

Release Time Guide

Introduction

Release Time Overview

Release time refers to specific periods of the day when teachers are released from their typical teaching load to perform a leadership role. As TLI Teacher Leaders (TLs), these teachers are still working with students for a significant portion of the day, but they also leverage their expertise to support their colleagues, further impacting student achievement across their entire school.

Schools should plan to allocate 50% release time for TLI Teacher Leaders who will serve as leaders of LEAP Teams. This will ensure they have sufficient time to lead a core content team, and provide observation and feedback to three to four teachers. After studying numerous models employed by schools in the TLI program, teacher leaders with 50% release time have been able to impact substantially more teachers and students than their colleagues with only 25% or 33% release time (while maintaining all of their normal teacher obligations). If a teacher has less than 50% release time, she will be able to achieve substantially less as a teacher leader—perhaps only providing coaching support to one or two teachers rather than three or four, a drastic reduction in the number of students affected.

There are three TLI teacher leader roles who are not focused on core content support and are not a LEAP Team leader: TLI Teacher Leader for SPED, TLI Teacher Leader for ECE, or TLI Teacher Leader for Culture. If a TLI teacher leader is focused on just one aspect of a leadership role—leading a team, coaching one teacher, or implementing a school-wide initiative—25% or 33% release time may be sufficient. In conjunction with formal teacher leader roles, informal teacher leader roles (without release time) are integral to the success of a school, and we encourage principals to utilize informal roles, such as grade level chairs or family engagement leads.

Key Principles for Release Time Success

When planning for teacher leaders to have release time, principals are encouraged to keep the following guidance in mind. This guidance is based on extensive study of successful lessons learned from three years of implementation of the TLI program, and on best practices from the most successful TLI schools. Both the planning and implementation stages of this process are incredibly important, and we encourage you to follow this guidance throughout them.

1) Winter and Early Spring: While Creating Your Plan for Release Time

- **Organize TLI Teacher Leader roles and the associated release time models around school needs, not individuals.** When designing release time models, it is important to think about your school's most pressing needs (for example, literacy or a school-wide behavior model) rather than elevating talented teachers you just want to have in leadership roles. Of course, we encourage you to nominate your talented teachers for leadership roles, but strongly advise against creating a role that you wouldn't fill if the teacher you had in mind for it were to leave.
- **Ensure that any teachers you hire to provide "coverage" for your TLI Teacher Leader(s) are effective as well.** Your teacher leader will undoubtedly be one of the strongest teachers in your building, and it is important that her students do not suffer academically as a result of her or him having release time. It is imperative that the teacher you hire to either cover the teacher leader's classroom during her release time is a strong teacher as well. If you hire a novice teacher, the teacher leader might not feel comfortable taking adequate release time, and will be unable to fulfill her leadership duties.
- **Finalize your school schedule early.** Clearly carve out the 50% release time for teacher leaders before implementing your model.

- **Keep your budget and schedule handy when you're designing your TLI Teacher Leader roles.** In order to ensure maximum collaboration between teacher leaders and the teachers you want them to support, make sure release time matches with what you want the teacher leader to observe. For instance, if you want your Math teacher leader to be able to observe a struggling Math teacher in action, ensure the teacher leader's release time matches up with the Math teacher's classroom time. Current TLI principals recommend determining when a teacher leader will not be teaching, and then planning for coverage from there.
- **Ensure your TLI Teacher Leader(s) still have regular planning time that is separate from release time.** In order for teacher leaders to be able to fulfill their duties as classroom teachers, they need to have release time that is held sacred, and separate from their regular planning time.

2) Summer: When Planning for the Upcoming Year

- **Ensure collaboration between TLI Teacher Leaders and coverage teachers.** Provide time for any teachers who will be working together through the release time model (i.e. teachers sharing a classroom or a teacher providing coverage while a teacher leader is coaching a colleague) to plan for how they will share responsibilities for their class throughout the year.
- **Develop a clear vision for what is happening during release time.** In conjunction with your leadership team, outline the goals of teacher leaders' release time, which teachers they would ideally work with, your school's implementation plan, how you will keep release time sacred, etc. The Teacher Leadership team in the Office of Instructional Practice is available to provide individualized support to schools implementing new TLI Teacher Leader positions.
- **Design a contingency plan for when there are teacher absences or irregular school schedules.** Even when other teachers are absent, it will be important to protect the release time of TLI Teacher Leaders. If their release time is interrupted, this will undermine their ability to effectively support the teachers and teams. It can be helpful to design a contingency plan for how release time will occur when teachers are absent or your daily school schedule changes.

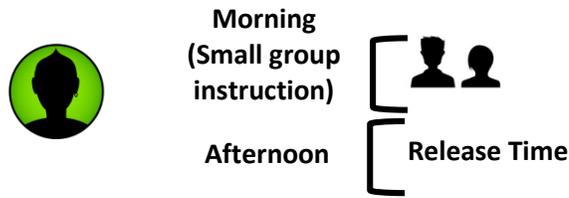
3) Fall and Ongoing: Once the School Year Begins

- **Protect the release time of your TLI Teacher Leaders.** Allow teacher leaders to dedicate their release time to planning and preparation for coaching, team meetings, facilitating professional development, rather than asking them to cover classes for absent teachers or oversee lunch or recess duty, etc. We certainly recognize that there are situations in a school when an "all hands on deck" approach is necessary and when teacher leaders won't be able to take their release time. However, whenever possible it is important to protect teacher leaders' release time, and we recommend that principals have a strong contingency plan in place for when school days don't go as planned.

Release Time Models

On the subsequent seven pages of this document, you can find more detailed explanations of the four most successful release time models in addition to a sample schedule to accompany each model. These are the four models that have been implemented most successfully in DCPS schools, and school teams are strongly encouraged to use one (or more) of these four models. If your school would like to discuss the feasibility of an alternative release time model, please email leap@dc.gov.

Model I – Interventionist

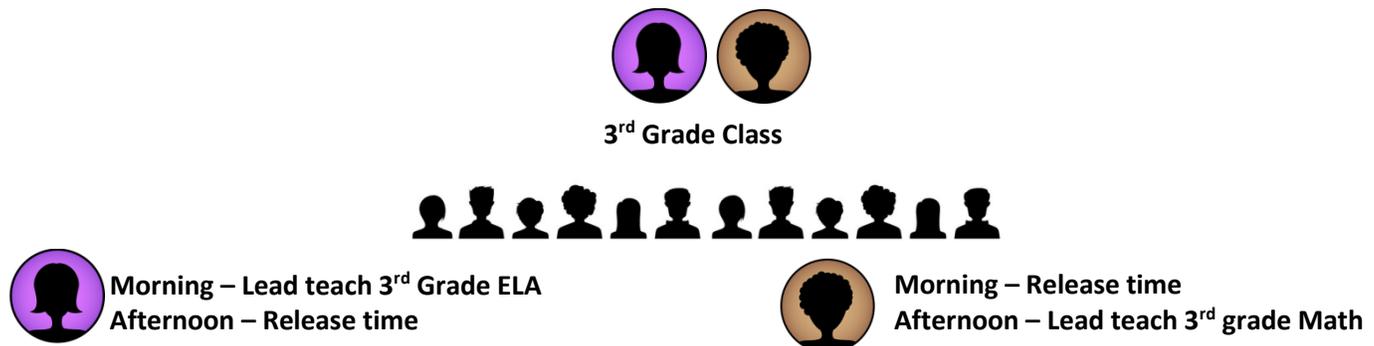


How it Works: Teacher leaders specialize in a particular content area, and serve as interventionist teachers for that content area. In this model, the interventionist performs the duties of a normal interventionist but at a reduced load, allowing for teacher leader duties in the remaining time.

Benefits	Considerations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flexible schedule – ability to modify schedule as needed throughout year • Less coverage required – removes the need to find coverage for an entire class of students during release time • Specialized support – highly-skilled teachers provide support to students with high levels of need 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan carefully to make sure all students receive necessary intervention supports

[Interventionist Sample Schedule SY15-16](#)

Model II – Shared Classrooms

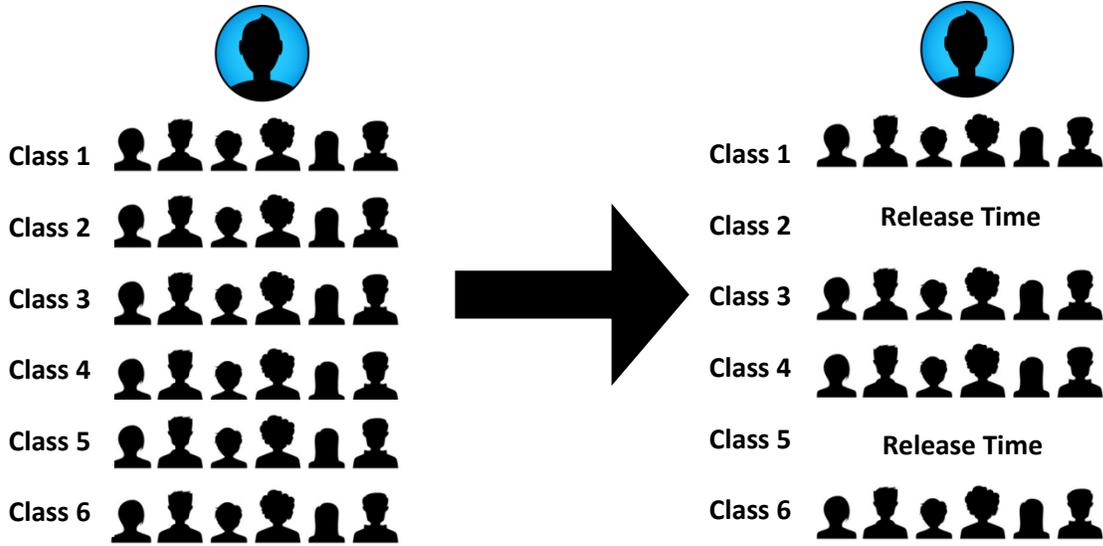


How it Works: Two teacher leaders share a classroom of students. Each teacher teaches for approximately 50% of the day. When Teacher Leader A is lead teaching, Teacher Leader B has release time. When Teacher Leader B has release time, Teacher Leader A is lead teaching.

Benefits	Considerations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High-quality release time coverage – with two teacher leaders, coverage is seamless and release time is quality instructional time • Simplifies release time schedule – the need for coverage is contained to one classroom • Concentration of highly-skilled teachers – could be used as intervention for specific group of students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication is key when sharing a classroom– this model works best when the teachers sharing the classroom discuss routines and procedures before the school year begins, and continue to monitor through constant communication

[Shared Classroom Sample Schedule SY15-16](#)

Model III – Reduced Course Load

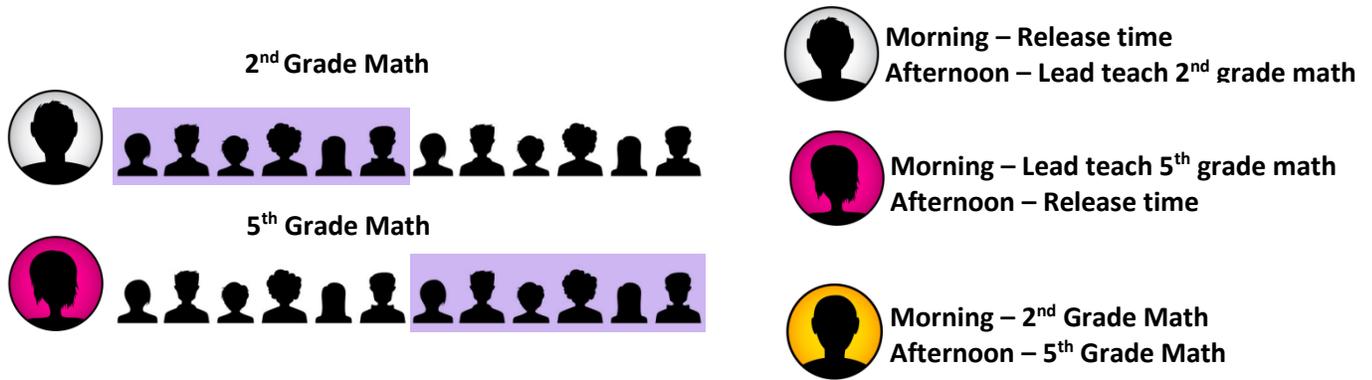


How it Works: Teacher leaders secure release time by teaching a reduced load of classes. This model works best at the secondary level or in a block schedule model. Reduced course loads for teacher leaders are achievable through a variety of approaches such as: reducing the number of sections of a particular course, increasing sizes of certain sections, hiring an additional FTE for a 0.5 need (e.g. school needs 1.5 FTE 8th grade math teachers but hires 2, enabling the second teacher to have 0.5 release time).

Benefits	Considerations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allows for creative scheduling options 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Potentially larger classes Potentially fewer sections of courses available Complicated schedule with A days / B days

[Reduced Course Load Sample Schedule SY15-16](#)

Model IV – Shared Coverage



How it Works: In this model, one shared coverage teacher provides the release time for two teachers across the length of a school day. While teacher leader A is teaching, teacher leader B has release time. The coverage teacher provides coverage for teacher B. When teacher leader B is teaching, teacher leader A’s release time is provided by the same shared coverage teacher. The coverage teacher does not have a homeroom of their own but instead is responsible for instruction across different grade levels and possible content areas.

Benefits	Considerations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Potential for coaching relationship between TL and shared coverage teacher 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Requires coverage teacher to be proficient in multiple grade levels / content areas as well as in classroom management

[Shared Coverage Sample Schedule SY15-16](#)

On the subsequent three pages, you will find sample schedules currently used in DCPS schools with teacher leaders during the 2015-2016 school year. One sample schedule is provided per release time model. If you have questions about the schedules or would like see more examples, please email leap@dc.gov.

Interventionist Sample Schedule

Time	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
8:10-8:40	Planning	Tuesday PDs	Lead SPED CLC	Plan with Teacher A	Whole Staff Training
8:45 - 9:00	TEACH – Morning Intervention Block				
9:00 - 9:15	Small group observations, rotating teachers A-C				
9:15 - 9:30	TEACH Intervention 9:15-10:00	TEACH Intervention 9:15-10:00	TEACH Intervention 9:15-10:00	TEACH Intervention 9:15-10:30	TEACH Intervention 9:15-9:45
9:30 - 9:45					TEACH Reading Instruction 9:45-11:15
9:45 - 10:00					
10:00 - 11:15	TEACH Reading Push-In 10:00-11:15	Coaching/ Planning Prep/ Open for Meetings	Coaching/ Planning Prep/ Open for Meetings	Teacher A Math Obs. 10:30-11:15	
11:15 - 12:00	Lunch				
12:00 - 12:45	Weekly Personal Classroom Planning and Prep	TEACH Push-In 12:00-1:40	TEACH Intervention 12:00-12:45	Debrief/Plan with Teacher C	Coaching/ Planning Prep/ Open for Meetings
12:45 - 1:45	12:50-1:45 Debrief/Planning with Teacher B		TEACH - Push-In 12:45-1:40	Check-in with Teacher A (bi-weekly) 12:50-1:35	
1:45 - 2:30	Planning 1:40-2:25 2nd Grade PLC		Planning 1:40-2:25 with 2nd Grade	Planning 1:40-2:25 2nd grade whole team	
2:30 - 2:45	Tuesday PD Prep & SpEd Collab Prep	TEACH Push-In Science/Social Studies 2:25-3:15	TEACH Push-In Science/Social Studies 2:25-3:15	2:30-3:15 Personal Planning for Instruction	2:30-3:15 TLI/Coach Meeting
2:45 - 3:00					
3:00 - 3:15					

Shared Classroom Sample Schedule

Time	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
8:10-8:40	Planning	Planning	CLC- HTT	TL 1 – Lead CLC: 5 Practices TL2 – Lead CLC: Rigorous Reading	Planning
8:45-9:15	TL 1 -Teach TL 2 - Release	TL 2 - Teach TL 1 - Release	TL 2 - Teach TL 1 - Release	TL 2 - Teach Ponce Release	TL 1 - Teach TL 2 - Release
9:15-9:45					
9:45-10:15					
10:15-10:45					
10:45-11:15					
11:15-11:30			TL 1 - Teach TL 2 - Release		
11:30-12:10	TL 2 - Teach TL 1- Release	TL 1 - Teach TL 2 - Release		Ponce Teach TL 2 - release	TL 2 - Teach TL 1 - Release
12:10-12:30	Lunch				
12:35-1:00					
1:00-1:45	Tls 1+2 - Planning	Tls 1+2 - Data Meeting	Tls 1+2 - Planning	Tls 1+2 - Planning	Tls 1+2 - Planning
1:45-2:40	TL 2 - Teach TL 1 - Release	TL 1 - Teach TL 2 - Release	TL 1 - Teach TL 2 - Release	TL 1 - Teach TL 2 - Release	TL 2 - Teach TL 1 - Release
2:40-3:00					
3:00-3:30	RTI Tls 1+2 - Teach				
Past 3:30				Tls 1+2 - attend ALT 4:30-6	

Reduced Course Load Sample Schedule

Times	A Day	B Day
8:00-8:30	Morning Planning	Morning Planning
8:45-9:55	(1) DC History	(2) DC History
10:00-11:10	(3) AP US History	(4) AP US History
11:15-12:00	(5) SGA	(5) SGA
12:00-12:45	Lunch	Lunch
12:50-2:00	(7) DC History	(6) TLI Planning
2:05-3:15	(9) Academy Planning	(8) Academy Planning

Shared Coverage Sample Schedule

Time	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
8:00-8:40		TL 1 - CPT Data Meeting		TL 2 - CPT Meeting TL 1 - CPT Meeting	
9:00-9:45	TL 2 - Planning TL 1 Support Teacher A (9-10:50)	TL 2 - Planning TL 1 Support Teacher A/C (9-10:50)	TL 2 – Planning TL 1 Support Teacher B/D(9-10:50)	TL 2 - Alternate weeks of Grade 3/5 planning and grade 4 planning TL 1 Coaching Teacher A/C	TL 2 Planning TL 1 Coaching Teacher B/D
9:45-12:00	TL 2 - Grade 5 Homeroom Math Instruction TL 1 - Planning (10:50 -11:30)	TL 2 - Grade 5 Homeroom Math Instruction TL 1 - Weekly Childhood Education IC Meeting	TL 2 - Grade 5 Homeroom Math Instruction TL 1 - planning/debrief teacher A/C (10:50 -11:30)	TL 2 - Grade 5 Homeroom Math Instruction TL 1- Planning/Debrief teacher B/D(10:50 - 11:30)	TL 2 - Grade 5 Homeroom Math Instruction TL 1 - Mini-PD (10:50 -11:30)
12:00 - 1:00	Lunch				
1:00-3:15	TL 2 - Alternate 3 rd grade and 4/5 th grade weeks coaching/small groups TL 1 - Planning (1:15-2:00) TL 1 class instruction (2-3:30)	TL 2 - coaching/small groups TL 1 - Planning (1:15- 2:00) TL 1 class instruction (2-3:30)	TL 2 - Planning TL 1 - Planning (1:15- 2:00), class instruction (2-3:30)	TL 2 coaching 3 rd grade teacher TL 1 team lesson Planning (1:15-2:00), class instruction (2-3:30)	TL 2 coaching 3 rd grade teacher TL 1 team Planning (1:15-2:00), class instruction (2-3:30)