Planning Your Week: A How-to

**GOALS**

1. Your weekly schedule prioritizes the highest leverage leadership practices:
   1. Cultivating School Culture.
   2. Improving Instruction: Observation, Feedback, PD, & Coaching.
   3. Developing Leadership.

*Note: Collecting, Analyzing and Acting on Data is imbedded throughout.*

1. All teachers are observed and receive feedback regularly.

**Prep Work**

“Student culture is not formed by motivational speeches or statements of values. It is formed by repeated practice—using every minute of every day to build good habits. From opening morning routines to the final bell, students receive a constant message that nothing is as important—and engaging—as learning.”

Santoyo, P., & Peiser, B. M. (2012). *Leverage leadership: a practical guide to building exceptional schools*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass. Retrieved from <http://uncommonschools.org/node/2186>.

**Step 1:**

Determine all of the standing duties and office hours that you will be responsible for. Consider other times that your presence may be needed (morning arrival, transition times, etc.). Remember, if it is not you, indicate who it will be.

**Step 2:**

Determine all of the standing group meetings that you will be responsible for leading or attending.

**TIPS:**

* Arrival, dismissal, passing times, recess, and lunch are excellent times to collect data on and help establish a strong school culture. Being visible and modeling your expectations is imperative!
* Establishing standing office hours helps protect your time and sends a strong message that you value parents and students.

**Culture and Leadership (Chart A)**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Task** | **Who** | **Day(s) / Time**  **M, T, W, Th, F** |
| Arrival / Bus duty |  |  |
| Breakfast |  |  |
| Recess |  |  |
| Lunch |  |  |
| Passing Time |  |  |
| Dismissal |  |  |
| Parent Office Hours |  |  |
| Staff Office Hours |  |  |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
| **Standing Meetings** | **Frequency**  **Weekly, monthly** | **Day(s) / Time** |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |

**Step 3:**

Determine the teachers you will observe and provide feedback to, and those you will delegate to others. Remember, this is ongoing observation and feedback for growth.

**TIPS:**

* With a 15:1 ratio, all teachers can be observed and receive feedback weekly. Decide if you want weekly or bi-weekly observations.
* Consider all formal and informal instructional leaders (assistant principals, coaches, coordinators, lead teachers), depending on your school size and needs.
* Consider each leader’s strengths, areas of expertise and instructional load.

**Observation and Feedback: Ongoing / Formative (Chart B)**

| **School Leader** | **Teachers: Prep or planning time** | |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Principal | * Ms. Smith; M – F 8-9 |  |
| Assistant Principal |  |  |
| Instructional Coach |  |  |
|  |  |  |

**Step 4:**

Determine blocks of time for your big projects and for communication.

**TIPS:**

* Plan for no more than 2-5 hours of “big project” work time per week. Use your monthly map to know what you need to plug into each of those blocks.
* Schedule time to check and answer emails and return calls before or after school.
* Checking email periodically throughout the day is a surefire way to get distracted from your priorities.

**Planning Your Week: Putting It All Together**

Build Your Week:

Start with a template (Excel) or electronic calendar application, so that once your week is built out you can use the same template each week as a starting point, then make changes accordingly.

1. First, add all of your duties and office hours (see Chart A).
2. Next, add all of your standing whole group meetings (see Chart A).
3. Then, for every teacher you will observe, schedule in 15 minutes of observation time   
   (see Chart B).

You can observe three teachers in one hour, allowing yourself travel time. If your campus is small, you may be able to observe four. Consider what you know about yourself and how you prefer to work.

If you are observing teachers once every two weeks, you will only need to block out half the number of blocks per week (e.g., you are managing 16 teachers, therefore you should schedule eight (8) fifteen-minute blocks per week).

You may consider observing teachers in similar grade levels, content areas, or those working on similar goals in the same block.

You may not want to label who you are observing in each of these blocks on your original template as you will certainly want to observe teachers at different times during their day.

1. Using each teacher’s available prep time as a guide, decide when you will schedule your 30-minute standing meeting with each teacher.

These times will be used for feedback on observations, planning and data analysis.

When scheduling, decide if you want back-to-back meetings, or you prefer to have time in between meetings for small breaks or other duties.

Some teachers do not have planning time during the school day, so these meetings may need to be before or after school. If this is the case, ask teachers which they prefer.

Share these standing meeting times with teachers by sending a calendar invite for the year.

1. Finally, add your blocks of uninterrupted work time for big project planning and for communication.

Aim for no more than 2-5 hours per week for working on big projects. Remember, you must devote time to your key drivers – developing the tools, processes and time for analysis necessary to accomplish your big goals.

Consider scheduling early in the morning or late in the evening, otherwise you take the risk of being interrupted! Go off campus if possible.

Do not check email during your work time.

**Additional Tips on Protecting Your Time:**