

MEMO TO: Secondary Teachers
FROM: Doug Smuland, Labour Relations Officer
DATE: October 15, 2020
RE: Secondary Teacher Issues



Dear ATU Member,

I want to outline some advice regarding questions that have arisen this year in respect to changes occurring in your workday and your teaching assignments.

Prep Time

Given the district's adoption of the Copernican quarter system, the delivery of preparation time has been regulated to one 10-week slot within the year. Currently, the ATU is advancing a Step 3 grievance regarding the scheduling of teachers' preparation time in secondary schools.

In particular the ATU grieved that the District violated the CA including, but not limited to, *Article D.23 Hours of Work*. In adopting the Copernican system within secondary schools for the 2020-2021 school year, the district has improperly sequenced the provision of teacher preparation time. The district cannot allocate the full 1590 minutes per week as an instructional assignment in three quarters and then make allowances for preparation time in the fourth quarter because preparation time is required to be deducted as an integral part of the formula each week.

In order to correct and address the outstanding issues outlined in this grievance, the ATU is seeking remedies including, but not limited to, the District's acknowledgement of the violations, the granting of 12.5% of total instructional time for the purposes of teacher preparation time per each five (5) day week for all secondary school teachers, making whole all secondary teachers, and any other remedies that are just and equitable in the circumstances.

Should we be successful in this grievance, some alternate timetable that provides teachers with weekly preparation time would need to be established.

Use of Prep Time for Coverage of Missing TTOCs

For teachers who are directed to provide coverage when a TTOC is unavailable, assurance from Administration that an equivalent ½-day be restored to the teacher within a reasonable time from when the coverage was provided should be obtained. Given the dearth of work available for TTOCs thus far it does not seem possible that these requests should be occurring; however, the ATU encourages teachers to access the *TTOC Shortage* option on the ATU website to record these occurrences.

The Careers Course

In assigning this course to all secondary teachers, and where in at least some schools the course is being scheduled on Wednesday afternoons when the teacher would otherwise be receiving prep time, there is likely a loss of some portion of prep that will need to be recovered. Teachers should first have a conversation with their administrator to ascertain when they will be provided the missing prep time. If no replacement prep time is provided, teachers should contact the ATU. The careers class must also meet all other requirements of the CA including class size and composition limits; failing this the teacher would be entitled to remedy.

When a teacher is assigned a careers class, this class must be run within the confines of the *Hours of Work* language of the CA. It is unacceptable for a teacher to be required to provide instruction or conduct personal interactions (either in person or on-line) outside the hours of work. Teachers should also be vigilant in ensuring that at no time would an individual conversation with a student be one where professional ethics and responsibilities might be seen as being breached.

When it is expected by administration that teachers be both the "teacher" and the "mentor" to their students in this course, teachers do not cede their professional autonomy on how they decide to provide instruction to their students. Teachers have the professional right and the professional responsibility to determine the planning, presentation and methods of instruction for their classes.

“Staff Learning Opportunities”

Given the district has mandated in-service for all secondary teachers and this in-service is within the hours of work language of the CA, teachers would be obligated to attend. The physical structuring of these meetings would need to be compliant with the greater safety protocols already established in your school, so physical distancing and cohort cohesion should remain in place.

The exception to mandated attendance in these opportunities would be when the meetings take place during a teacher's preparation time. If teachers who are owed prep time are required to attend, they should first have a conversation with their administrator to ascertain when they will be provided their missing prep time. If no replacement prep time is provided, teachers should contact the ATU.

As with the advice above for the career classes, teachers should be aware of their right to professional autonomy within these meetings and determine when and if the material provided or presented is in keeping with their own teaching methods and consistent with the recognized educational practices they employ on a day to day basis.

Parent Teacher Interviews

Secondary teachers are reminded that parent teacher conferences at the secondary level are optional in the following circumstances:

1. A Secondary Teacher is using Check-My-Progress software (or similar) to provide regular, informal reports on student progress to parents or is using an approved written interim report, and
2. The teacher can demonstrate they have initiated contact with parents regarding students who are struggling within their class.

As such, if teachers have been meeting the above requirements, the recent announcements sent out by some secondary schools regarding parents booking appointments is inappropriate. Teachers should remind their administrators of the 2016 Consent Order that established the above, that these interviews are optional and if in the opinion of the teacher they are needed, should be organized by the individual teacher. Of course, teachers will always have professional obligations to meet with parents and discuss student progress when requested to do so but have the right to schedule any such meeting to fit their needs.

Language from the Collective Agreement:

ARTICLE D.23 HOURS OF WORK

1. No elementary teacher shall be required to offer instruction for more than four (4) hours and forty-five (45) minutes per day, and may not exceed twenty-three (23) hours and forty-five (45) minutes per five (5) day week, including preparation time and excluding a daily recess of not less than fifteen (15) minutes. No secondary teacher shall be required to offer instruction for more than five (5) hours and nine (9) minutes per day and may not exceed twenty-five (25) hours and forty-five (45) minutes per five (5) day week, including homeroom and preparation time.
2. Full time secondary teachers shall be entitled to twelve and one-half per cent (12.5%) of total instructional time for purposes of preparation.
3. Full-time elementary teachers shall be entitled to one hundred (100) minutes per week (one hundred and ten (110) minutes per week effective June 30, 2019) for purposes of preparation, this preparation time will be in a minimum of twenty-five (25) minute blocks with no more than one (1) block of less than twenty-five (25) minutes.
4. Preparation time of part-time teachers of three-eighths (0.375) FTE or more shall be pro-rated.
5. A teacher's instructional assignment shall be defined as time during the instructional week devoted to teaching courses and lessons, and shall include time assigned to supervise curricular activities, including study periods.
6. School starting hours shall be between 0800h and 0930h (8:00 a.m. and 9:30 a.m.) and shall be continuous for no more than six (6) hours and thirty (30) minutes secondary, or six (6) hours

elementary, or other such arrangements as agreed between the parties. With the agreement of the teacher, instruction in some specialized programs may have a different starting time but the teacher shall, in any case, work on a continuous basis as per Article D.23.1. The instructional assignment of such teachers shall be within six (6) continuous hours for elementary and seven (7) continuous hours for secondary.

7. Each teacher shall be allowed the uninterrupted time for lunch during the school's regularly scheduled lunch break. The school's lunch break shall be a minimum one-half hour (0.5h).

ARTICLE D.24 SUPERVISION DUTIES

1. No teacher shall be required to perform any duties during the school's regularly scheduled noon intermission.
2. No teacher shall be required to perform more than twenty-five (25) minutes of supervision per week.
3. As a result of the implementation of this article, the scheduled blocks of supervision duties shall not be increased.
4. In the application of Article D.24.2, the staff of each school, including the Administrative Officer, shall agree on the required supervisory duties and shall ensure that such required duties are assigned in an equitable manner.

ARTICLE D.27 STAFF MEETINGS

1. The purpose of staff meetings is to facilitate the administration and enhance the operation of the school.
2. Teachers are expected to attend staff meetings unless prior approval for absence has been granted by the Administrative Officer. Part-time and itinerant teachers shall attend staff meetings when the staff meeting is contiguous to their hours of work.
3. Teachers may submit items to the Administrative Officer which will be placed on the agenda of staff meetings. A copy of this agenda shall be given to each teacher.
4. At least three (3) school days' notice of regular staff meetings shall be given, including a preliminary agenda. Notice may be waived for short emergency meetings. The Administrative Officer will arrange the agenda in order of priority. The Administrative Officer will make all reasonable efforts to restrict the frequency and length of staff meetings.
5. Staff meetings will not be longer than one hour and forty-five minutes (105 min.) from dismissal of regular classes, nor held during recess or lunch break unless of an emergency nature. With majority consent, staff meetings may continue on a voluntary basis.
6. A teacher shall not be required to act as recording secretary. Written minutes shall be kept and circulated to all staff members.
7. It is the teacher's responsibility to be apprised of the staff meeting agenda and the decisions made at the meeting.

ARTICLE F.22 TEACHER PROFESSIONALISM

1. The Board recognizes and respects the professionalism of teachers covered under this collective agreement. Teachers have the professional right and the professional responsibility to determine the planning, presentation and methods of instruction for their classes within the following criteria:
 - a. teaching methods shall be consistent with recognized educational practices;
 - b. prescribed provincially and locally developed curriculum shall be followed;
 - c. resources used shall be consistent with prescribed and authorized materials.