

COLLABORATION TIME-ADDITIONAL SIX (6) HOURS Frequently Asked Questions

Collaboration is defined as staff members working together for the purpose of improving student learning by using information based on data, research and instructional best practices. Examples of collaboration time include, but are not limited to, the following: analysis and development of common assessments, data analysis, examination of instructional strategies, vertical and/or horizontal articulation, book studies related to best instructional strategies and the use of content or course specific resources.

The Troy School District administration and the Troy Education Association leadership have jointly compiled this list of FAQs regarding the additional six (6) hours of collaboration time required this school year in an effort to provide clarification for administrators and teachers.

1. What is the requirement relative to collaboration time this school year for the additional six (6) hours?

Teachers are responsible for completing six (6) hours of collaborative time during the remainder of the 2008-09 school year. Since this time will count as student instructional time, *this collaborative time shall occur outside the school day and shall not include staff meetings (including staff meetings called for the purpose of collaboration; two hours per month) or annual committee requirement(s).*

2. Why is it that I have to complete these extra six (6) hours?

Districts are responsible for providing 1,098 hours of instructional time to students each year. The State does allow a certain number of professional development hours to count as instructional time. Our student and staff calendar includes 12 hours of professional development towards the 1,098 requirement. In previous years, we completed all 12 hours of PD that counted as instructional time in two days in August. This year, we only had one day (6 hours) of August PD. Therefore, we need to schedule an additional six (6) hours of PD to count towards student instructional time. These six hours obviously need to be **in addition** to the student instructional time that is already in the calendar.

3. I participated in after school collaboration activities prior to the ratification of our current Collective Bargaining Agreement. Can those hours qualify as collaboration time?

No. Under the terms of our agreement, hours must be accumulated between January 7th and June 17th, 2009.

4. Can staff meeting time that is used as collaboration time count towards the additional six (6) hours of required time?

No. Each building principal is allocated three hours of staff meeting time each month. Two of the three hours shall be used for collaboration time around activities determined by the building leadership team in conjunction with the building principal. *The six (6) hours of collaboration time required is in addition to staff meeting collaboration time.*

5. Can collaboration time be scheduled during my duty free lunch period and count as a part of the six (6) required hours?

No. Because these six (6) hours of collaboration time are considered student instructional time by the state of Michigan, they must occur outside the school day. These six (6) hours, in effect, offset the August day when staff members collaborate in building or department meetings.

6. I serve on a district-wide committee that occasionally meets after school. Can I count this toward the required six (6) hours of collaboration time?

No. Work on committees as specified in Article 6.2B does not count toward fulfilling the requirement. However, if teachers are working on more than the required number of committees, after school meeting time for the voluntary committee work (beyond the requirement) could be counted with approval of the building principal and appropriate documentation.

7. Must shared or part time teachers accumulate six (6) hours of collaboration time?

Shared or part time teachers shall complete the appropriate number of prorated collaboration hours based on their assignment. For example, a teacher who works half time (.5) is required to complete three (3) hours of additional collaboration time.

8. Who is responsible for establishing collaborative opportunities?

Collaboration opportunities should be teacher initiated. Principal approval must be obtained prior to the activity. Opportunities can be initiated by department, grade level, or school. These opportunities can involve as few as two teachers, or can include teachers district-wide. Building principals, department heads and building instructional teams can be valuable resources and are available to work with staff members to structure meaningful opportunities.

9. Who is responsible for documenting that I have accumulated the six (6) hours of additional collaboration time?

Each teacher is responsible for maintaining his/her own TSD/TEA collaboration Time Report Form (see attachment C) that must be submitted to the building principal by the last teacher workday.

10. I have an idea for a collaboration opportunity that involves my grade level/department colleagues. How do I proceed?

- a. Determine that this activity might be something of interest to your colleagues
- b. Complete the Request for Approval of Professional Development Activity that is located on the Intranet under the Professional Development link. (See attachment A.)
- c. Secure the approval of your building principal.
- d. Notify those involved of the activity, time, place, etc.
- e. Following the activity, complete the TSD/TEA Collaboration Time Report Form and share that with those who participated in the activity and your building principal. (See attachment B.)
- f. Log your collaboration activity on the TSD/TEA Collaboration Time Report form. (See attachment C.)

11. Is there a minimum time for each collaboration session relative to the six (6) additional hours?

Effective collaboration calls for the exchange of ideas between staff members. A minimum of 30 minutes is recommended and would be ideal. Sessions of less than 30 minutes can be approved for credit as a part of an overall plan (i.e. final meeting as a continuation of a previous activity.)

12. Can these collaboration activities also qualify as Professional Development time?

Yes. It is probable that collaboration activities will meet the requirements for Professional Development hours. If the activity meets the criteria listed in the introduction to this FAQ, it can be used for both Professional Development and collaboration credit. *Professional Development is not automatically collaboration time. However, collaboration time activities will almost always qualify as professional development time.*

13. I know that we are required to accrue 30 hours of Professional Development time each year. Does this now mean that I have to attend and document 36 hours of Professional Development time for the 2008-09 school year?

No. You are still responsible for attending 30 hours of Professional Development this school year. The six (6) hours would be one means of accumulating time toward the 30 hour requirement.

14. Can I work with colleagues and accrue a portion of the six (6) additional hours of collaboration time on non-student days that I flex?

Yes, that is possible. If teachers choose to collaborate on their flex days, they are using their own time for collaboration. The following provisions would apply:

- a. The collaboration activity that occurs during the flex time must be planned by staff and approved by the building administrators. It must meet the guidelines for a collaborative activity.
- b. Collaboration can occur only for teachers who flex the day or portion of the day. Teachers cannot plan collaboration time if they use the day as work time.

- c. Collaboration in these instances should take place outside the school building to avoid confusion for people who choose not to flex the time. Teachers can meet in the Services Building, Central Office or at a staff member's home.
- d. Participants should complete the TSD/TEA Collaboration Report Time form (see attachment B) and return a copy to the building principal.

15. Can I choose to collaborate with my colleagues on weekends and/or during school vacations?

Yes. Provisions (a) and (d) in question # 14 would apply.

16. I am a special education itinerant staff member (speech pathologist, social worker, psychologist, integration consultant.) What process do I use to meet this requirement?

You would follow the process outlined in question #10. Your collaboration time activities should be approved by the Special Education Director or her designee.

17. I am a traveling and/or a special subject teacher (art, physical education, vocal music, media etc.). What process do I use to meet this requirement?

Again, you would follow the process outlined in question #10. Your collaboration time activities should be approved by the principal of your home-based building. Collaboration activities for special subject teachers may be developed in coordination with Directors responsible for the subject areas (i.e. Fine Arts, Athletics, etc.) However, final approval would come through your home-based building principal.

