

WHAT IS COLLABORATION?

Dear Parents/Guardians:

This year the school district will implement a plan to allow our teachers time to collaborate on improving your student's academic progress without disrupting your family schedule or your student's normal bus pick-up times.

To keep you informed on how this plan will work – and why it will be beneficial for your students – we have prepared the following questions and answers to help you understand what we will be doing in regard to collaboration time at school this year.

Frequently asked questions:

What is collaboration time and how does it benefit students?

Part of the answer is what collaboration isn't – it isn't staff training, or in-service, or planning time. While these are important activities, collaboration is time when groups of teachers, by grade level or by subject area, work together to address the academic progress of their students this year – right now. The results of this collaboration are used to create instructional strategies that will meet the individual needs of the students teachers are working with this school year. For example, how might a team of 3rd grade teachers – working together – better meet the needs of the math students in their classes whose skills have exceeded the rest of the group? How might a team of kindergarten teachers address how to accelerate the learning of some of their readers who are a little behind? The goal of collaboration is to allow teachers to work together to address the academic success of all their students.

When will collaboration take place?

Collaboration will take place each Wednesday throughout the school year in every school in the district. Teachers will spend the first 45 minutes of their work day in groups collaborating to increase student achievement. Choosing a common day and time at all levels is designed to help families coordinate their schedules if they have students in more than one school level.

When will school start on collaboration days?

At each level – elementary, middle, and high school – the regular school day will start 20 minutes later than the regular start time. At the elementary level, this means the first bell will ring at 9:20 (rather than 9:05) and the tardy bell will ring at 9:25. In middle school, the first class bell will ring at 8:00 am, and the tardy bell will ring at 8:05 am. At high school, the first bell will ring at 7:55 and the tardy bell will ring at 8:00 am.

Can my child still come to school at the regular time?

Yes. Students can come to school at the regular time, and bus pick-up times will be the same on every school day. For the extra 15 minutes that students are at school in the morning before the regular school day begins, students will be supervised by non-teaching staff.

Does my student have to come early on collaboration days?

No. If your student walks to school or if you drive them to school, he or she can arrive in time for the first bell on Wednesdays. Students will not be counted tardy unless they arrive in class after the Wednesday tardy bell.

Will collaboration time reduce time in the classroom?

At the elementary level, no. Because the first 15 minutes of the day will include opportunities for students to be active, schools will not hold morning recess on collaboration days. In middle and high schools, although this schedule reduces class time, the secondary schools in our district have been running a collaboration schedule for several years, and the 20 minutes of lost instructional time has been made up for by more efficient and effective instruction the rest of the school week.

What if I have questions or concerns?

We are eager to hear any comments or concerns that you may have, both initially and over time. Your comments will help us refine how we implement this new Wednesday collaboration schedule more effectively. We also want to hear if you believe that it is working over time. Please contact your school principal with your comments. This information will then be shared among schools and with the district administration to improve this process.

Sincerely,

Dr. Linda Clark
Superintendent