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| DefinitionTo build a strong multi-tiered system of support, it is necessary for schools and districts to prioritize and allocate time to support all educators and students. Effective tiered schedules include adequate time for core instruction, assessments, intervention time, team meetings, and planning. This resource is intended to provide administrators with guidance when developing a master schedule that supports a tiered system of instruction and support, inclusive of Tier 1 core instruction and common planning time. The resource includes two sections. The first examines student scheduling considerations and focuses on Tier I core instruction and time for supplemental intervention and enrichment. The second section examines teacher scheduling considerations, including common planning time.Guiding principlesWhen creating a master schedule to support all students and educators, the following principles are critical to guide the work. An effective master schedule:* supports student achievement and equity, providing supplemental support for students academically, behaviorally, socially and emotionally when they need it.
* ensures that all students have access to Tier 1 inclusive instruction as well as advanced coursework.
* allows students to move seamlessly out and into Tiers 2 and 3 interventions/supports, as appropriate.
* supports teacher common planning time, collaboration, and consultation.
* is inclusive, transparent, and collaborative.

Common challengesThere are numerous barriers that prevent the development of master schedules that provide adequate time for tiered scheduling for students as well as common planning for educators. Hanover Research (2014) argues that the most common challenges include building consensus among stakeholders and ensuring adequate common planning and professional development time. You can address these barriers through shared responsibility for schedule development and using the resources and tips outlined in this guidance to ensure adequate time for teachers to collaborate, support evidence-based decision making, and grow professionally. Getting Started

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| SECTION 1: Student Schedules |

When scheduling for a tiered system of instruction it is recommended that there are dedicated intervention and/or enrichment blocks for all students that are provided by qualified personnel, including classroom teachers and special educators, Title 1 educators, English language learner educators, etc. For students in need of additional support in a targeted area, the intervention block is an opportunity to review, relearn and master the skills in that area. For students who have demonstrated proficiency in the curriculum being taught in their classrooms, or who need an additional level of challenge, the enrichment block provides an opportunity to develop a deeper understanding of key concepts and to apply and integrate learning from core content. Districts need to design a schedule to provide every student with what they need, when they need it. In this section, this block will be referred to as the What I Need, or WIN block, because its placement in the schedule ensures that every student is able to access the targeted support they need while also accessing Tier I instruction in inclusive classrooms. No schedule is perfect, but there are numerous models that provide examples for how to schedule Tier II and Tier III intervention in addition to providing all students with access to Tier I instruction. Keep in mind it may take a few years to develop an ideal schedule for your school. All schedules need to be reviewed annually and revised as needed. To build shared responsibility, administrators are encouraged to collaborate with educators, families and students around which schedules best support all stakeholders.Elementary Student SchedulesWhile there are different ways to approach creating a schedule that supports a tiered system of instruction, the first step should be to determine which model will best suit your school and staff. When examining the WIN blocks below, consider which approach would be more advantageous to your school.**Re-Grouping Approach**: In this model all of the classes in each grade level are combined for the intervention and enrichment blocks allowing for a more discrete grouping of students and a more varied range of enrichment opportunities. The students move to different locations around the school and receive intervention/support or enrichment services from the most qualified school personnel including their classroom teachers. **Centers Approach**: In this approach, all students receive intervention/enrichment within their own classroom. Transition time is eliminated which allows for more time on learning and students are able to stay focused and are less distracted. This model encourages teachers to share instructional practices and allows for services for students with disabilities to be provided within the general education environment.To view elementary schedules that include WIN time to support intervention and enrichment, [view sample schedules](https://www.doe.mass.edu/sfss/matoolsforschools/sample-student-schedules.docx) here or access [Scheduling Guidance](https://mtss.madison.k12.wi.us/files/mtss/Sheduling-Guidance2016-17_FINAL.pdf) from the Madison Metropolitan School District. |

Secondary Student Schedules

Oftentimes, secondary students have multiple teachers which prevents educators from cultivating connections with students and each other. As you create a master schedule for educators, consider creating instructional cohorts, or teams of students, who are educated by a team of educators. Research suggests that “as a result of improved self-concept and sense of school membership, students show increases in academic achievement, conduct, and peer relationships” when instructional cohorts are used (Hanover Research, 2015).

[View sample schedules](https://ese-resources-clearinghouse.squarespace.com/s/Sample-Student-Schedules.docx) that incorporate a block for intervention and enrichment (i.e, What I Need, or WIN block) at the secondary level. Enrichment opportunities at the secondary level may include such options as independent study, virtual coursework, a service-learning program, advistory, or entrepreneurship opportunities, which when used in partnership with instructional cohorts, create numerous opportunities for educator and student collaboration.

You will note that schedules have slightly different blocks of time for WIN block. This is because there is no agreement in the research as to a definitive amount of time necessary to provide intervention. All sample schedules, however, fall within recommended ranges from the *Self-Study Guide for Implementing High School Academic Interventions*, published by the Institute for Education Sciences (2016).

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| SECTION 2: Teacher Schedules |

Common planning time among educators is a crucial element in the success of a multi-tiered system. Planning time helps improve instruction by allowing teachers to share best practices, examine data, discuss students' work, engage in instructional related PD, and plan curriculum and lessons together. In order for common planning to contribute meaningfully to student outcomes, sufficient time should be built into the schedule. As you think about your teacher schedules, reflect on and discuss the following questions.

* Do you have sufficient time for shared planning? Is it enough time?
* If there is common planning, what types of activities occur during these meetings?
* How is common planning time supported to ensure it is implemented well and rigorously?

To help to define “sufficient time,” consider the following guidance from the National Center for Time on Learning (2014). For each of the following, check whether your school schedule presently allows for:

* 60 min/week for grade level meetings (minimum)
* 60 min/week for data analysis (minimum)
* Opportunities for regular content level team meetings
* Partner staff to regularly participate in teacher meetings discussing student progress
* Student support services staff to regularly participate in teacher meetings discussing student progress
* Specialty/elective teachers to regularly participate in teacher meetings discussing student progress
* Opportunities for additional informal/non-mandatory grade level meetings during common planning/prep time
* Opportunities for additional informal/non-mandatory content level meetings during common planning/prep time
* Additional collaboration time beyond regularly scheduled meetings, such as peer-observations, coaching, full faculty PD, etc

If the answer to the prompts above is, “yes,” you’re in good shape for teacher common planning time. If many of your answers are “not yet,” consider creating action plans around schedule adoption that would allow for such critical professional activities.

ERS (2018) offers some concrete ways to revise an existing schedule to ensure more common planning time. Their suggestions include stacking two blocks of planning time together, reduce planning time on a few days to increase time on another day, reorganizing time that teachers have at the beginning and end of the day into more team planning time, scheduling non-instructional blocks like recess and lunch next to planning time, creating larger specials classes so that fewer specials classes can cover more core teachers’ time, and creating WIN blocks. You can view specific guidance, as well as sample master teacher schedules by accessing their resource [Finding Time for Collaborative Planning](https://www.erstrategies.org/cms/files/3876-finding-time-for-collaborative-planning.pdf).

Additionally, the National Council for Learning Disabilities & Understood (2019) offers additional tips for finding common planning time. They encourage leaders to look into scheduling regular (e.g., weekly/monthly) early dismissal or late-start days for teacher collaboration and to create communication systems so that faculty meetings do not have to be used for “housekeeping” items.

Additional resources

* The [Inclusive Schools Network](https://inclusiveschools.org/scheduling-for-success-common-planning-time/) has a resource, Scheduling for Success: Common Planning Time that provides tips to integrate and support common planning into a master schedule.
* Access the Checklist for [Maximizing the Effectiveness of Time](https://www.timeandlearning.org/school-resources/checklist-maximizing-effectiveness-time) from National Time on Learning (2014).

Extension activities

* The National Time on Learning (2014) project has a rubric to help measure the effectiveness of teacher collaboration and common planning time. Access the [Framework for Assessing Teacher Collaboration](https://www.timeandlearning.org/sites/default/files/resources/assessing_teacher_collaboration_at_your_school_framework.pdf) and use this to determine how closely your teacher schedule and collaboration time aligns to best practices in the research.
* [This resource](http://www.doe.mass.edu/edeval/guidebook/8b-masterschedreview.pdf), from Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, supports school leaders and their teams to use when planning, creating, and vetting their master school schedules.

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