

## MASTER SCHEDULE TEAM

Includes:

- Who Needs to Be Involved – a Team Approach to Master Scheduling
- Successful Strategies for Teams: Overview of Team Member Handbook, Clemson University
- Consensus Building Strategies
- Parking Lot/Issues Bin
- Master Schedule Team – Communicating the Work & Results

### **Who Needs to Be Involved - a Team Approach to Master Scheduling**

*Includes suggestions from the following:*

- *College and Career Academy Support Network (CCASN), UC Berkeley Graduate School of Education*
- *Broward County Schools, Florida*
- *Duval Public Schools*
- *Chicago Public Schools, Chicago, Illinois*
- *(former) Hogan High School, Vallejo Public Schools*

Traditionally, the master schedule has been developed by a single administrator, counselor, or registrar, often working behind closed -- and occasionally locked -- doors, in a process that is mysterious at best. Our research indicates that the high schools with the most successful master scheduling approaches use an inclusive process in building the schedule. They incorporate many stakeholders, particularly those most affected by the outcomes of scheduling

Establishing a scheduling team allows for division of labor; builds knowledge, skill, and capacity around master scheduling; and provides different perspectives that enable creative approaches and effective problem solving.

When there is such a master scheduling team, it usually minimally includes:

- An administrator who can make final decisions about courses to be offered and teacher assignments
- A counselor who meets with students and pays attention to graduation, college entrance requirement, and college and career readiness.
- A classified (non-teaching) staff member who assists, especially with course selection data entry and computer runs, and contributes perspectives from staff (software technician)

But as more high schools move toward a shared approach to school leadership, often associated with implementation pathways/academies/SLCs, this master

scheduling team can be substantially broadened. Such an expanded master scheduling team usually includes teacher-leaders from one or more Pathways.

Pathways/Academies/SLCs AND one or more Departments who have an interest in acquiring expertise in master scheduling and can represent the pathways/academies/SLCs as a whole, the Departments as a whole, and the broader needs of both students and faculty.

An additional counselor or student advocate might also participate. Someone who represents special education, English-language learners, or non-traditional learners might also participate. The team should be big enough that some tasks can be shared but small enough to work efficiently. Successful schools often report having a scheduling task force that handles some of the research and communication and supports a small, core inner team and overall Master Schedule Coordinator.

From Broward County Schools

“The School Scheduling Committee should include the Principal, Guidance Director, ESE Specialists, ESOL Coordinator/Contact, IMT and Testing Coordinator, Other staff members may be added as deemed appropriate.”

From Duval County Schools

Recommendation: the inclusion of a middle school feeder representative on the Master Schedule Team.

From the former Hogan High School, Vallejo Unified School District

Excerpt from a PowerPoint Slide included in an March, 2011 Presentation on Academy and Small Learning Community Master Scheduling (focused on California Partnership Academy model):

- Master Schedule Build Team:
  - Decision Maker
  - Puzzle Master
  - School Information System Specialist....
  - School Historian

<http://www.2011.ccpcc-conference.net/sites/2011.ccpcc-conference.net/files/session-resources/250/Final%20CPA%20Master%20Schedule%20Workshop.pdf>

From Chicago Public Schools

“A successful high school Master Schedule represents the scheduler’s best efforts along with the school principal, teachers, and counselors at bringing the school curriculum design together in a framework for the greatest possible learning outcomes. A successful academic year is not possible without this foundation and without the collaboration of the entire school staff.” – Flavia Hernandez, Chief Officer and John Ambrose, Director of Student Scheduling, Office of P-12 Management, Chicago Public Schools

“It is not possible to approach scheduling in isolation. The school scheduling team composed of teachers, counselors, and administrators work together to provide the school scheduler the information needed to complete the technical requirements of Master Schedule Builder software used in the preparation of the school schedule. The school scheduling team is an extension of the Instructional Leadership Team.” — Flavia Hernandez, Chief Officer and John Ambrose, Director of Student Scheduling, Office of P-12 Management, Chicago Public Schools

*From National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP)*

“How the master schedule is constructed may be as important as what the master schedule contains. While the master schedule reveals what is really important to the school, how the master schedule is constructed reveals how professionals interact and how key decisions are made in the school. Finally, the master schedule discloses the true beliefs and attitudes the staff holds about the value of input from other staff members.” – “The Master Schedule: A Culture Indicator,” NASSP - National Association of Secondary School Principals

“If the school is collaborative, the staff has a major role in decisions leading into drafting the master schedule.” – “The Master Schedule: A Culture Indicator,” NASSP – National Association of Secondary School Principals

*From Breaking Ranks (NASSP publication)*

“The manner in which a high school organizes itself and the ways in which it uses time create a framework that affects almost everything about teaching and learning in the school. ...imaginative, flexible scheduling must be the order of the day... ...high schools...develop flexible scheduling that allows for more varied use of time in order to meet the requirements of the curriculum...”

**Successful Strategies for Teams**

**Team Member Handbook**

Clemson University

Frances A. Kennedy, PhD and Linda B. Nison, PhD

88-page document

<http://www.clemson.edu/OTEI/documents/teamwork-handbook.pdf>

“Becoming skilled at doing more with others may be the single most important thing you can do to increase your value --- regardless of your level of authority.” - Useem, Fortune 2006

Contents:

Introduction: Why Should I Learn to Team

## Teaming Basics

- Stages of Team Development (Forming-Storming-Norming-Performing)

- Team Players (Contributor-Collaborator-Communicator-Challenger)

  - Team Player Questionnaire

- Teamwork Mental Models

- Teamwork Skills

  - Interpersonal Skills

  - Meeting Management Skills

  - Effective Communication

  - Collaborative Decision-Making

    - Compromise versus Consensus

## Organizational Tools

- Establishing Roles and Responsibilities

- Establishing Ground Rules

- Meeting Agenda

- Meeting Summary

- Project Plan

- Gap Analysis

- Milestone Chart

## Problem-Solving Framework

- Define the Problem

- Describe the current process

- Identify the root cause(s) of the problem

- Develop a solution and action plan

- Implement the solution

- Review and evaluate

- Reflect and act on learnings

## Analysis Tools

- Brainstorming

- Affinity Diagram

- Nominal Group Technique

- Pareto Charts

- Flowcharting

- Interrelationship Diagram

- Cause-and-Effect Diagram

- Data Collection

## When Something Goes Wrong

- Paying Attention to the Basics

  - Organizing your team

  - Focusing Meetings

  - Keeping Projects on Track

Team Dysfunctions  
Let's turn it around and look on the positive side!  
Team Assessment  
References

### **A Few Consensus Building Strategies**

#### **KALEIDOSCOPE GROUPS**

Working in small groups (trios, quads), each group member takes a few minutes to discuss her/his position on a particular topic, issue, decision to be made, etc.) Small group participants should pay attention to both similarities and differences in terms of feelings/ opinions regarding the overall topic, issue, dilemma, decision, etc.)

The facilitator will then guide a debrief of the whole group either asking each small group to share a summary of their discussion OR, depending on the size of the faculty, using a power sweep or round robin. Participants might share their feelings on the topic and/or what they are still wondering about the topic.

#### **YES-NO-WHAT DO YOU NEED?**

The facilitator states the master scheduling proposal (or shares a potentially controversial aspect of the master schedule proposal/ guiding principles/priorities) and the focus of the discussion is also written on a chart pad.

Each participant states either:

- ☐ YES, I support this, and shares why, OR
- ☐ NO, I do not support this, and this is what I would need in order to support it.

A participant may also elect to remain neutral, with the caveat that neutrality implies a willingness to support what the group decides.

The debrief may include a discussion of strategies to meet the need of those opposed and/or of how best to reach consensus given any deeply held feelings of participants.

#### **SPEND YOUR DOTS**

The facilitator leads a brainstorming process around making a particular decision or setting a particular priority, etc. After the group has determined a smaller list of some of proposed principles/priorities/elements, etc., the facilitator then gives each participant five sticky dots (number of dots may vary) and asks everyone in the group to vote their dots. Each participant can choose to divide up her/his dots among several principles/priorities/design elements, etc. OR spend them all on one or two of the ideas that are most important to her/him.

## **FIVE FINGER SHARE**

The facilitator shares an aspect of the project proposal, or a proposed guiding principle, design element, or \_\_\_\_\_. He/she then asks participants to quickly indicate where they stand by using one of their hands. Participants share how they feel by raising a hand with a certain number of raised fingers. (NOTE: If this is the first time a group (or some members of the group) is/are using five finger share OR if there are new faculty/staff members, it helps to have a PowerPoint slide or a poster or chart paper which describes the following:

Five fingers: Love the proposed schedule/guiding principle/\_\_\_\_\_. I support this and will actively work to make this master schedule (etc.) a reality.

Four fingers: Really like. I support this master schedule proposal. While I may not be a leader in implementing the master schedule, I will do what is appropriate to support this.

Three fingers: Neutral. I won't undermine the efforts of others.

Two fingers: Really dislike. Prefer other options, but will abide by the group's decision. I will not sabotage.

One finger: Hate. I am seriously opposed to the idea.

If anyone holds up one or two fingers, the facilitator may encourage her/him to share what he/she would need in order to raise three, four, or five fingers.

## **PLACEMAT CONSENSUS ACTIVITY**

Building Consensus as an Instructional Strategy (Encouraging students to share ideas and come to a consensus about a concept/topic)

(example)

### Functions

In this strategy, master schedule team members (or faculty members) are divided into small groups of 2-4 participants, gathered around a piece of chart paper. Each individual participant thinks about the question that is posed. (See Stage 1 Resources Beginning the Conversation about Master Scheduling for ideas for questions. Many other questions/issues will emerge during the schedule building work.

Participants then are asked to each write her/his ideas on her/his own section of the chart paper. Then they share ideas to discover common elements, which are written in the center of the chart paper.

See more detailed description and additional options for this strategy at

[http://www.dickenson.k12.va.us/userfiles/file/DCSBO/Teacher%20Resources/Math%20Resources/placemat\\_consensus\\_description..pdf](http://www.dickenson.k12.va.us/userfiles/file/DCSBO/Teacher%20Resources/Math%20Resources/placemat_consensus_description..pdf)

NOTE: Some of these strategies are based on the work of the Coalition of Essential Schools, National School Reform Faculty, Bay Area School Reform Collaborative, Nancy Golden and others.

See also “**How to Reach Consensus**” (with pictures) at WikiHow  
<http://www.wikihow.com/Reach-a-Consensus>

See also: “Consensus Building: A Key to School Transformation,” by Daniel Baron, (senior fellow with the National School Reform Faculty) Instructional Leader, Principal Leadership, February, 2008

The article includes a Tuning Protocol for Building Consensus that could be used by faculty groups or student groups. Also, includes a “Proposed Decision-Making Process.” Consensus here is defined as: “\* I can live with the decision \* I will support my colleagues in implementing this decision \* I will do absolutely nothing to impede the implementation of this decision.”

A copy of the article was retrieved in November 2013 at  
<http://www.parkwayschools.net/CandD/CurriculumAreas/cte/documents/Article.Consensus.Bldg0001.pdf>

### **Parking Lot/Issues Bin**

In meetings, we often keep a list we call the ***parking lot*** or ***issues bin*** in order to capture items that are not quite on topic during a given meeting, but should be addressed at some future time. Similarly, during the master scheduling process, some issues will come up that you may not be able to resolve or fully discuss at the time, but that you want to come back to and address as you plan for the next phase or cycle of master scheduling.

#### **A few TIPS for effective use of the Parking Lot/Issues Bin:**

**Make the Parking Lot/issues Bin visible** Meeting consultant Rick Brenner suggests that you “Enter the items on a flip chart or other medium that’s visible to all. Visibility helps deter duplication, and it might spur additional creativity.”

**Enlist a Valet** At each meeting of the master schedule team, there might be someone who takes responsibility for recording any parking lot issues and verifying that whoever raised the issue agrees with the wording. NOTE: In small meetings, the recorder or scribe might also assume this role.

**Encourage self-parking.** Encourage master schedule team members to self-park. If someone is aware of an issue that needs to be addressed in the future, he/she might add it to the parking lot list.

**Review at meeting’s end OR at the end of each stage** A very brief end-of-meeting or end-of-stage review of the parking lot/issues bin typically involves assigning someone from the master schedule team to “own” the issue and either obtain the information

needed to bring back to the master schedule team as a whole OR to follow it to resolution.

**Follow Up** Typically, every item on the parking lot/issues bin list should be a part of a future Master Scheduling team meeting agenda or included on the next edition of the parking lot/issues bin resolution list. No parking lot item should simply disappear from the list without resolution. The master schedule team member who “owns” the item should track its progress toward resolution.

**Maintain a Parking Lot History** The master schedule meeting recorder or scribe should also maintain a list of parking lot/issue bin items as part of the meeting minutes.

As part of the internal assessment of the Master Scheduling process and product, the Master Schedule team should examine all parking lot/issue bin items. Are there patterns? Are there any types of issues that occur repeatedly? If so, what might be preventing them from being fully resolved in the master schedule process?

### **Master Schedule Team – Communicating the Work & Results**

See: An Example of a Way in Which One Master Schedule Committee Communicated Some of their work to the rest of the faculty:

Master Schedule Committee: An Overview of What We Have Done So Far

<http://prezi.com/pyojq3efoexi/master-schedule-committee/>

Communication About the Master Schedule – including the master schedule process With Regard to Stakeholders:

- Who are the master schedule stakeholders? Have they been clearly identified? Have they been prioritized (if appropriate)?
- Are the needs and concerns of each stakeholder group well known? If not, is there a plan to determine these needs/concerns? Is there a plan to address these needs/concerns?
  - What level of input into and/or communication about the master schedule and master schedule process does each stakeholder group desire?
  - What do they most need to know? When?
  - How frequently do they wish to be engaged and/or receive communication/s from the Master Schedule team?
  - What forms of communication will best meet the needs of various stakeholder groups? (i.e., group meetings, group presentations, one-on-one or small focus group or task force meetings; emails; direct mailings; through the school/district website; newsletter/blog; Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) sheet)



The Master Schedule Team as a whole develops a master schedule communications plan and determines who on the master schedule team will take primary responsibility for facilitating regular and effective communication about the master schedule with all key stakeholder groups.

One example of a partial Master Schedule Stakeholder Communications chart:

	Face-to-Face Meeting	Large Group Meeting/ presentation	Small group meeting/ focus group	E-mail	Letter – newsletter/ blog	website		
Key Stakeholders								
Students								
Teachers								
Counselors								
Parents								
Non-certificated Staff								
Union leaders								
District administration								

*CCASN Suggestion for the Master Schedule Notebook, Stage 1 section/file: Each year the Master Schedule Team leader should include and maintain a list of the individuals who form the Master Schedule Team and/or who will play an important role in the master schedule process. CCASN suggests including the name, role, phone number, and email for each Master Schedule Team member as well as indicating the years of master schedule experience for the lead “scheduler,” any participating administrator, counselor, or registrar, and other team members (as appropriate)*

This resource was developed by Patricia Clark and Charles Dayton, College and Career Academy Support Network, Graduate School of Education, University of California.

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