

## Structuring Successful Scheduling Teams

As counterintuitive as it may seem, highly effective principals often turn the responsibility for creating a school's master schedule over to cross-departmental teams of teacher leaders (Buffum et al., 2008). Consider using this reproducible chart to think through who you'd like to see working on your school's master schedule. Composition matters if teams are to be successful.

### Who do you think should represent your core academic departments and grade levels? Why?

Any successful scheduling team must include representatives from each of the core academic departments and grade levels simply because these departments and grade levels often have individual priorities and projects that they are committed to.

The logical choices to represent departments and grade levels on your scheduling team are teachers already serving as chairs on your school's leadership team. Including these members shows respect to building leaders and ensures that longstanding projects, which are probably under the guidance of these individuals, are considered during the scheduling process.

You may also want to consider adding other departmental or grade-level representatives to your scheduling team—particularly in situations where your chair is resistant to change. Adding more flexible peers who can serve as sounding boards and sources of compromise will be important for building support and changing minds.

### Who do you think should represent your special education staff? Why?

Any successful schedule in a PLC must make the needs of nontraditional students—those who struggle and excel—a priority. That's why including special education representatives on your scheduling team matters.

These teachers can clarify the impact that individual choices are going to play in the work that you do with the students who need you the most. They will understand everything from how best to incorporate special programs teachers into collaborative meeting structures to how state laws and student IEPs will impact your master schedule choices.

**Who do you think should represent your specialists? Why?**

In most PLCs, specialists—such as foreign language teachers, band directors, and media specialists—are critical because they absorb entire grade levels at once, freeing teacher teams to collaborate or intervene on behalf of students. Sadly, however, specialists often feel neglected in PLCs. Because they are almost always singletons, their priorities are often pushed aside in schools where core literacies like reading and math are given first priority.

To address this imbalance, you must include members of your elective department on the scheduling team. Doing so will help ensure that specialists feel valued. It will also provide insights into how scheduling choices will influence the development of students beyond the core academic subjects.

**Who do you think should represent your noninstructional staff members? Why?**

Most PLCs rarely have enough teachers to successfully meet the needs of every student. This means high-functioning learning communities redefine the roles of noninstructional staffers like secretaries, janitors, counselors, and teacher's assistants to create extra sets of hands for intervention programs or extra chunks of time for collaborative teams. To better understand just how much help you can expect from the noninstructional staff members in your building, you'll need to include representatives from their ranks on the scheduling team.

**Who do you think should represent your administrative team? Why?**

As talented as the teacher leaders are in your building, their understanding of just what's doable can be limited by their knowledge of state laws, district requirements, and school-level resources. Consequently, the scheduling team needs a representative from your administrative team. Think carefully about who this representative will be. In order for teachers to truly believe that they are being empowered to craft the master schedule, the scheduling team's administrative representative must be able to interject and advise without appearing to give orders and overrule team members.

**Who do you think should represent your school's popular programs? Why?**

Finally, consider your school's individual priorities and core practices. Do you have a successful student mentoring program that your faculty believes in? Are you relying on parent volunteers to help free teachers work with each other or with struggling students? If so, the people leading these kinds of individual projects must be a part of the scheduling team as well. Nothing stalls momentum for a new schedule more than killing off a popular program without ever listening to its supporters.