

Compilation of CASS Research Papers

Addressing the issues of transformation, teacher time and instructional time

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College of Alberta School Superintendents



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CASS BRIEF

Tripartite Negotiations and the Transformation Agenda

--- DRAFT ---

Purpose

The Alberta Government has once again engaged the ATA and the ASBA in discussions that may lead to a Tripartite agreement that could have another 5 year life span as well as have an immense effect on the transformation agenda. This includes the possibility of a significant unintended negative impact on the ability of school divisions in Alberta to improve teaching and learning.

This brief will focus on the relationships between the elements of a tripartite agreement that have a direct effect on the high quality instruction and high quality professional development needed to develop, support and sustain high quality teacher capacity.

The inter-relationship amongst teacher assigned instructional time, total teacher assignable time, high quality teacher professional development that leads to increased teacher capacity, the number of days worked by teachers and the instructional hours for students as well as a connection to workforce planning will be included.

This brief is not presented nor referenced as an academic paper and is not intended to cover all of the, separate yet related, necessary conditions for system improvement. It will not include topics such as sustainable three year funding, curriculum requirements and design or pre-service training.

It has as a focus, the premise that the key to transformation and sustained system improvement is that of improving the capacity of all teachers collectively in their role as skilled instructional experts. It would be hoped that any decisions reached in the tripartite discussions would account for the impact they will have on Improving teaching and learning in the Transformation Agenda for Education in the province of Alberta

In commenting about the factors that actually produce a sustained transformation in education systems Dylan William concluded:

“And it’s not class size that makes the difference, nor is it the presence or absence of setting by ability—these have only marginal effects. The only thing that really matters is the quality of the teacherⁱ. In the classrooms of the best teachers, students learn at twice the rate they do in the classrooms of average teachers—they learn in six months what students taught by the average teachers take a year to learn. And in the classrooms of the least effective teachers, the same learning will take two yearsⁱⁱ. Moreover, in the classrooms of the most effective teachers, students from disadvantaged backgrounds learn just as much as those from advantaged backgrounds, and those with behavioral difficulties learn as much as those withoutⁱⁱⁱ. That is why, as Michael Barber says, the quality of a country’s education system cannot exceed the quality of its teachers^{iv}.”

Context

ASBA

The ASBA participated in the tri-party discussions in their role of a representative organization but without the authority to actually represent boards or a defined position. The ASBA was at the table as a representative of boards but without a mandate to represent a ratified position or negotiate an agreement.

Thereafter the ASBA Board of Directors, after consultation with jurisdictions authorized the ASBA representatives to negotiate those items set out in the scope originally agreed to by the three parties: term; salary rates; long term, predictable, sustainable funding and a dispute resolution process. The ASBA approach to date has been to keep the Negotiations function or agenda separate from the Transformation function or agenda of their role. They have respectfully ensured an accountable role in representing boards that are autonomous yet have had the responsibility to provide a representative function on behalf of boards at a table where the Government will not engage boards separately and holds the ASBA accountable for representing boards in these discussions.

Alberta Teachers’ Association

The ATA could be characterized as having successfully incorporated various supports for teachers into the tripartite discussions including elements of professional development by way of increased PD days (12), less instructional time (-50 hours) and a defined assignable time for all teachers and administrators (200 days and 1200 hours a year) into the Tripartite discussions.

The ATA has been very engaged in the process and has enjoyed a favourable relationship with the former Minister of Education and the government generally. Teacher salaries have risen significantly over the term of the agreement, the partnership with Finland has opened the door to considering less instructional time and curriculum refinement and the professional development piece may have its acceptance both as a recognized contributor to improved teacher capacity and as a proxy for increasing salary compensation.

Government:

The government has had "Labour Peace" in the education sector for the last 5 years based on an agreement that incorporated the AWEI in determining teacher salaries. This agreement has been far more expensive, especially in light of the global economy, than they are comfortable with. They are motivated to maintain a long-term agreement to once again guarantee Labour Peace.

The government is in transition and likely facing an election in the near future. The government agenda includes having long term labour peace with teachers and other public sector employees prior to an election.

The new Premier is considered by some to be teacher and possibly education friendly, the former Minister of Education is essentially third in government hierarchy with continued influence over the direction of education, the deputy minister has not changed, the re-engagement of tripartite discussions seems to have a sense of urgency and already has an aggressive timeline.

It is very probable that this government will target a balanced provincial budget and a possible approach to negotiations with teachers will be to use incremental decreases in instructional hours and increased Professional Development days as a proxy for salary increases in their negotiation strategy – while presenting it as an enabler of transformation. At CASSIX the Deputy minister indicated that less instructional time for students is supported by international comparisons.

It is very likely that the March Tripartite proposal will form the basis for both discussions and a future proposal.

Contents of March 2010 Proposed Tripartite Agreement

In March of 2010 a tentative "Tripartite Agreement" was presented to teachers and to boards.

The March Tentative Agreement contained the following:

- A five year term
- A schedule of salary increases for each of the 5 years including a zero for most and an adjustment amount to bring many up to an established 4 yr max figure.
- A Ministerial Order that would have established the maximum assignable teacher time to 1200 hours per year. (Including School Based administrators)
- Reduce instructional time by 50 hours
- 12 professional learning days in the school year (equivalent of 12 days)
- A number of other professional and contractual directions (The recent "Proposed Parameters for a Framework Agreement" includes many process mechanisms similar to the March proposal).

The ATA Provincial Executive Council supported the agreement but it may have been difficult for them to receive the support of the Locals because the agreement provided little of interest to the majority of Calgary and Edmonton teachers (70% of membership) because giving up the 4.54% salary increase for the assignable minutes they already had in their collective agreement (1200 hours over 200 days = 1800 minutes or 30 hours a week) was not palatable.

Individual Boards were presented with the tentative agreement but never formally supported it or voted on it. Some characterized the Board response as negative and attributed the lack of MLA support to lobbying on the part of boards. The desire for flexibility to meet local needs in self-determined ways was a major reason for board discontent. The ASBA approach to date has been to keep the Negotiations function or agenda of their role separate from the Transformation function or agenda of their role. They have respectfully ensured that they have not overstepped their role in representing boards that are autonomous yet have had the responsibility to provide a representative function on behalf of boards at a table where the Government will not engage boards separately and holds the ASBA accountable for representing boards in these discussions.

The ATA has successfully incorporated elements of the Transformation agenda by way of increased PD days (10), less instructional time (-50 hours) and a defined assignable time for all teachers and administrators (200 days and 30 hours a week) into the Tripartite discussions and this has resonated with the Minister's Transformation agenda - but with potentially serious limitations.

Professional Development Implications

The External Advisory Committee for Workforce Planning stated that; "A key to unlocking the potential of an education sector workforce is professional learning".

Ben Levin states that " Professional Development for teachers has been widely seen as an essential way to promote teacher changes in teaching and learning and as the key to successful educational reforms (Borko & Putnam, 1995) Yet, as much as we recognize the importance of teacher professional education, the overall effects of current practices are disappointing. Professional development is often criticized as lacking in impact, especially when delivered through workshops"

He goes on to conclude that; "Studies have shown that effective professional development enhances the quality of education. The characteristics of effective professional learning programs for teachers are clearly identified and widely discussed in the literature. Generally speaking, they are job-embedded, on-going, in-depth, content focused, collaborative and encouraging reflective thinking".

Of significance in the current context of Tripartite discussions and a true Transformation Agenda is the ability to determine the necessary resources and infrastructure of time for embedded professional development. Research indicates that this includes time for collegial peer coaching, classroom visits and focused discussions both in team meetings and colleagues classrooms as they are amongst the most effective forms of professional development.

Individual boards will need to consider the impact that the government's last proposal of determining teacher assignable time of 1200 hours will have on their ability to enhance professional development while maintaining or enhancing their current levels of service to students. Questions will need to be asked about the limitations 30 assignable hours places on the time needed for the embedded collaboration research indicates should be a current practice standard.

The External Advisory Committee for Workforce Planning reinforced this notion by stating in its report that "Stakeholders will identify ways to maximize resources and opportunities for professional development in the education sector".

As a matter of process and intentional design in proceeding in the Tripartite discussions – consideration should first be given to the function of the education system, the specific teacher capacity that is intended to be attained through professional development needed for true transformation. That can then be followed by deliberately planning the form of the supports and infrastructure that include scheduling time within an established workday, workweek, and work year.

The External Advisory Committee on Workforce Planning further articulated that; "It is acknowledged in the research that, for professional learning to be effective, the learning must transform teacher practice and result in improved student outcomes. For this to happen, Darling-Hammond suggests that professional development should:

1. Be intensive, on-going and connected to practice
2. Focus on student learning
3. Align with school improvement priorities and goals
4. Promote strong working relationships and collaboration among teachers. (Darling-Hammond 2009)

Essentially, the necessary conditions for professional development to be able to result in transformational change in teacher expertise include the need for it to be scheduled to occur largely in the school and classroom of the teachers involved as they practice, which means that they need collaborative coaching or peer coaching embedded into the day when teachers are practitioners in their element and while students are there. They then need the organizational model of a professional learning community in which they also have the collaborative time together at the school when students are not there.

This leads again to the connection between the Transformation Agenda intended to provide sustainable school improvement in every school division, school and classroom in Alberta and the Tripartite agreement that will see the government establish, by ministerial order or public policy, the length of the school year, the assignable time for teachers in a given school day or school week or school year and ultimately enable of prevent the application of research based professional development practices.

As Williams examined the absolute societal imperative to improve public education he concluded that;

"We have to make the teachers we have better—what I call the "love the one you're with" strategy". He further stated that "Twenty, or even ten, years ago this would have resulted in a very gloomy prognosis, since there was little evidence that professional development could improve teacher quality. In recent years, however, we have begun to understand that professional development has been ineffective because it has been based on a faulty analysis of the problem.

The standard model of teacher professional development is based on the idea that teachers lack important knowledge. For the last twenty years, most professional development has therefore been designed to address those deficits. The result has been teachers who are more knowledgeable, but no more effective in practice. Changes in what teachers know or believe will not benefit students unless teachers also change what they do in

classrooms. We have been focusing on getting teachers to think their way into a new way of acting, whereas it would be far more effective to get teachers to act their way into a new way of thinking.

Unfortunately, changing teacher practice is difficult, because it involves changing long established habits. For example, we know that the way that most teachers ask questions in their classrooms is less than optimal, but a twenty-year veteran teacher may have asked over a million questions in her classroom. When you've done something one-way over a million times, doing it a different way it is difficult. This is the key idea if we are to improve teachers' practice—the realization that we need to help teachers change habits rather than acquire new knowledge—and this is why that all the current proposals for recertification will be bureaucratic distractions.

On the other hand, we are beginning to learn what kinds of structures need to be in place to help teachers change habits. ... Teachers need to be *accountable* for developing their practice—the evidence is that left to their own devices, teachers improve their practice slowly if at all. And because changes in practice are so difficult, they also need to be given *support* for change.

It is clear that all these elements can be provided through the establishment of school-based teacher learning communities ... teachers report back to their colleagues about what they have done in their classrooms to improve their practice, get the support of their colleagues for persisting with these difficult changes, hear about new ideas for improving practice, and commit themselves to specific improvements in their practice for the coming month. Schools that have embraced this kind of structure have seen significant improvements both in practice, as observed in classrooms, and in GCSE results”.

In Alberta's context, the 2003 Alberta's Commission on Learning (ACOL) report entitled “Every Child Learns. Every Child Succeeds” made the recommendation to “Require every school to operate as a professional learning community dedicated to continuous improvement in students' achievement” (recommendation 13). It also indicated that “Adequate time should be made available to incorporate professional development as part of a school's ongoing activities” and they also identified some of those professional development activities as being “collaborative program development and problem solving, mentoring, coaching and peer observations”. Where other incremental recommendations such as class size targets were implemented, the far more promising, research-based and transformational nature of professional learning communities and high quality professional development aimed at increasing teacher capacity are now recognized as holding the most promise for school improvement. The research would support the approach of education partners discussing the difference between the current paradigm of looking for

incremental decreases to workload or the number of instructional hours or the number of students in a class as directions for school improvement and focus on a paradigm that embraces and creates transformational factors that will lead to enhanced teacher capacity and a sustained cycle of school improvement.

In a 2009 publication by the National Staff Development Council entitled "Professional Learning in the Learning Profession" indicated that "improving professional learning for educators is a critical step in transforming schools and improving academic achievement". They go further to articulate the characteristics of an organizational model that leads to such a transformation.

"In an effective professional learning system, school leaders learn from experts, mentors, and their peers about how to become true instructional leaders. They work with staff members to create the culture, structures, and dispositions for continuous professional learning and create pressure and support to help teachers continuously improve by better understanding students' learning needs, making data-driven decisions regarding content and pedagogy, and assessing students' learning within a framework of high expectations.

Teachers meet on a regular schedule in learning teams organized by grade-level or content area assignments and share responsibility for their students' success. Learning teams follow a cycle of continuous improvement that begins with examining student data to determine the areas of greatest student need, pinpointing areas where additional educator learning is necessary, identifying and creating learning experiences to address these adult needs, developing powerful lessons and assessments, applying new strategies in the classroom, refining new learning into more powerful lessons and assessments, reflecting on the impact on student learning, and repeating the cycle with new goals"

The system at the school level is supported by state (provincial) and federal policies that encourage regular teacher collaboration and professional learning closely tied with school improvement priorities and provides needed resources to give teachers time and opportunity to make this happen".

The key findings of their report on professional learning and its impact on student achievement indicate that effective professional development is intensive (approximately 50 hours to develop specific skills in a given area), ongoing and connected to practice; focuses on the teaching and learning of specific academic content; is connected to school initiatives; and builds strong working relationships among teachers. Research on improving teacher capacity indicates that the key is that of establishing a professional learning community as a cultural and organizational model within which high quality professional development is embedded in the ongoing daily and weekly practice of teachers in their schools.

Teacher capacity is improved across a system, collectively and not just individually, when it is:

1. Embedded in the practice of a regularly assigned school day, week and year;
2. Collaborative and draws on the disciplined professional approach that incorporates a defined improvement cycle that examines results and the instructional strategies employed in daily teacher practice.
3. On-going throughout the school year with a schedule that provides both time for peer coaching, skill practice, modeling, peer observation in each others' classrooms, reflection - as well as at least one hour per week in collaborative discussions and more hours in examining data, analyzing results and planning for improvement together.
4. Context-based, meaning it happens in the classrooms where teachers teach while the students are there and with others who have similar teaching assignments and subject matter.

These high quality, transformational, professional learning conditions require a deep understanding of the discipline of teaching, a culture of a truly professional learning community characterized by: 1. A shared mission, vision and values; 2. Collective inquiry; 3. Collaborative teams; 4. Action orientation and experimentation; 5. Continuous improvement; and, 6. Results orientation, and an organizational infrastructure that both engenders the collaborative standard of professional practice and provides the time in the school day timetable, division calendar and mandated school year to facilitate effective, research and evidence based, transformational professional development.

The professional standard has changed from that of practicing in isolation to that of practicing in collaborative and interdependent teams. Transforming the teaching culture into one where practicing in a deeply collaborative manner rather than in isolation has become recognized as the professional standard.

Designing and implementing both a school timetable and a division calendar where time for collaboration, coaching, peer mentoring, analysis of student results, teacher instructional strategies and a disciplined improvement cycle are embedded into the infrastructure of assignable time is critical as a foundation to this transformation. Can this be accomplished within the proposed 1200 hours a year?

Throughout the Tripartite discussions the circumstances of individual boards and the degree to which they are able to resource and implement the conditions needed to do this in their circumstances will need to be given due consideration.

Supplemental Considerations

Consideration: Professional Development and Assigned Teacher Time

On the website of the Alberta Teachers' Association located in a section on Hours of Instruction the ATA presents information from a 1997 study that indicated that during a typical week teachers work in excess of 50 hours a week (between 52.4 and 53.4 hrs). The Canadian Teachers' Federation has published similar information indicating that when surveyed, teachers indicated that they worked an average of 51.8 hours per week in 2001 and 55.6 hours per week in 2005. To our knowledge these hours are exclusive of extra-curricular activities which are deemed to be voluntary and not included in the actual provision of professional duties which would include instruction, preparation etc. A number of teacher collective agreements in the province of Alberta recognize that participation in extra-curricular activities is a voluntary activity that is not assigned nor compensated for as part of their professional duties.

In Alberta, when assignable time can be found in collective agreements, by far the most common clause stipulates that teachers are to be assigned 30 hours per week even though it is acknowledged that teacher responsibilities require far more than that in order to provide high quality professional service to students.

In the collective agreements where teacher assignable time is stipulated, it is common for the 30 hours to be further disaggregated into instructional time and assignable time. Instructional time is usually limited to 23.3 hours of assigned teacher time and 6.6 hours is left to be assigned for preparation, supervision, meeting with parents, collaborating with colleagues providing assistance to individual students and other duties as assigned by the principal. In school divisions that do not have an hours of work clause there is more flexibility in their assigned tasks so long as the provisions of the school act and other legislation is followed. Many rural school divisions have indicated that such flexibility is absolutely necessary in order to provide high quality learning experiences for students given the lack of any economy of scale and other contextual constraints that are not present in large urban divisions.

The link between professional development and assigned teacher time comes in the relationship between the limits that 30 hours a week of assignable time places on what evidence-based research concludes is the professional standard of teachers' professional responsibility to collaborate with other teachers. The research is quite conclusive regarding the need for teachers to collaborate in regularly scheduled, embedded, ongoing and disciplined ways. This research reasonably establishes a professional standard and expectation for all teachers. Yet, the most commonly identified barrier to this occurring in Alberta is insufficient time to do so.

Teachers and the teaching profession rightly espouse the need for collaboration and high quality professional development as described in the research and in the information already provided in this brief. However, it is fair to conclude that there exists a cultural norm amongst Alberta teachers, supported by the union function of the ATA, to hold the position – contractually or otherwise – that anything outside of the current 30 hours, or in the absence of an hours of work clause, anything outside of the school bell day – is individually and not collectively directed – so systematic collaboration suffers. This is not a pejorative statement but rather a fair observation of the day-to-day practice of most teachers anywhere.

Schools and school systems often find it virtually impossible to provide the high quality collaborative, contextual, on-going, on-content professional development experiences defined in the research and espoused by the profession within the 30 hours limit. Many schools and school divisions try to facilitate desirable professional development for teachers by spending thousands and hundreds of thousands of dollars on substitute teachers to provide collaboration time but it is never sufficient and can never be resourced in a manner that leads to sustained growth or improvement.

When school divisions put forward the need to be afforded flexibility to meet student needs it is because they want desperately to provide the best possible professional infrastructure for teachers in order to achieve the best possible learning for students. They want the resources and ability to provide the infrastructure that will establish high quality professional development. The same could be said of the systems that are already working under the 30-hour limit.

**Consideration:
Increasing Teacher Assigned Time**

A possible consideration is that of attaining at least 1400 hours assignable time. It is possible that such a decision would actually benefit all parties because it would enhance the ability to schedule the preparation time, collaborative time and embedded peer coaching time etc., that research indicates teachers need. 1400 hours is a 35-hour workweek over the 40 teaching weeks of the year. 1200 hours is a 30-hour workweek.

An assignable work-year of 1400 hours may create a situation where teachers would have the balance of full days or half days without students for targeted professional development and then it could be sustained with daily-embedded time in each other's classes learning from each other, coaching each other practicing and perfecting the skills they have been exposed to. This (1400 hrs) could lead to a renewed profession.

At 50 hours a week over 40 weeks it is 2,000 hours that surveys indicate teachers work and are paid for. Assigning 1400 of those hours, an average of 35 a week, 7 a day over 200 days, reduces teachers hours worked out of school from 800 to 600 a year. That is three hours a day as opposed to the four hours a day the current survey information indicates. There is a strong case to be made that teachers would be far better served professionally to have the time scheduled together during the school day than to continue to spend the time alone.

Professional practice is unlikely to be enhanced if teachers are unable to be scheduled to work together to do all they need to do to attain the skills and proficiency in high quality instructional practices required of them to meet student learning needs. It is only in rare circumstances that teachers are able to organize their lives so that they are working together systematically outside of the defined hours of the teaching day.

**Consideration:
Workforce Planning and Sustainability:**

Another strong consideration in ensuring time for a collaborative culture and embedded high quality professional development is the benefit it would be to new teachers and workforce sustainability. If new teachers were able to enter a condition where they had designated time in the school day to learn from and with experienced teachers who were exemplifying the highest of professional standards their experience and professional capacity would be significantly enhanced. Teacher development, teacher expertise and teacher retention rates would improve significantly by design.

The Alberta Government is also predicting a shortage of teachers in the future and there are strong indications that many new teachers will come from outside of the province and possibly from other countries. These teachers will likely have been educated in another country, trained in foreign universities and new to both the profession and the province. Like new teachers from Alberta, these teachers will be far more successful being welcomed into a professional learning community with high quality professional development support as opposed to being expected to survive on their own or be supported by ad-on programs that are yet to be developed for immigrating teachers.

**Consideration:
Teacher Compensation**

In current circumstances, a 4-year max teacher who works 50 hours a week for 40 weeks is considered to work 2000 hours and receives approximately 100,000 dollars in annual compensation including salary and benefits. To the general public this would translate into an hourly wage of 50 dollars an hour. If teachers were considered to work 50 hours a week for 38 weeks then this would translate into 1800 hours worked and compensation totaling about 55 dollars an hour over the year.

Whether the premise is that teachers work 2000 hours a year or 1800 hours a year the total presumed workload for teachers will not change by increasing assignable time because it will be offset by a decrease in the amount of personally directed professional service. Whether the current situation of assigning teachers 1200 hours a year, 200 days of 6 hours plus the 800 hours of personally directed professional service or assigning teachers 1400 hours a year, 200 days of 7 hours plus 600 hours of personally directed service, the total hours worked would not be increased and in many cases teachers have indicated that the additional collaborative time actually reduces their total workload.

Instructional Time

The current instructional time requirements in the Province of Alberta, combined with many other factors, have led to some of the highest student achievement in the world. While the optimum amount of instructional time for quality student learning is open to much debate, the current Alberta Education instructional time requirements have led Alberta students to be among the highest academic achievers in the world.

The question that the College of Alberta School Superintendents (CASS) would like to submit is: "What is driving the agenda to consider fewer instructional hours for students in the Province of Alberta; is it educationally driven or are there other factors that are influencing the debate?" CASS respectfully submits that the agenda is being driven by factors related to the tripartite discussions. The issues appear to focus more on teacher working conditions than student learning outcomes. While this may be the current political reality in the Province of Alberta, this should be clearly stated. To discuss student instructional time, linking it to the transformation of education, while actually considering this learning factor in the context of teacher working conditions is, at best, misleading.

If student instructional time is to be considered it should be through broad consultation with the public, educators, government officials and other stakeholders. The current process is both hurried and exclusive. It is the concern of CASS that irreversible changes to student instructional time will occur without learned discussion and broad public consultation.

CASS urges the Government of Alberta to reconsider its process for the consideration of student instructional time. Changes to instructional time should not occur in parallel with the tripartite discussions. Rather, the determination of student instructional time should occur in a nonpartisan, nonpolitical arena where a researched informed, broad consultative discussion occurs to determine optimum student learning environments.

Should the political environment dictate that the current consideration of student instructional time proceeds, CASS urges that a number of key guiding principles be considered in determining student instructional time requirements in the Province of Alberta.

Principles

1. Curriculum and Curricular Outcomes

The current Alberta Program of Studies contains a large number of curricular outcomes for students. The sheer number of these outcomes creates an almost insurmountable task for teachers. It is difficult, if not impossible, to cover the curriculum and ensure that students achieve the curricular outcomes in the current allotment of student instructional time.

If student instructional time is decreased, without a corresponding change to curriculum, teachers will be faced with an impossible task.

Changes to curriculum require intensive work on the part of Alberta Education and teachers in the field. In order to create a curriculum based on student competencies, reducing curriculum outcomes and creating a curriculum that is deep rather than broad, realistic timelines need to be put in place. We see tremendous potential in the work related to Action on Curriculum and we believe that it is important to provide adequate time to address the mandate for transforming education in Alberta through curricular reform. To decrease student instructional time before changing the current requirements of the curriculum would, in the opinion of CASS, be a grave error.

Research in the area of student instructional time and curriculum supports this argument.

The research literature suggests that, while time is certainly a critical factor, by itself it has little direct impact on student performance. Simply adding time to the school year or day would not likely produce large scale gains in student achievement.

Rather, what research studies repeatedly find is that in education, quality is the key to making time matter. Of particular importance is providing curriculum and instruction geared to the needs and abilities of students, engaging them so they will return day after day, continuing to build on what they have learned. ("Is It Just a Matter of Time?", Julie Aronson, Joy Zimmerman, and Lisa Carlos, http://www.wested.org/online_pubs/po-98-02.pdf)

A study of instructional time in a number of nations concluded much the same.

The authors next analyzed the effect of variations in total instructional time within nations by comparing total instructional hours to math, science, and civics achievement. The variance in achievement was only slightly related to total instructional hours. In Japan, for example, students who received more than 1,112 hours of instruction per year scored only 25 points higher on the math assessments than those who received less than 935 hours of total instruction. The majority of countries generally showed small correlations between total hours of instruction and achievement scores in math. The same held true for achievement in science and civics.

The authors also examined the relationship between the hours of subject-specific instruction and subject-specific achievement and again found weak correlations. In math, the average variation in achievement explained by instructional time was +/- 0.14 (or only 2.2 percent of the variation in scores). In science there was a slightly stronger correlation of .23, explaining 5.0 percent of the variation in scores; while in civics, two countries showed a positive correlation, but six countries showed a negative correlation. At best, the average variance in score explained by increasing the hours of instruction ranged from 0.8 percent in math to 7.0 percent in civics (most notably among developing nations).

The Bottom Line

Changes in instructional time do not generally increase or decrease student achievement, unless such changes go beyond unusually low, or high, amounts of time. Curriculum and instructional quality appear to have a much greater effect on achievement than do total hours of instructional time. (Baker, D. P., Fabrega, R., Galindo, C., & Mishook, J. (2004). Instructional time and national achievement: Cross-national evidence. Prospects 34(3), 311-334.)

It is clear, from these and other studies, that curriculum design and instructional quality are larger factors in student achievement than instructional time. If instructional time in the Province of Alberta is to decrease, a corresponding process for the redesign of curriculum must occur. To change instructional time requirements without first redesigning curriculum would be an error. The curriculum work needs to occur first, then instructional time can be considered.

2. Instructional Quality - Teaching Strategies and Learner Engagement

A second key factor in student achievement is instructional quality. It is clear from the research that the quality of instruction provided by teachers is a far greater indicator of student success than the amount of instructional time provided to students.

Any examination of the research on the relationship between time and learning is complicated by the variety of ways in which researchers talk about time. While some studies define it somewhat generically, (e.g., "the school day"), others make distinctions between different subsets of time depending on how it is used by schools, teachers and students. If one is to compare findings among studies, understanding the definitional distinctions is critical. Education time as researchers view it is perhaps best understood as a vertical continuum of sorts. Picture an inverted pyramid. At the top is time most broadly described, most easily measured, most abundant and most easily mandated: the number of hours in a school day and days in a school year. At the bottom is time most narrowly focused, most difficult to measure, most elusive and most difficult for policy makers to influence: those moments when learning is actually taking place.

Allocated time. At the top of the continuum is the most generic type of education time, allocated time, which refers to the total number of days or hours students are required to attend school. Moving down the continuum, allocated time can then be broken into instructional time and non-instructional time. The former is time spent in class, whether for core academic subjects like math, science and language arts or for non-academic electives, such as driver's education. Non-instructional time, by contrast, is that portion of the day devoted to lunch and recess, to passing between classes, to school assemblies and to other non-classroom activities.

Engaged time. Next on the continuum — a subset of instructional time — is engaged time, during which students are participating in learning activities. While any 50-minute class period (so called instructional time) may nominally be devoted to a particular subject, such as history, in reality, some portion of the period is almost always consumed by activities having little or nothing to do with learning, such as roll call, disciplinary issues and interruptions by

announcements coming over the public address system. Thus, in trying to understand the relationship of time to learning, researchers narrow their focus yet again, this time honing in on that portion of the period when students are both in class and participating in instructional activities. Engaged time is also referred to in the literature as "time-on-task."

Academic learning time: Finally, at the bottom of the continuum is that time when learning actually occurs. Simply because a student is engaged in instructional activities does not necessarily mean he or she is learning. For example, an advanced student who is asked to spend 30 minutes going over material he has already fully mastered, will not be learning because there is nothing for him to learn. Similarly, a student who is involved in an instructional activity that covers advanced material for which she is not yet prepared is also unlikely to learn. With this in mind, researchers have focused in on academic learning time as that precise period when an instructional activity is perfectly aligned with a student's readiness and learning occurs.

The Basic Findings. The majority of studies dealing with the relationship of education time to student achievement look at allocated time, while other studies focus on engaged time or academic learning time. In some cases, the time variable being studied is not clearly specified. This inconsistency can make it difficult or misleading to compare studies. It also helps explain why, looking at the entire body of research on time and learning, there appear to be mixed findings about the degree to which time influences student learning.(8) However, despite this variability, the literature reveals a fairly consistent pattern:

There is little or no relationship between allocated time and student achievement.

There is some relationship between engaged time and achievement.

There is a larger relationship between academic learning time and achievement. (9)

(http://www.wested.org/cs/we/print/docs/we/timeandlearning/the_research.html)

Given this research, and the research findings of others, it is clear that it is not the amount of time that is allocated to instruction, but rather how that time is used, that is essential to improving student achievement.

In any discussion regarding the decrease of instructional time for Alberta students, this factor needs to be considered. A decrease in student instructional time cannot occur in a vacuum. In addition to changes in curriculum efforts need to be intensified to provide practicing teachers with quality professional development in the area of engaging students in quality academic learning time. Further, discussions need to occur with post-secondary institutions to design teacher education programs with this outcome in mind.

The intensely short timelines that are being contemplated for the decrease of student instructional time does not allow for the design of quality professional development activities for teachers to ensure that students are receiving a higher quality of educational experience to compensate for the decrease in instructional hours.

3. Assessment Practices

If curriculum redesign and teacher practice that focuses on providing students with quality academic time are realized, it follows that current assessment practices in Alberta will need to be examined.

Much instruction in Alberta schools is geared towards ensuring that students cover the curriculum in order to prepare for provincial achievement tests and diploma examinations. The large number of curricular outcomes, combined with an assessment regime that measures students' understanding of these outcomes, dictates that teachers require a large number of instructional hours to ensure that students are prepared for the provincial examinations.

While CASS is supportive of standardized assessment that measures student achievement, current provincial assessments will need to be revised if changes to curriculum occur. If a curriculum is developed that focuses on depth and not breadth, fewer curricular outcomes will need to be measured using provincial assessment tools. This could result in fewer student instructional hours being required to prepare students for provincial assessments.

Summary Comments

The redesign of curriculum, the development of quality professional development that focuses on academic engagement for students, and the development of quality assessment tools requires time. The current timelines for the discussion of student instructional time does not provide the time necessary for development in these areas. The work in these three areas needs to occur before, not after, a decrease in student instructional time.

The discussion regarding student instructional time needs to involve all stakeholders. The public needs to be informed about the research and issues surrounding instructional time. Broad public consultation needs to occur. It is clear from previous experience in Alberta that changes to student instructional time will be met with resistance unless it is clear that there are compelling educational reasons for change.

Discussions regarding student instructional time need to occur as part of the transformation of education, not in conjunction with tripartite discussions regarding teacher salaries and working conditions.

Changes to instructional time may indeed benefit students. It is not clear that current instructional time for students is at the correct number of hours per year. Changes to required instructional time may be required. This discussion needs to occur, however, in the context of curriculum, professional development, and assessment. Most of all, there needs to be time for a thorough examination of the issues and thoughtful planning on how to move forward.

Teacher Time

A Look at Research and Recommendations

The intent of this paper is to provide a recommendation to the ASBA (Alberta School Board's Association) as to the issues surrounding the 'time' teachers spend in front of students.

To make a sweeping decision to reduce time committed to student learning across different contexts with varying demographics and schools structures makes some underlying assumptions that require close examination. One assumption is that teaching quality in Alberta is in question. Another assumption is that there is a lack of engaged academic learning time across all of our Alberta schools. As well, we must assume that if we reduce teachers' instructional time there will be a corresponding increase in teacher quality and student achievement.

All of this points to the complexity of the relationship among teaching time, quality instruction and student learning, as well as the interrelationship of student performance and contextual differences such as valuing of education, parental support, culture, demographics, social support structures, and student activity outside of school. This gives cause to proceed with decisions regarding teacher time with caution, especially if driven by political or economic pressures.

Overview of Research

With an abundance of research supporting a strong positive correlation between quality teaching and student achievement, regardless of time (Aronson & Carlos, 1998; Hargreaves, 2009; Marzano, 2003), it is tempting to make the assumption that the quantity of teacher instructional time is an innocuous variable. When coupled with research that concludes quantity of allocated instructional time does not have significant influence on student learning unless it is used for intentional and focused academic learning time (Silva, 2007; Zimmerman, 2001), it appears a strong argument for reducing instructional time to address teacher development in quality teaching. A "less is more" supposition is concluded. The relationship among instructional time, teaching quality and student learning, however, is far too complex to draw the conclusion that students can learn more with less time if teaching quality is enhanced. Research completed by the Toronto District School Board (2007) cautioned making inter-country comparisons because expectations, demographics and societal context may be entirely different.

There is a strong body of research that demonstrates time does matter when there is effective teaching and actual academic learning time (Organizational Development Department of Research and Information Services, 2007). The combination of additional time with effective teaching strategies and curricula designed to engage students is a powerful tool for enhancing academic performance (Aronson & Carlos, 1998). In a summary of research pertaining to time and student achievement, Rangel (2007) points out that students who spend more time engaged at the appropriate level of difficulty on tasks central to the curriculum have higher achievement than those who spend less time. Studies have also evidenced a strong correlation between instructional time and reading, science and math scores on tests (Brown & Saks, 1986; Keeves, 1992; Marcotte and Hansen, 2010; OECD, 2006; Suarez, 1991).

When comparing international results (TIMSS), there are many factors other than time that appear to account for differences in student performance: quality of teaching, curriculum, and the role of the parent (Aronson & Carlos). There also appear to be important cultural differences with respect to value placed on education. Academic learning is considered a primary responsibility for students, who consequently spend less time playing sports, working and engaging in leisure. In many Asian countries students spend large amounts of time outside of school doing homework and receiving tutoring which increases the amount of learning time (Aronson & Carlos). Dillon (2010) examined factors that contributed to the success of Shanghai students on the 2009 PISA examinations and concluded that results, in part, reflect the culture of education including the amount of time students spent studying rather than extracurricular activities like sports.

A factor requiring careful consideration is the relationship between instructional time and the changing needs of 21st century learners. The recent *Framework for Student Learning* (Alberta Education, 2011) will provide direction for the development of future curriculum in the province. The framework identifies a number of student competencies that will prepare them for the 21st century as “engaged thinkers and ethical citizens with an entrepreneurial spirit” (p.2). The competencies include the higher order cognitive processes of critical thinking, problem solving and decision making. Student will be expected to be creative, innovative, fluent communicators, technologically fluent, collaborative and responsible. There is research that points to the need for increased instructional time to accommodate the kind of pedagogy and instructional strategies necessary to support complex cognitive thinking and deep learning (Bauerlein, 2011; Grouws & Cebulla, 2000; Keeves, 1992; Silva, 2007). Examples of powerful strategies of learning that promote complex thinking include cooperative learning and the authentic application of problem solving and critical thinking situations (Vogel, 2000). To address higher level learning competencies, teachers are compelled to use classroom discussions, higher-order questions, and inquiry-based learning, as well as performance and project based demonstrations of student learning (Grouws & Cebulla, 2000; Vogel, 2000). This all takes more time, not less. Deep learning of less content at higher cognitive levels takes more time than a breadth of content based curriculum delivered through more traditional teacher-directed strategies such as lectures, text based response, independent practice and asking simple questions that require brief responses from students (Vogel, 2000).

Problem solving and critical thinking do not happen in a vacuum. Instructional time should not be reduced on the false assumption that content does not need to be taught because it can be found. It is true that students do not necessarily need to learn volumes of content that can be easily accessed electronically, but they do need to bank knowledge to have the ability to engage in complex thinking such as analysis, evaluation, and comparative exploration (Dalton, 2008; Rose, 2009). Without a bank of knowledge, they do not have the ability to be discerning and know what to do with information. There is a well-researched connection between background knowledge and academic achievement (Marzano, 2004). Recent brain research on twenty-first century brain development is beginning to paint a bleak picture of the brain developing under continued stimuli and constant instant messages. Pathways for deep thinking, empathy and compassion are not developing (Carr, 2010; Small & Vorgan, 2008). They conclude that time is of the essence; time to think, debate, and reflect in order to build the sophisticated networks in the brain necessary for what is being called “life-deep learning” (Carr, 2010). Filling the curriculum with digital text and visuals, having students read and write blogs, wikis, Facebook pages, multimedia assemblages do little to address the primary reason that students end up not ready for success in post-secondary studies – they are unable to engage in deep reading and complex tasks (Alton, 2008; Dune,

2009; Rose, 2008). Difficulty lies in students' lack of experience and practice with reading complex texts. Complex texts require slower labor (Rose, 2008). The demands of complex texts include willingness to probe, a capacity for uninterrupted thinking, and receptivity to deep thinking. Balancing fluency with electronic media with the ability to critically examine written text takes more time. Research suggests that the ability to synthesize, analyze and evaluate complex text will be a primary determinate for success of individuals in the 21st century (Bauerlein, 2011). Some research suggest adding time or carefully preserving some time to engage students in slow reading with print matter and investigations that require complex thinking (Bauerlein, M., 2011).

Studies have shown that when instructional time is reduced the focus is on core curriculum and students end up with reduced time in other classes such as art, music, drama, physical education and practical arts. Narrowing of the curriculum is a serious mistake. A meta-analysis of 35 years of educational research indicates "guaranteed and viable curricula... A composite of opportunity to learn and time, is the school level factor with the most impact on student achievement" (Marzano, 2003). According to Marzano, the move to a more rigorous curriculum and transparent accountability is important and must be matched with efficient use of time.

The addition of high-quality teaching time is of particular benefit to certain groups of students, such a low-income students and others who have little opportunity for learning outside of school (Marzano). The research conducted by the Toronto District School Board recommended consideration of extra time for students who need help and extended services for students at risk of academic failure (2007). The research on the need for expanded learning opportunities for low-income students is clear—without more time to create greater access to quality learning, achievement gaps are sure to persist (Silva, 2007).

The Landscape – Alberta, Canada and Other Nations

Alberta

Thirteen school boards in Alberta now have a provision in their Collective Agreements with ATA covering Hours of Work or Minutes of Instruction. These provisions differ and address hours of instruction or assignable time, or both.

During the week of October 24, 2011, school boards were surveyed as to their views on the matter of instructional or teacher time provisions in the collective agreement. 27 boards responded. Of the respondents, four had collective agreement provisions, and one addressed limits to time in policy. Of these five, four reported concerns about having teacher/instructional time provisions in the collective agreement. The other 22 boards were uniformly against incorporating instructional or teacher time provisions in the collective agreement.

The survey provided the following reasons not to include such provisions in the contract:

- "thin edge of the wedge" – opens the possibility of further demands for class size restrictions, restriction of definition of teacher duties, etc.
- Teachers as professionals are responsible to devote the time necessary to perform their professional duties

- The need to preserve “management rights” and flexibility of operations
- Limitations on time require more teachers, and so increase costs
- Decisions on assigning duties at a school are best left to the school and jurisdiction
- These provisions introduce another item subject to grievance, which is time consuming and expensive.
- Restrictions on time are particularly hard to implement in small school settings, which have fewer staff and, therefore, less flexibility to timetable or to cover teacher absence
- Time at school is not strictly determined by educational functions. Some schools may be required to have longer days due to transportation constraints (joint bussing arrangements, city transit with hours of availability restricted due to city rush hours, etc.). These schools will have greater needs for supervision of students.

Other concerns expressed were:

- Difficult to balance needs of the Program of Studies with PLC (Professional Learning Communities) time and embedded PD. PLC time might have to be eliminated to meet instructional requirements.
- The Letter of Understanding with the ATA defining a teacher’s work day as 9.1 hours may be invalidated by time restrictions.
- A “one size fits all” approach to teacher time is unworkable due to the needs to accommodate different school circumstances, such as small rural schools vs. large urban high schools, Hutterite colony operations with only one teacher and multi-grades, etc.
- Limitations on teacher time may shift more student supervision to support staff, increasing wage costs through increased hours worked.
- School jurisdictions can currently set their own calendar(s) to meet community needs. Restriction on time may eliminate some current arrangements involving 4 day weeks or year round schooling.
- As instruction moves to “any time, any place, any pace”, the implementation of this concept requires more flexibility, not less.
- It is quite possible that any savings achieved through a multi-year deal at the provincial level by defining grid increases may be more than offset by the need to hire additional teachers to meet decreased instructional time provisions.

International and National Comparisons

Research Points (2007), published by the American Educational Research Association (AERA) indicate that “Students who spend more time engaged at the appropriate level of difficulty on tasks central to the curriculum have higher achievement than those who spend less time’. They indicate that this “academic learning time” is critical to student achievement. As an example they describe a study by Clark and Linn in 2003 involving 3000 eighth-grade students. They were all taught by the same science-teacher, who adjusted a unit of study to be completed in 12 weeks, 9 weeks, 6 weeks, or 3 weeks. The students maintained their performance on multiple-choice questions but their conceptual learning fell dramatically as time was diminished. Students’ performance dropped from 69% in the 12-week unit of study to 25% when the unit was streamlined to 3 weeks. The final conclusion by AERA was that “academic learning time is a fraction of Allocated Time in any school subject but it is the most important factor related to learning”. (AERA, 2007)

Victor Lavy (2010) from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Royal Holloway University of London, DEP, CEPR, and NBER conducted a study into the differences across and within countries in instructional time and achievement in Math, Science, and Reading. Lavy provides evidence from a sample of 15 year-olds from over 50 countries that participated in PISA 2006 that indicates that instructional time has a positive and significant effect on test scores. He goes on to share similar evidence from a sample of 10 and 13 year-olds in Israel. The size of the effect was larger for girls, for pupils from low SES families, and for immigrants (Lavy, 2010)

Comparisons in Instructional Time

1. From PISA 2006 (Lavy, 2010) – accessed from OECD Education at a Glance, 2006.

Country	Compulsory classroom instruction
15 year-olds	
Belgium, France and Greece	Over 1000 hr/yr
England, Luxemburg, and Sweden	only 750 hr/yr
7-8 year-olds	
England, Greece, France, Portugal	over 800 hr/yr
Finland, Norway	less than 600 hr/yr

2. Minimum and maximum mean classroom instruction time OECD. (Lavy, 2010)

Subject	Maximum	Minimum
Math	4.2 hr/week (Iceland)	2.4 hr/week (Netherlands)
Science	3.6 hr/week (New Zealand)	1.8 hr/week (Netherlands)
Reading	4.7 hr/week (Germany)	2.4 hr/week (Austria)

3. Research Report Toronto District School Board (Erling, 2007)
 - a. Ontario Ministry of Education regulation for school year calendars
Is 194 school days (2 days can be designated professional activity days and 4 days that Boards can designate as professional activity days and the other 188 days are to be instructional days).
 - b. Erling indicates that a 5-hour instructional day and 195 or 195 total school days is relatively standard at the K-8 levels across the provinces, although there is some variation depending on maximum days allowed for non-teaching functions. (Erling, 2007)
 - c. Erling identifies Saskatchewan and Alberta as provinces that allow up to 200 days during a school year with Alberta legislation requiring that students in elementary receive 950 hours (10 hours more than Ontario students) and 1000 hours per year in secondary schools (100 or more hours than Ontario students) (Erling, 2007)
 - d. Erling indicates that there are varying policies throughout United States regarding minimum number of instructional days and whether or not PD time is counted as instructional time within their 180-day minimum requirements. (Erling, 2007)

- e. International Erling reports that in 1997 the EIC report "The Road Ahead" in its survey of 20 countries' number of school days ranked Canada 10th out of the 20 with its 188 school days. In comparison, China ranked the highest with 251 days and Portugal the lowest with 172. (Erling, 2007)
- f. Prendergast (2007) indicated that international data provided by 35 participants of the TIMSS assessment revealed the average number of instructional days is 187, ranging from 162 in Iceland to 231 in Japan.

Summary of instructional days in various countries from this data including the extremes:

Country	Instructional Days
China	251
Japan	231
Canada	188
Portugal	172
Iceland	162

More recently the OECD just released a study on the actual time spent by teachers teaching students varies across countries of the world. The data is summarized in the following chart:

	Number of weeks of instruction			Number of days of instruction			Net teaching time in hours			Working time required at school in hours			Total statutory working time in hours		
	Primary education	Lower secondary education	Upper secondary education, general programmes	Primary education	Lower secondary education	Upper secondary education, general programmes	Primary education	Lower secondary education	Upper secondary education, general programmes	Primary education	Lower secondary education	Upper secondary education, general programmes	Primary education	Lower secondary education	Upper secondary education, general programmes
OECD average	38	38	38	186	185	183	779	701	656	1182	1198	1137	1665	1660	1663

As indicated in 2009 (OECD, 2011) teachers in primary schools averaged 779 hours, 701 in lower secondary schools and 656 in upper secondary schools. The number of teaching hours per year in lower secondary education in 2009 varied from over 1200 hours per year in Chile to approximately 400 in Greece. United States, Mexico and Argentina join Chile in teaching hours over 1000 hours per year in public lower secondary schools. The average number of teaching hours in public upper secondary general education is 656 per year with ranges from 377 in Denmark to 1368 in Argentina. Hours per day that teachers in lower secondary teach varies widely from 3 hours or less per day for Greece, Japan, Korea, Poland and the Russian Federation to more than 5 hours in Argentina, Chile, Mexico and the United States.

The OECD (2011) Education at a Glance also reports that the annual teaching hours in primary schools range from less than 600 in Greece, Hungary and Poland to 900 or more in France, Ireland, the Netherlands and the United States to over 1200 in Chile and Indonesia. However, differences in length of school days will determine how many hours the teachers will be expected to teach each day.

Although there was little change in teaching time between 2000 and 2009, about half of the OECD countries for which there is data available saw at least a 5% change, mostly an increase in the amount of teaching time. In most countries, primary teachers teach more hours per year than secondary teachers. Greece is one of the rare countries that reduce teaching hours as teachers gain experience in the classroom. (OECD)

PISA Results 2009: The Shanghai Story

In 2009, Shanghai students took the PISA assessment for the first time. These students ranked first in reading, math, and science, outperforming other 15 year-olds in 65 countries of the world. "The results also appear to reflect the culture of education there, including greater emphasis on teacher training and more time spent on studying rather than extracurricular activities like sports" (Dillon, Dec. 7, 2010 for The New York Times). Dillon goes on to report that Secretary of Education for United States, Arnie Duncan sees this as a "wake-up call" for United States. Their students scored 23rd or 24th in most subjects. The New York Times report quotes from the OECD report on the latest PISA results that notes China's history of competitive exams and long school hours for their students (note 251 instructional days listed above). In recent years, teaching has become one of the "preferred occupations in China, and salaries have risen. In Shanghai, the authorities have undertaken important curriculum reforms, and educators have been given more freedom to experiment" (Dillon, 2010)

The Mechanics – What Constitutes Instructional, Assigned and Assignable Time and the Professional Expectations of Teachers

Understanding the some basic terms is essential in any agreement that includes time. Although there are variations, following are some definitions used by various jurisdictions:

- Instructional Time:
 - Instruction is the process in which certificated teachers take responsibility for ensuring that learning activities for students are directed towards achieving outcomes of approved Program of Studies and/or individualized Program Plans through:

- interaction with students, either face-to-face or using information and communication technology, for the purpose of teaching, assessing student achievement of outcomes and related activities including tutorials, discussion groups and learning skill centers: and/or:
- interaction with students who are engaged in self-directed packages, independent study, computer-assisted learning and/or classroom learning; and/or
- Supervision of presentations for and/or by students, workplace learning and other learning activities.

Reference: The Teaching Quality Standard Ministerial Order # 016/97, Section 18, the School Act.

- Assigned Time:
 - Any time that is spent on a duty that is assigned to a teacher by the school administration
- Assignable Time:
 - All time during the school day as well as time outside of the student hours. Teachers can be assigned any professional duties by the principal during this time which includes time that is free from instruction (sometimes referred to as 'preparation time') as well as parent / teacher interviews, etc.
 - Examples of assignable time could include: supervision, parent-teacher conferences, preparation, staff meetings, consultation, time between classes, time before and after the school day, class coverage, teacher's convention and professional development days.
 - *Please see Appendix B for an example of one school jurisdictions parameters*
- Professional Expectations of Teachers:
 - The various professional responsibilities that a teacher performs on a regular basis. Examples include professional development, professional reading, mentoring, preparation, mentoring, etc.
 - *Please see Appendix A for a graphic illustration of definitions for one jurisdiction*

The management of calculating teacher time is extremely intensive and time consuming for school administrators. Opportunities for grievances become an issue and are also time consuming and take schools away from the important work that they do.

Homemade management tools have been developed by different jurisdictions, but for some districts, they would need to be adjusted for every single school since school year calendars vary for every school in the district.

Recommendations

- In any agreement regarding the transformation of education and improving student achievement, teacher time should not be a one size fits all component.
- Teacher time is a working condition which has very little to do with student achievement.
- Rural school districts would be hardest hit by having teacher time as a part of their contracts due to the nature of some of their smallest schools.
- Mandated application of standard allocations of teacher time would not recognize the contextual differences across the province
- If Teacher Time became part of any agreement, several aspects must be avoided:
 - Teacher 'preparation' time (or time that is free from instruction) could never be part of a teacher's 'assigned' time.
 - Extracurricular activities could never be part of a teacher's assigned time
- There are issues surrounding the professional expectations of teachers. This is not a 'clock punch' profession and should never be viewed as such.
- With any place, anytime anywhere teaching opportunities, teacher time can be difficult to define
- Applying teacher time restrictions across the province essentially imposes restrictive structures during a time of transformation. The local jurisdiction, in collaboration with the teachers, is in a better position to determine how time is allocated for ongoing professional development of quality teachers.
- While some models that delineate assignable time, instructional time and professional duties may work within the context they were established, application in other contexts may have barriers that are significant in nature. For example, there are still single class schools in this province with one teacher on site (eg. Colony Schools). It is impractical and costly to have another teacher drive out to cover non-instructional teacher time.

Conclusion

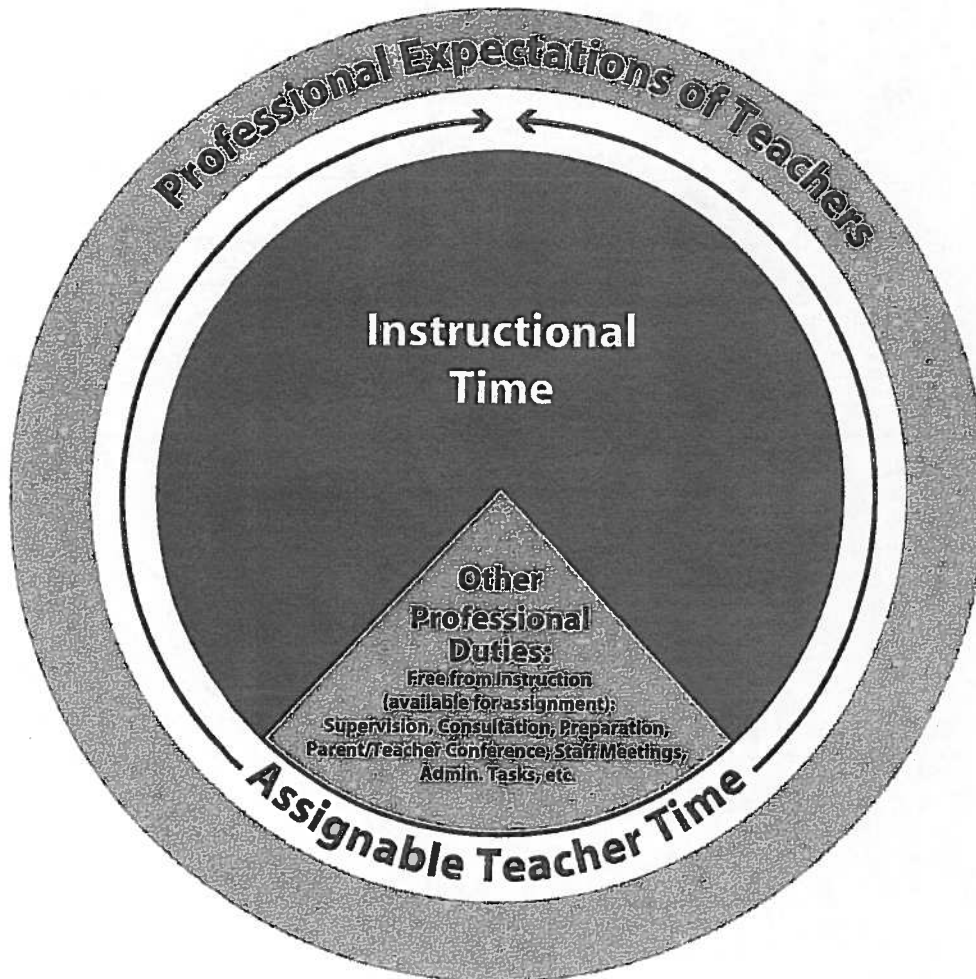
The concerns raised by boards with respect to the introduction of restrictions on teacher hours of instruction or hours of work are broad and differ depending on circumstance.

It is clear that there would be severe difficulties in applying such restrictions in an equitable manner across the province, due to the widely varying situations of schools, between large and small, rural and urban.

Alberta Education's vision for education stresses flexibility for students and flexibility in hours of instruction and schedules. This argues for more flexibility and responsiveness by boards and teachers, not less.

Most boards and teachers have functioned well for years without instructional hours or teacher hours restrictions. It is not clear why such provisions might be introduced now, as they are at odds with the provincial transformation agenda of equity, flexibility and efficiency.

Instructional Hours & Assignable Time



Assignable time:

All time during the school day. This includes time free from instruction which may consist of other professional duties assigned by the principal. Assignable time also includes assigned time outside of the school day for other professional duties (e.g. parent/teacher conferences, etc.).

Time that is free from instruction:

Teachers must be available during the school day for assignment, should they be needed. This is current practice.

General supervision of students:

All certificated personnel are responsible for the safety and supervision of all students from the time students arrive at school until they depart.

This diagram is for illustrative purposes only. It is very simple in nature and takes into account the various professional responsibilities that a teacher performs on a regular basis (e.g. professional development, professional reading, extracurricular activities, mentoring, etc.).

Appendix B

Example of Jurisdiction Parameter

Instructional Time = 1430 Minutes/Week (on average) [23.83 Hours]

Kindergarten: 475 hours

Grades 1-9: 950 hours

Grades 10-12: 1000 hours

- Instruction is the process in which certificated teachers take responsibility for ensuring that learning activities for students are directed towards achieving outcomes of approved Program of Studies and/or Individualized Program Plans through:
 - Interaction with students, either face-to-face or using information and communication technology, for the purpose of teaching, assessing student achievement of outcomes and related activities including tutorials, discussion groups and learning skill centers; and/or:
 - Interaction with students who are engaged in self-directed packages, independent study, computer-assisted learning and/or classroom learning; and/or
 - Supervision of presentations for and/or by students, workplace learning and other learning activities.

Reference: The Teaching Quality Standard Ministerial Order # 016/97, Section 18, the School Act.

Maximum Instructional Time for Teachers:

- Is based on the actual school days (current year 197) to a maximum of 200 Instructional Days
 - [953 hours max]
- Instructional hours for teachers is not linked to instructional hours for students (student entitlement vs. teacher working conditions)

Total Assignable Time = 30 hours/Week (on average over the entire year)

- Is based on the actual school days (current year 197) to a maximum of 200 Teacher Days
 - [1200 hours max]

Other Assignable Time = Anything outside of Instructional Time.

- Principal may assign appropriate duties during this time.
- Teachers would be performing regular professional duties during this time
- The longer your school day, the more assignable time you have
- Some of the duties that may be assigned by Principal (including, but not limited to . . .)
 - Supervision
 - Parent-Teacher conferences
 - Preparation
 - Staff meetings
 - Consultation
 - Administrative tasks
 - Time between classes (eg: 2 minutes travelling time = supervision)
 - 15 minutes before school and at end of day
 - Class coverage
 - Teacher's Convention
 - Professional Development days

Extra-Curricular activities will be the collective responsibilities of the staff of the school. Individual teachers choose from among these activities based upon their knowledge, skills and interests. Current practice is in effect.

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