
LEAP Scheduling Policies and Best Practices

Over the past several months, the Office of Instructional Practice has engaged DCPS principals, assistant principals, instructional coaches, and other staff who play a role in scheduling at their schools, to learn more about school schedule design and understand how schedules will be adapted to include the LEAP Weekly Cycle next school year.

The LEAP Weekly Cycle necessitates two primary considerations as it pertains to scheduling. First, that all LEAP Teams attend LEAP Seminars on a weekly basis for a minimum of 90 minutes, and second that all core content teachers receive regular informal observation and feedback. During the 90-minute weekly LEAP Seminars, teachers will analyze student work, build content knowledge, lesson plan, and practice content-specific learning together. During LEAP observations, teachers will have the opportunity to hone the skills learned in LEAP Seminars through planning and practice. Establishing a schedule that guarantees these critical structures is essential to the successful implementation of LEAP at your school.

While scheduling processes and designs are unique to each school and leadership team, this document seeks to share some commonalities and best practices, from your colleagues across the district, in order to support you in integrating the LEAP Weekly Cycle into your SY16-17 master schedule, and to clarify how to do so within existing regulations. Please know that there will be dedicated time at LEAP Summer Intensive to refine and finalize your master schedule with your LEAP Leadership team. In order to make this work time as productive as possible, **we ask that you bring a draft or final version of your school's master schedule to the second week of training (July 18-22).**

LEAP Scheduling Policies and Guidelines

1. All LEAP Teams must meet on a weekly basis for a minimum of 90 minutes per week.

If you cannot find a way of building in 90 consecutive minutes of meeting time for all of your LEAP Teams, you may divide this weekly meeting into two 45-minute blocks. Please note that due to design of LEAP Seminars, you should avoid scheduling the weekly meetings in three 30-minute blocks. We recommend that if you elect to split the LEAP Seminar, you schedule both sections on consecutive days.

LEAP Seminars must include all members of the LEAP Team, including any ESL and SPED teachers you have included as a part of that group. Time will be dedicated to refining these teams during LEAP Summer Intensive.

2. The 90 minutes of the LEAP Seminar is included as part of the required 225 minute weekly planning allocation for teachers. The Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) between DCPS and the Washington Teachers' Union (WTU) contemplates the use of planning periods for the activities outlined above. Specifically, Article 23.6.1 states, "[P]lanning periods shall be used for instructional purposes: planning lessons, reviewing student work, maintaining student records, holding conferences, and other similar activities."

3. Teachers on LEAP Teams should receive a 15 minute informal observation once a week, or at the high-school level, at least every other week. As you design your schedule, consider how LEAP Leader schedules align with the instructional time of the teachers on their teams, especially for TLI Teacher Leaders. For additional considerations around creating and scheduling release time, please reference the [Release Time Guide](#).

-
-
- 4. Schools should allocate 50% release time for TLI Teacher Leaders.** Creating this release time will ensure TLI Teacher Leaders have sufficient time to lead their LEAP Team, and provide observation and feedback to three to four teachers (most TLI Teacher Leaders at high schools will not conduct observations given the responsibilities of serving as the Department Chair). For additional details about how to create release time for TLI Teacher Leaders, please reference the [Release Time Guide](#).

There are three approaches to consider when creating time for your LEAP Seminars. Pursuant to Article 23.2.1 of the DCPS-WTU CBA, the “work day for ET-15 and ET-15/12 Teachers shall be seven-and-one-half (7.5) consecutive hours beginning no earlier than 7:30 AM and ending no later than 4:30 PM, inclusive of a duty-free lunch period...”.

Taking this into account, you may take one of three approaches when scheduling your LEAP Seminars. Please note that adjustments to the start and end time within the constraints of Article 23.2.1 do not require a teacher vote or any other formal procedure, except as noted below. Still, best practice is to work collaboratively with your staff to identify the best possible solution to meet the weekly LEAP Cycle requirements.

- 1. Create common planning time during the school day. As stated above, LEAP Seminars can be a part of the 225 minutes of planning already mandated for teachers.** In addition, if you cannot find a way of building in 90 consecutive minutes of meeting time for all of your LEAP Teams you may divide this weekly meeting into two 45-minute blocks. Additional details about how you may go about achieving this common planning time can be found in the following section of this document.
- 2. Hold LEAP Seminars before school.** The DCPS-WTU CBA is more restrictive concerning how time is spent at the start of the school day. While Article 23.2.1 permits teachers to begin working as early as 7:45am, Article 23.8 requires that each school hold a Morning Block period during the 30 minute period prior to the five (5) minute period before students begin school. However, the CBA also permits each school leader to work with its Morning Block Team to develop a schedule that may depart from that restraint. For example, a school leader could seek a compromise whereby teachers arrive at your school as early as 7:45 AM two days a week (in which case teachers would be dismissed at 3:15pm) and LEAP Seminars run from 7:45 AM to 8:30 AM on those mornings. In that scenario, you may consider offering teachers the flexibility to use their Morning Block time as they see fit during the remainder of the week. Since such a schedule would depart from the timeframe stated in the DCPS-WTU CBA, you would need agreement from the Morning Block Team to institute such a schedule.
- 3. Hold LEAP Seminars after school.** One example of this model would be teachers reporting from 8:45 AM-4:15 PM, with a student day of 8:45 AM-3:15 AM. LEAP Seminars could be held in two 45 minute blocks from 3:30 PM-4:15 PM. This would not affect the student day, but would require agreement from the Morning Block Team to not utilize a Morning Block on the days in question.

Scheduling Process Best Practices

The process for designing master schedules looks different at each school, and we recognize that what works well for some schools may not work for your school. Below are a few best practices and considerations to support you as you draft your master schedule.

- Try a variety of approaches for scheduling LEAP Seminars – all LEAP Teams at your school do not have to use the same approach to have common planning time.** There are a variety of ways that you can create common planning time for your LEAP teams. As LEAP was designed to build on systems and structures for common planning that already live in many DCPS schools, we’ve observed DCPS principals using the following strategies to create this space:

-
- *Stretch specials times to create a double special block that occurs once in a rotation. This could look like a 90 minute specials block once every two weeks for particular grade bands, with diminished allocations in the off week to create balance and equitable access to enrichment.*
 - *Block specials back-to-back to create 90 minute blocks (preferable for smaller LEAP Teams). This may require reduced special subject time on other days to ensure all other instructional needs are met for students and to create an equitable distribution of access to enrichment for all students.*
 - *Consider A/B weeks for specials or non-traditional rotations not aligned to a 5 day week.*
 - *Use other staff members to lead enrichment times (e.g., Guidance Counselors, Library Media Specialists, etc.). This may be particularly useful at high schools in creating additional electives that will enable core content teachers time to attend LEAP Seminars or receive necessary release time to plan for LEAP responsibilities.*
 - *Plan specials adjacent to student lunch, recess, or morning collaborative to create larger blocks of time to be used for LEAP Seminars or time for other LEAP Responsibilities for LEAP Leaders.*
 - *Leverage external partnerships with organizations like Fillmore Arts Center.*
- **Consider dividing large LEAP Teams into smaller LEAP Teams with a narrower grade band focus.** With more teachers on a LEAP Team, the more complex it will be to create common planning time. For example, teams that span K-5 (or similar configurations) may be broken up into two teams: one for K-2 teachers and one for 3-5 teachers. This shift has multiple benefits: (1) ease of scheduling and (2) alignment with content covered during LEAP modules of study, as the content studied in early elementary often differs from the content studied in upper elementary.
 - **Consider LEAP Seminars and release time for TLI Teacher Leaders as you craft your schedule around student needs and DCPS instructional requirements.** As you are drafting your master schedule, you may choose to create a supplemental schedule only noting the times LEAP Seminars, and include the when, where and who for each. For an example of what this could look like, click [here](#). You can reference this LEAP Seminar schedule as you finalize your master schedule for you students.
 - **Initiate the scheduling process by vision setting and naming your priorities for the coming school year.** Organize and list all of the information you need to begin designing your schedule, such as district-wide instructional priorities, school-specific priorities and goals, a list of all staff for next year, enrollment numbers, and LEAP Teams, and their members and leaders. Consider asking yourself and your scheduling team the following questions:
 - *What can we replace in our SY15-16 schedule now that we are implementing LEAP, given the priorities of LEAP?*
 - *What are we already doing that we can potentially modify to ensure LEAP is a success?*
 - *What are all the times we need to map for each LEAP Leader and LEAP Team member (e.g., time to observe and debrief, time to meet in the weekly LEAP Seminar, team to meet as an ALT, etc.)?*

For an example of what a priorities document might look like, click [here](#).

- **Determine who will be drafting the schedule and what tools will be used.** Especially for large schools, the process of creating schedules is quite complex, and layering in new programs may create additional challenges. Leverage the talent in your building and share the work, and consider using new tools or systems to design your schedule more efficiently.
 - **Education Resource Strategies (ERS) Scheduling Tool** – Developed by ERS, a highly-regarded education consulting firm, the [elementary scheduling tool](#) and [secondary scheduling tool](#) both use Microsoft Excel to help you build customized schedules based on your school’s unique scheduling needs. Additionally, you can download pre-scheduling checklists and post-scheduling review documents to aid in the process.

- **Google Sheets** – For schools who are leveraging multiple team members in the scheduling process, Google sheets provide a great way for all team members to view and edit the master schedule. For an example of what this looks like in practice, please see the scheduling page of the LEAP Information Portal.

Special Guidance on Early Childhood Education Schedules

Early Childhood Education (ECE) teachers are an integral part of LEAP. Below are a few guidelines to keep in mind as you schedule the components of the LEAP Weekly Cycle for ECE teachers at your school.

- Only TLI Teacher Leaders for ECE are required to have release time, as it is an integral part of the budgeted position. ECE LEAP Teacher Leaders (particularly at non-Title 1 schools) are not required to have release time.
- In non-Title 1 schools, ECE teacher observation schedules should leverage peer-to-peer observations whenever possible. Consider creating pairs or triads of teachers who can observe one another and provide continuous feedback as a part of the LEAP Weekly Cycle. In Title 1 schools, the ECE LEAP coaches will be the primary observer for their LEAP Team.
- Title I PK classrooms must maintain ratios at all times (2 staff to 16 children in PK3 and 2 staff to 20 children in PK4). Teachers and school leaders are encouraged to recruit volunteers to support during nap time in order to maintain ratios while teachers and paraprofessionals are breaking for lunch or for LEAP seminars. Volunteers are an important part of the Head Start model.

Example Scheduling Timeline

