

Stage 2: Tip Sheet for Pathway/Academy Lead Teachers and Department Chairs – Developing a “Preferred” Pathway/Academy/Department Schedule

Once the pathway program of study tallies and the course tallies are complete and accurate, the Master Schedule Team will determine the number of sections of each course that are needed and may determine – with input from others – when certain “global” courses such as band that are open to students from all pathways will be placed in the master schedule.

Then the Master Schedule Team provides each Pathway/Academy lead and each Department chair copies of the respective pathway course/department course tallies and section allocations. The number of pathway or department sections needed translate into FTE allocations for each pathway and/or department.

At this stage of the process, the Master Schedule Team typically asks each Pathway/Academy lead AND each Department chair to work with her/his respective Pathway/Academy/Department team of teachers to develop a preferred master schedule for the pathway/academy OR department. Often a collaborative meeting is held involving representatives from the master schedule team, all pathway leads, and all department chairs to provide guidance on the development of “preferred” pathway and department teaching schedules, to transparently share course section allocations and rationale, to provide copies of the conflict matrix, to encourage and support on-going pathway-department collaboration and communication during the schedule development process, and to review a timeline for when each pathway/academy and each department “preferred” schedule must be completed. At this meeting, there is often a collaborative agreement regarding which common planning period (or periods) each pathway interdisciplinary team will share. (There may also be a system in place that involves rotations of common planning time among the pathway teaching teams from year to year.)

Resources needed include:

- A list of the precise number of sections of each pathway OR department course needed based on the accurate student pathway and course selection tallies.
- A copy of the course conflict matrix.
- A list of any schedule constraints or opportunities that potentially impact a specific pathway and/or specific department “preferred” schedule.
- Information on the placement of any “global” courses (Courses such as band or possibly Advanced Placement that are open to students from all pathways.)
- A “mini” version (pathway or department size version) of a master schedule board with either colored magnetic tags or sticky tags, or space for post-its.

As you work with your pathway community of practice/teaching team or department teaching team to develop your optimum pathway schedule OR department schedule, you will need to collaborate closely with pathway and department leads throughout the school. If, for example, a teacher is a full time English teacher in the Law Academy, her/his schedule preferences may need to be coordinated by both the Law Academy and the English Department.

Guidelines include:

Ideally, all teaching preferences, preparation period preferences, and room preferences will be based on student learning needs.

Ideally, no teacher will be assigned more than three different course preparations (course preps) (course codes).

Ideally, no teacher will be assigned to teach more than three class periods in a row without a break for a prep period or lunch.

Process:

Begin with any particular teacher assignment or scheduling constraints or opportunities that impact your pathway/academy or department. For example, the ceramics course must be offered after lunch as the kiln is fired during lunch. OR the double-block biotechnology course must be offered in periods 1 and 2 as it is co-taught by an industry partner who is only available in the morning. OR additional funding is available through a community college partnership to support an after school dual enrollment Academy Chemistry course. Also, a teacher may have a documented medical condition or disability that necessitates accommodations with regard to classrooms/facilities and or need for a certain preparation period. Or a teacher is shared with another school and is only available certain periods. Or there are “zero” periods, after school periods or online or hybrid course options available? Or the chemistry teacher must be shared with another pathway team. Each pathway and department needs to answer: What are the pathway scheduling constraints and opportunities unique to your context?

Care should be taken to assign each teacher a **balance of classes**. If, for example, your school offers advanced courses or honors courses, you should avoid assigning one teacher all the honors sections and another all the ninth grade courses.

Attention must be paid to **room usage**. How is access to computer labs and/or science labs and/or art rooms or other specially equipped classrooms balanced and coordinated? If, for example, there is only one classroom equipped to support the culinary classes in the Hospitality and Tourism Academy, Culinary Arts I and Advanced Culinary Arts should not be offered during the same period.

If you are including an **additional release period/prep period** for a particular teacher in your proposed schedule of pathway/ academy/department courses, specify the purpose AND funding source for this additional release period. (Lead teacher coordination period funded by a grant from the State Department of Education; Common Core Literacy Coordinator funded by District Title I funds; Work-based Learning Coordinator funded by Pathway/Academy industry partner, etc.)

Similarly, if a teacher will be **assigned to teach an additional course beyond the number of courses allowed by the teacher contract** (a teacher teaching all six periods on a six period bell schedule with no preparation period), what is the funding source that will compensate that teacher for teaching an additional, beyond-the-contract course section?

Common Planning For Pathway/Academy Interdisciplinary Teaching Team

Pathway leads: To the extent possible, include a common planning period for the pathway community of practice/teaching team OR, if your pathway is large, you might assign one common planning time for the lower division pathway teaching team and assign another common planning time for the upper division pathway teaching team, OR a different common planning time for each grade level community of practice. Common planning time for multiple pathway/academy/SLC teams must be coordinated with the Master Schedule Team and other pathway leads. Preparation periods for each teacher will need to be closely coordinated with department chairs.

Teacher prep periods:

Pathway leads and department chairs: Depending on your bell schedule and school-wide staffing allotments, each teacher may have two preparation periods – one for meeting with her/his interdisciplinary team (or other community of practice) AND one for a personal preparation period. Care must be taken that personal preparation periods are equitably distributed and that this is done in an open and transparent manner. For example, if several teachers prefer a preparation period at the end of the day, this option might rotate each year among them. (A mantra shared with CCASN in numerous master schedule focus groups and master schedule interviews with master schedule teams was: “What you do for one, you need to do for all.”)

Teaming

Pathway Leads:

There may be teaming between the pathway English teacher and the pathway social studies teacher with the English and social studies pathway courses at each grade level taught in an interwoven interdisciplinary manner. This might involve a double period, such as periods 5 and 6 with both the pathway English teacher and the pathway social studies teacher having back-to-back classes of English 10 and World Cultures respectively with the same cohort of 60 pathway students assigned to both teachers.

Will any **co-teaching** occur within the pathway program of study? Take into account the availability of ELL teachers or Special-Education teachers to support full inclusion of ELL and/or Special Education students in the pathway program of study.

Department Leads:

Will any department courses involve co-teaching with ELL teachers and/or special education teachers?

Distribution of Course Sections

Department chairs: Typically, it is important to spread course sections for a particular course/course code across the school day. For example, if there are six sections of Geometry to be scheduled on a six period bell schedule, one section might be offered each period to increase access for all students. If there are fewer course sections of a particular course than there are course periods, then one section of the course should be offered in as many different periods as possible.

Once each pathway/academy and department has developed a “preferred” master schedule, the Master Schedule Team often reconvenes a meeting of Academy leads and Department Chairs. The agenda may involve a peer review of each pathway’s and each department’s schedule proposal.

There are other important considerations.

What are the pathway or department strategies to help prevent student course failures?

What credit recovery systems are in place or need to be in place that help to keep pathway students eligible for full participation in the academy/pathway program of study and help to reduce or eliminate the need for students to repeat any pathway classes?

If ELL and/or Special education students are to be fully included in pathway programs of study, how is this priority supported in the development of “preferred” pathway and/or department schedules? How is the availability of ELL teachers and/or special education teachers taken into account?