with up to 185 days of instruction. Blueprint will replicate the conditions established in our successful past turnaround partnerships, which include increasing instructional time by at least 20 percent over what students typically receive in Boston Public Schools' elementary schools... In School Year 2014-15, Blueprint will redesign the daily schedule such that students' school day will begin at 7:30 a.m. and end at 3:30 p.m." (Page 24, Priority Area 2, Strategy 5).

The proposed change to the turnaround plan would amend this section to state: In School Year 2016-17, Blueprint will redesign the daily schedule such that students' school day will begin at 7:30 a.m. and end at 3:30 p.m. four days per week and 12:30pm one day per week. This weekly early release day will be used to incorporate more time for staff professional development and collaborative planning in topics such as supporting English Language Learners, differentiating instruction, checking for understanding, increasing rigor, and using data to improve instruction. The early release time was set at 12:30pm to accommodate BPS transportation availability. To accommodate this early release time and maintain the requisite hours for our extended learning time goals, we propose expanding the academic calendar to 186 days. This change was approved by the School Site Council, which includes teacher and parent representatives.

Integrating additional teacher professional development into the weekly schedule also aligns with the professional working conditions agreed upon as part of the collective bargaining agreement and stated in the turnaround plan. Specifically, the turnaround plan states that: "Teachers will work up to 210 days during the course of each year, allowing for professional development and planning prior to the start of the school year and during the school year. The teacher schedule will be nine hours per day with a maximum of 45 hours per week." (Page 23, Priority Area 2, Strategy 3).