

## ARTICLE XX -- TEACHING CONDITIONS

### Section 1. Pre-School Work Period

The pre-school work period for new teachers shall not exceed nine days.

### Section 2. Work Year

For all employees not new to M-DCPS, the work year shall not exceed four workdays prior to the students' first day of school.

For teachers, the work year shall not exceed three workdays after the students' last day of school.

In no event, however, shall the number of "days worked" in any school year under this work calendar be more than the number of "days worked" under the previous calendar.

### Section 3. Workday

- A. The employee workday shall be seven hours and five minutes for employees at the elementary level, including Pre-K, and seven hours and 20 minutes for employees at the secondary and adult education levels. The workday shall include lunch and planning/preparation period.

In case of serious emergencies, such as school-wide disruptions which affect the safety and welfare of the student body, employees may be required by the principal to stay longer than the ordinary workday in order to assist in supervising students. The principal or supervising administrator shall make every effort to resolve the emergency as quickly as possible.

In no case shall teachers be required to remain longer than one hour beyond the regular workday.

The workday shall include a maximum of five teaching periods for secondary school teachers.

- B. The starting and dismissal time for students shall be established by the Board, provided that no change in schedule will increase the weekly number of hours teachers are presently assigned to teach students.
- C. In the case of late arrival or early departure from the work location, an employee present more than one-fourth and less than three-fourths of the workday is considered as having worked one-half day; and an employee present three-fourths or more of the workday is considered as having worked a full day, upon prior notification and approval by the principal or the supervising administrator where no principal exists.
- D. The use of sign-in and sign-out sheets is authorized for payroll purposes only, and the

only handwritten marks permitted on the sign-in sheets while posted are the employee's initials and/or a code indicating that the employee is absent. Under no circumstances shall highlighting or circling be used. Employees are expected to sign in upon arrival to the school site. The use of time clocks and similar devices is prohibited, except for hourly employees.

- E. Employees may leave the work location during the hours they are not directly responsible for students, provided prior authorization has been given by the principal.
- F. On a school day which immediately precedes a holiday or vacation, the teachers' day shall end at the close of the pupils' day. If the holiday falls on a Monday or the recess begins on a Monday, the employees' day on the preceding Friday will end at the close of the pupils' day. In those schools operating on two shifts, the teachers shall complete their workday. Principals may excuse teachers in this instance 15 minutes early. On other days, a teacher may, with prior approval by the principal or designee, leave, if necessary, after the completion of the teaching assignment. Instructional personnel including all Teachers on Special Assignment (TSAs), all itinerant instructional employees and school psychologists/staffing specialist working in ACCESS Centers and central administrative offices shall be allowed to leave 30 minutes early on such days.
- G. A teacher may, with consent, be assigned an additional teaching period beyond the normal workday and shall receive compensation equal to one-eighth of the teacher's daily rate.

#### H. Meetings on Election Days

Meetings after school hours requiring the attendance of school employees shall not be scheduled for any day when county-wide primary or general elections are held.

- I. The workday for employees assigned to central or ACCESS Centers shall be 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., with the exception that, if an assignment leads to an employee being at a work location other than his/her base location at the end of the specific work location administrator's day, and if no pending assignment requires a return to the base work location, the employee for the purpose of safety, may leave before the end of his/her normal workday, if no administrator remains at the work site or with the permission of the school-site administrator. The workday for itinerant instructional employees, including school psychologists/ staffing specialists assigned permanently to school-site(s), shall be equivalent to other instructional personnel at such school site(s).
- J. Compensatory Time

Bargaining unit members assigned to the Office of Professional Development and Career Advancement, Department of Parent and Family Education, Office of Grants Administration, Project TRUST Specialists, or group counselors in the senior high schools whose jobs require evening and/or Saturday work hours scheduled by their supervising administrator to implement specific teacher inservice programs and/or parent education activities, shall be entitled to receive compensatory time.

## K. Flexible Hours

1. In recognition of current employment trends, the parties agree to establish a Flexible Hours Program at the secondary level. The Union recognizes the Board's right to deny individual requests and to terminate a flexible hours job at any time, provided existing employment rights of all parties are maintained and protected.

Employees may, with the approval of the work-site administrator, modify their workday schedule (i.e., beginning times adjusted, but not overall daily working hours). Such modification will not interfere with the overall number of hours worked or number of classes taught, nor will it preclude the eligibility for receipt of a supplement for extra duties and responsibilities.

2. Where agreed to by individual student services personnel (i.e., school psychologists, counselors, and school social workers/visiting teachers) and their immediate supervisors, the workday schedule may be modified (i.e., beginning and ending times adjusted, but not overall daily working hours) in order to provide necessary services for students and their parents/guardians. Current student services personnel shall not be required to accept a modified workday schedule. Newly-hired student services personnel may be required to work modified workday schedules in order to provide necessary services for students and parents/guardians and shall be notified at the time of initial employment. A record of such alternate work schedules shall be maintained with other payroll records by the supervising administrator.
3. Athletic Trainers, Teacher Trainers, and Assistant Athletic Trainers may, with approval of the school-site principal, modify their workday schedule (i.e., beginning times adjusted, but not overall daily working hours). Such modification will not interfere with the overall number of classes to be taught, nor will it preclude the eligibility for receipt of the Teacher Trainers', and Assistant Athletic Trainers' supplement.

## Section 4. Faculty Meetings

Except in a school emergency, no more than two faculty meetings shall be conducted each month, with a minimum of 24 hours' notice of such meetings, excluding meetings on planning/preparation days. Teachers are required to extend the workday for the purpose of attending faculty meetings. Such meetings shall be of no more than one hour in duration and shall begin no later than 10 minutes after students are dismissed. In elementary schools, the principal or his/her designee may utilize one Wednesday per month as one of the two authorized monthly faculty meetings. Physical and Occupational Therapists shall use faculty meeting days for district inservice or assigned therapy work.

## Section 5. Planning/Preparation Days

- A. Elementary teachers of special education students shall dismiss their classes on preparation days on the same basis as all other elementary teachers.

- B. In order to provide preparation time for elementary teachers, pupils in the elementary schools shall be dismissed one hour early one afternoon a week, using Wednesday for this purpose.
- C. The principal or immediate supervisor shall assist employees in utilizing employee preparation days by providing materials and other instructional data requested by the faculty and/or individual teachers, as soon as possible, prior to the date of the employee preparation days.
- D. Days designated in the school calendar as planning/preparation days, pre- or post-planning days, or teacher workdays shall be elsewhere referred to as teacher planning/preparation days and shall not be used for area or county meetings, except as designated on the school calendar.
- E. The majority of time during teacher planning/preparation days is to be used by the employee, who may choose from among the following activities: instructional planning, recording of grades, and reviewing student cumulative folders and/or instructional material or activities.
- F. During the teacher pre-planning/preparation days, all newly-assigned School Social Workers shall be provided by the Board with an orientation of job responsibilities. Such responsibilities shall not include placement of students in special education.
- G. Physical and Occupational Therapists shall use planning/preparation days for district inservice or assigned therapy work.
- H. Schools with 14 or more full-time exceptional student education teacher units (excluding gifted and itinerant personnel) will be allocated one ESE specialist.

ESE teachers with full-time student contact, assigned to schools not allocated an ESE Program Specialist, who plan and prepare Individual Educational Plans, will be granted four (4) release days per school year.

## **Section 6. Duty-Free Lunch**

- A. All unit members shall have a duty-free lunch period. This duty-free lunch period shall consist of at least 30 minutes in secondary schools and at least 30 minutes in elementary schools.
- B. The principal is responsible for seeing that proper behavior is maintained during the lunch period.
- C. Employees shall not be required to travel during their uninterrupted duty-free lunch period. Lunch shall be exclusive of preparation or travel allowance time. Employees shall also be free to leave the work location during the duty-free lunch period upon notice to the principal or designee.

## **Section 7. Planning/Preparation Periods**

- A. As a part of the workday, all secondary teachers shall have one uninterrupted planning/preparation period daily of no less than one teaching period.
- B. Classes shall not be combined in order to provide teachers with uninterrupted preparation periods.
- C. Uninterrupted preparation/planning time is not to be used for faculty meetings or other such compulsory meetings, except in cases of emergency or by mutual agreement of the faculty and the principal.
- D. In elementary schools, whenever a specialist, i.e., music, art, physical education, is in charge of a class, the classroom teacher shall be entitled to leave the classroom and use this time for planning. To the extent possible, such planning time shall be in uninterrupted segments.
- E. As a part of the workday, all elementary teachers, including art, bilingual, music, physical education, library/media specialists, and any other special teachers at the elementary level, shall be provided appropriate time for planning.

## **Section 8. Grade Changes**

If the principal of a school feels it is necessary to change a pupil's grade in any subject at the end of the grading period, the principal shall consult with the teacher who issued the original grade and give his/her reasons for the necessary change to the teacher, in writing. If a change in grade is made, it shall be recorded as the principal's grade and not the teacher's grade.

## **Section 9. Time to Teach**

- A. Classroom interruptions shall be kept to a minimum. Principals will establish schedules for the use of the intercom systems in the schools, including staff use. The schedule will be posted. Deviation from the schedule shall be made only in an emergency or when another means of communication is not possible or feasible.
- B. Assemblies, testing programs, and other school-wide activities which would disrupt the normal classroom instruction shall be rotated so that the same classes and employees are not continually affected.

## **Section 10. Alternative Planning Days/Work Year**

Employees shall have an opportunity to select an alternative planning day/work year schedule when developed by the Calendar Committee and approved by the Board.

Effective the 1999-2000 school year, the number of planning/preparation days available for opting will be limited to no more than five days as determined by the Ad Hoc Calendar Committee.

## **Section 11. Teacher-Parent Communication**

- A. Teacher-parent conferences contribute greatly to improving the public school's relationship with the community which each school serves. The Board and the Union agree that improving the public school's relationship with the community and the public in general serves the best interests of students and citizens. Effective teacher-parent communication aids in contributing to and maintaining the public's commitment to public education. The Board recognizes its responsibility to facilitate teacher-parent communication through methods such as, but not limited to, provision of translators (including other teachers who can serve in this capacity) for non-English speaking parents, sufficient telephone lines, available extensions within teacher work areas, business cards, and released time for conferences, when necessary. The Board and the Union agree to explore new methods of communications technology to enhance teacher-parent communication. Additionally, the parties agree to develop a teacher-parent communication program at schools representing each instructional level (i.e., elementary, middle, senior) whose focus shall be the development of innovative techniques for enhanced teacher-parent communication.
- B. The Board and the Union encourage all teachers and parents to continue to engage in teacher-parent conferences for all students. Teachers are encouraged to initiate teacher-parent contacts when, in their professional judgment, such contact would enhance student performance. Teachers will make a reasonable effort to respond to parental requests for a parent conference in a timely manner. The principal of the school shall assist in arranging teacher-parent conferences.
- C. It is agreed that, in order to provide consistency in implementing these provisions throughout the district, the following guidelines shall apply and be included in each school's faculty handbook and discussed thoroughly with members of the administrative and instructional staffs during preparation days prior to the opening of school each year:
  - 1. Teacher-parent conferences shall occur when students begin to display a consistent pattern of disruption, or when students demonstrate unacceptable academic achievement through failure to exert sufficient effort. The principal will exclude from class, for a period not to exceed 10 days, a student who has displayed a consistent pattern of disruption until a teacher-parent conference is held or until the principal determines such a conference cannot or need not be held.
  - 2. Written or telephone communication may be appropriate alternatives for a teacher-parent conference. A student progress report constitutes written communication.
  - 3. Teacher-parent conferences shall be scheduled at a time and place and/or manner mutually convenient for the teacher and the parent. Principals and teachers are encouraged to use teacher workdays for teacher-parent conferences, whenever possible.

4. Elementary teachers of students assigned to their self-contained classrooms shall afford parents or guardians of the students an opportunity for a teacher-parent conference. In the case of departmentalized or open-space arrangements, the teachers serving the same group of students shall afford the parents or guardians the same opportunity for a teacher-parent conference.
5. Teachers will log teacher-parent conferences in their official gradebooks and specify whether such contacts were in person, by telephone, or through written communication.
6. When parent contact is not achieved, evidence of the attempts to contact the parents will be recorded in the teacher's gradebook and the teacher will seek assistance from the administrator in making follow-up attempts to contact the parents.
7. Written notification must be sent home by the teacher to the parents or guardians at any time during the grading period when it becomes evident that the student is performing unsatisfactorily in academics, conduct, or effort. Minimally, such standardized written notification shall be sent home prior to the beginning of the eighth week of each of the four nine-week periods of the regular school year. Subsequent to the seventh week of the grading period, if an unanticipated reduction in performance becomes evident in academics, conduct, or effort, the teacher shall notify the parent or guardian. It is the teacher's responsibility to award a grade commensurate with the student's performance. Additionally, the teacher shall send to parents of all other students an "Interim Progress Report" at least two weeks prior to the end of each grading period. In order to minimize paperwork, such notification shall be transmitted on a standardized checklist type of form with appropriate guidelines which shall be developed jointly.
8. Procedurally, it is agreed that a standardized checklist type form shall include a place for the teacher to indicate that a parent conference is requested. However, if the parent does not respond to the request for a parent conference, it shall be the responsibility of school personnel to take, within reason, actions to initiate a parent conference. If these actions fail, the form will be verification of the original request.
9. Every attempt shall be made by the school to communicate directly with parents when there are indications that student performance and/or behavior is declining. The signature of a middle, or senior high school student on a progress report, with instructions to deliver it to the parent, will not in itself constitute a comprehensive attempt to achieve contact with parents. When, in the teacher's judgment, a conference with the parent is necessary, further attempts by mail or telephone are encouraged.
10. When, in the professional judgment of the administrator or his/her designee, daily or weekly progress reports may improve behavior of a student who displays a consistent pattern of disruption or improve the academic

performance of a student who is in danger of earning a grade of less than "C", a teacher must comply with the request for such a report. In order to minimize paperwork, such reports shall be transmitted on a standardized checklist type form and, in the absence of evidence that these reports are effecting positive change in the student, they shall be discontinued.

11. Although teachers are encouraged to respond to parent requests for information regarding academic performance or behavioral conduct of students, a teacher shall not be required to issue weekly progress reports when the originator of the request is a non-administrator or designee (e.g., parent/guardian). On a voluntary basis, however, and in accordance with the best professional judgment of the teacher, this information may be provided.
  12. A teacher is required to issue an official report of pupil progress, once, at the end of each grading period. This report is communicated to parents on the official M-DCPS report card.
- D. In the interest of heightening parental awareness of and responsibility for the performance of students, it is recommended that the Board seek the cooperation of the media in making regular public service announcements such as: "Do you know how your child is doing in school?" and notice that report cards are being issued during each week that such reports are being distributed.
- E. The following voluntary programs have been developed and implemented at the elementary school level. Successful programs shall be disseminated to all schools.
1. Report Card Pick-Up  
  
Pursuant to statutory authorization, the faculty may develop and implement a program whereby parents can pick up their children's report cards at least twice during the school year.
  2. Parents' Back-To-School-Day  
  
The faculty may develop and implement a program whereby parents have the opportunity to observe their children in the classroom environment and to participate in other normal school activities for all or part of one regularly-scheduled school day.
- F. Community Report Card

The Board agrees to implement the Community Report Card.

## **Section 12. Employee Parental Privilege**

In support of enhanced parent participation and communication, it is the parties intent that employees be provided with an opportunity to meet with their child's teacher(s) for parent-



teacher conferences. Accordingly, unit employees may be released for up to three hours annually at times when they are not assigned direct instruction or supervision of students (except where appropriate coverage is provided). Schools are encouraged to develop a plan designed to implement this provision in an orderly manner.

### **Section 13. Medicaid Reimbursement**

The Union and Board agree that the Speech/Occupational/Physical Therapist will assist the Board in securing reimbursement for Medicaid services rendered to eligible students.

### **Section 14. Uniforms for Instructional Employees**

Full-time instructional employees who are required to wear uniforms (i.e., medical related field and culinary arts instructors) shall be reimbursed for the cost of required uniforms in an amount not to exceed \$250 annually.