

# 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 (Noonan, 2008). To ensure that your scheduling team is successful, however, composition matters. Consider using this handout to think through who you'd like to see working on your school's master schedule.*

<b>Question</b>	<b>Your Response</b>
<p>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.</p> <p>The logical choice 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 – have a voice in the scheduling process.</p> <p>But 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 that can serve as sounding boards and sources of compromise will be important for building support and changing minds.</p> <p><b><i>Who do you think should represent your core academic departments and grade levels? Why?</i></b></p>	
<p>Any successful schedule in a professional learning community must make the needs of nontraditional students – those who struggle <i>and</i> excel – a priority. That's why including special education representatives on your scheduling team matters.</p> <p>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.</p> <p><b><i>Who do you think should represent your special education staff? Why?</i></b></p>	
<p>In most professional learning communities, specialists – foreign language teachers, band directors, media specialists – are critical because they absorb entire grade levels at once, freeing teacher teams to collaborate and/or intervene on behalf of students.</p> <p>Sadly, however, specialists often feel neglected in professional learning communities. Because they are almost always singletons, their priorities are often pushed aside in schools where core literacies like reading and math are given first chair.</p> <p>To address this difficult truth, you simply must include members of your elective department on your scheduling</p>	

<p>team. Doing so will help to ensure that your specialists feel valued. Doing so will also provide insights into how scheduling choices will influence the development of your students beyond the core academic subjects.</p> <p><b><i>Who do you think should represent your specialists? Why?</i></b></p>	
<p>Another difficult truth in most professional learning communities is that we rarely have enough teachers to successfully meet the needs of every child.</p> <p>That means highly functioning learning communities redefine the roles played by non-instructional 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.</p> <p>To better understand just how much help you can expect from the non-instructional staffers in your building, you’ll need to include representatives from their ranks on your scheduling team.</p> <p><b><i>Who do you think should represent your non-instructional staffers? Why?</i></b></p>	
<p>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. That means your scheduling team is going to need a representative from your administrative team.</p> <p>Think carefully about who this representative will be, though. In order for teachers to truly believe that they are being empowered to craft your building’s master schedule, the administrative representative of your scheduling team must be able to interject and advise without appearing to order and overrule.</p> <p><b><i>Who do you think should represent your non-instructional staffers? Why?</i></b></p>	
<p>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 to work with each other or with struggling students?</p> <p>If so, the people leading these kinds of individual projects must be a part of your scheduling team as well. Nothing kills momentum for a new schedule more than killing off a popular program without ever listening to its supporters.</p> <p><b><i>Who do you think should represent your school’s popular programs? Why?</i></b></p>	