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RECOMMENDATION

TO: CONTRACT PARTNERSHIP COMMITTEES
FROM: OCSTA
RE: PREP TIME FOR ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHERS
DATE: OCT 1, 2007

At its November 23, 2006 meeting, the School Policy Committee (SPC) made the resolution to the OACS Board *that the OACS board instruct the Coordinating Committee to consider teacher preparation time as a contract issue that will be part of the ongoing salary and contract discussions.*

OCSTA has been researching the issue of preparation time for elementary school teachers since late 2004. In February 2005, we conducted a survey re prep time in OACS elementary schools. This survey was updated in November 2006 and is attached to this report. Attached also are three publications by the

Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario:

- ① *A Case For Teacher Preparation Time*
- ② *Quick Comparison of Public Elementary Teacher Collective Agreements 2006-07*
- ③ *Quality education includes...*

RECOMMENDATION

Based on the research we have conducted and the discussions we have had with elementary and secondary school teachers, as well as principals, OCSTA recommends *that prep time becomes part of the contract and salary negotiations in elementary schools.*

RATIONALE

1. The demands on a teacher's time at school have increased to the point that elementary school teachers have little or no break during the school day. Why?
 - Individual needs of students have increased because of diagnosed learning disabilities. This means, the teacher is often working with individual students during morning and lunch recess times.
 - For security and safety reasons, yard supervisions have increased.
 - There has been an increase in extra-curricular activities such as sports tournaments, intra-murals, speech fests, battle of the books competitions, Book Fair, Science Fair, Christmas Program, Spring Musical, Fine Arts Festival, etc.
 - Parents expect regular communications with the teachers, either by email, telephone or via a note in their child's agenda.

All of these are good things, but it takes time to do them well and teachers need a

break during the regular school day to rest and renew their energy.

- ...
2. The OACS School Policy Committee (SPC) recognizes that the need for teacher preparation time has grown significantly.
 - OACS curriculum has shifted. It used to be photo-copiable worksheets, but now requires much more teacher preparation time. For example, the new programs for math, Bible, science, and Creation Studies require teachers to review recommended websites, prepare manipulatives, prepare science demonstrations and experiments, etc.
 - Parents have higher expectations for their child's learning and teacher communication about their child's progress. How?
 - ✓ Parents expect teachers to be available for consultation at any time.
 - ✓ Teachers receive email communications from parents who expect timely responses.
 - ✓ Parents expect more from schools in terms of co-curricular activities.

Therefore, the SPC believes that there is merit in considering teacher preparation time as a contract issue to be dealt with by the Coordinating Committee because the teacher's workload outside of class time has increased significantly.

For more information on workloads and job expectations, see the appended article entitled *A Case for Teacher Preparation Time* written by the Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario.

3. Teachers in approximately half of the OACS elementary schools already have prep time. The amount of prep time ranges from 20 minutes to 200 minutes per week. See attached *OCSTA Survey Re Prep Time in OACS Elementary Schools* for specific details. Teachers in OACS high schools 250 minutes or more professional release time per week.
4. Teachers in publicly-funded elementary schools in Ontario have 180-200 minutes of prep time per week. See *Quick Comparison of Public Elementary Teacher Collective Agreements 2006-07* for further details.
5. Classroom teachers can be given professional release time by hiring specialists to teach music, French, art, physical education, computer studies. Having these experts on staff enhances the school's program and benefits the students. High schools teachers have observed the positive results for students who are taught by specialists. Students who come from feeder schools in which specialist teach French, music, art, math, science, etc. are better prepared for the high school curriculum than those who are taught by generalists. See also *Quality education includes...*

6. In terms of the financial impact on the school's budget, if a teacher has one hour = 60 minutes per week, 60 minutes is 1/5th of the instructional time per day, i.e. 1/20th of the teaching week. One-twentieth (1/20th) equals 5%. In other words, giving teachers 60 minutes of professional release time per week would add a maximum of 5% to the budget. However, it is up to the local school board to determine how to finance teacher prep time. Schools that cannot afford specialty teachers or extended prep time might consider other ways in which to provide teachers with some prep time by, for example, using parent volunteers.

In conclusion, ultimately it comes down to respect for what the teacher must do in a day and if he/she is given an appropriate and reasonable amount of time to do it. Today's teachers are involved in much more than just teaching in the classroom. Time is a central issue for teachers, and they often battle the misperceptions in the community about the value of their time spent in the classroom. As such, teachers who are given appropriate time to prepare for class as well as teach will likely do a better job. This benefit will trickle down to a wide variety of issues that affect the education experience.

**APPENDIX A:
OCSTA SURVEY RE PREP TIME IN OACS ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS
FEBRUARY 2005; UPDATED NOVEMBER 2006**

City/Town: School Name	Prep Time for Teachers Minutes/Week
Alliston: Alliston Community	No
Aylmer: Immanuel	No
Barrie: Timothy	Gd 1-3: 35 m, Gd 4-6: 45 m, Gd 7-8: 80 m
Belleville: Bellville	No
Bowmanville: Knox	No
Brampton: John Knox	Gd 1-2: 60 m, Gd 3-5: 80m, Gd 7-8: 60 m- All classes have a computer specialist as well. Teachers do not plan for this period.
Brantford: Brantford	No
Burlington: Trinity	No
Cambridge: Cambridge	No
Chatham: Chatham	Gd 1-3: 60m, Gd 4-6: 70m, Gd 6-8: 90m
Clinton: Clinton and District	No

Cobourg: Northumberland	No
Drayton: Community Christian	No
Dundas: Dundas Calvin	Prep during music class
Etobicoke: Timothy Christian	No
Fruitland: John Knox	Gd1-3: 40 min, Gd 4-8: 80 min
Georgetown: Georgetown	No
Guelph: John Calvin	60 min
Hamilton: Calvin	No
Jarvis: Jarvis District	No
Kingston: Kingston	40 min (full time teachers only)
Kitchener: Laurentian Hills	60 min/fulltime teacher 30/part time
Lindsay: Heritage	No
Listowel: Listowel	Gd 1-2: 60, Gd 3-6: 70m, Gd 6-8: 80m
London: London Christian Academy	105-120 min/full time teacher
London: London Parental	Gd 1-3: 80m, Gd 4:80m, Gd 5-8: 200m
Metcalfe: Community Christian School	50 min (Parent Volunteer covers library)
Montreal: Emmanuel	90 min (Elementary only, High school different amounts of prep)
Muskoka: Muskoka Christian	Ranges from 20min-160 min. (Depends on class sizes and double vs. triple grades. French teacher gives prep to others.
Newmarket: Holland Marsh	60 min/fulltime teacher 30/part time
North York: Willowdale Christian	45 min
Oakville: John Knox	90 min
Orangeville: Orangeville	No
Orillia: Orillia	No
Oshawa: Immanuel	No
Ottawa: Ottawa	160 min
Owen Sound: Timothy	60 min
Prince Albert: Scugog	No
Prince Edward Island: Immanuel	No
Renfrew: Renfrew and District	No
Rexdale: Timothy	No
Sarnia: Sarnia	Gd6-8: 80min
Sebringville/Stratford: Stratford District	No

Smithville: Covenant	Gd1-3: 40 min, Gd 4-8: 80 min
St. Catharines: Beacon Christian Elementary	Gd 1-8: 140 min
St. Thomas: St. Thomas Community	No
Strathroy: Strathroy Community	No
Wallaceburg: Wallaceburg	No
Wasaga Beach: Silvercrest	No
Wellandport: Wellandport	Each teacher receives 120-135 minutes per week. Principal teaches French 3 times/week to cover these preps.
Williamsburg: Timothy	No
Windsor: Marantha Christian Academy	Gd 1-8: 80 min
Woodstock: John Knox	40 min
Wyoming: John Knox	No

Almost all schools that responded did not have prep time worked into the contract. Prep time was given to teachers because of specialty teachers coming into the classrooms or switches between teachers. In many schools, the Principal came in to cover classes so teacher could have prep time.

What have we learned from the thousands of strategies introduced to improve schools since the early 50's?

- “Teachers make all the difference. Effective teachers have a large impact on student learning.” (Darling-Hammond, & Ball, 2000, p.1).
- “Teachers’ context knowledge and pedagogical expertise affect student academic growth.” (Rowan, 2003, p.12).
- “Teacher satisfaction – working in a good, supportive environment that encourages exploration, innovation, and risk-taking directly links to improved student outcomes.” (Webster & Fisher, 2000, p.19).
- “Students’ attitudes are influenced by the way the teacher delivers the curriculum and this in turn has an influence on achievement outcomes.” (Webster & Fisher, 2001, p19).
- “The introduction of new curricula and the subsequent need for new instructional techniques demand more time for teachers for planning instruction and organizing class time, assessing students, and pacing their instruction for different groups of students.” (Manouchehri, 1998, p.12).
- “The possibility of sustaining school improvement is more doubtful without a dual focus on organizational and pedagogical change.” (Harris, 2003, p.36).
- “Most schools are not organized to provide enough common planning time for teachers to improve and sustain student achievement. Researchers find that teachers need at least three hours a week to work together.” (Bodilly & Berends, 1998, p.3).
- “Accountability systems must focus on developing capacity, not control. Too many resources are allocated to bureaucratic activities peripheral to teaching and learning.” (Gallagher, 2003, p.5).
- The intensification of teacher work as a result of external reform processes has had a negative impact on teacher recruitment and retention, and teacher motivation, satisfaction, and health. (Harris 2003; Ryan 2003).

On the Canadian scene, Ontario has been at the forefront of many education reforms. Since 1998 these initiatives include but are not limited to:

- The introduction of new curricula in language, math, science, and technology, social studies, history, geography, the arts, health and physical education – in total 20 new curriculum documents between 1997 and 2002. (Rankin 2003, p.4).
- A new provincial report card and supporting that, a whole host of new assessment practices. (Grieve, 2003 p.4).
- Continuous evolution of the EQAO testing program at grade 3 and 6 in literacy and in math with attendant requirements of annual school plans, target setting,

and a renewed emphasis on literacy and numeracy skills. (Grieve, 2003, p.4).

- Teacher annual learning plans.
- The loss of professional development days.
- The integration of special needs students into classrooms.
- A teacher performance appraisal system.

Leithwood, Fullan, and Watson, noted international researchers on education reform, state that:

”The introduction of so many initiatives within a short time span and without sufficient resources has had negative consequences for the public education system in Ontario.” (2003, p.10).

The Impact of Education Reform on Teachers

Job Satisfaction, Motivation, and Health Teachers in an international study have clearly conveyed their belief that their profession has intensified, become more complex, and increasingly time demanding. Preliminary results from a sister study conducted in Canada support these findings. While the primary motivation for teachers to remain in the profession is the satisfaction and enjoyment they derive from working with students (Dinham & Scott, 2000); in fact, the reality is such that 61% of teachers in Ontario are more dissatisfied now than at the beginning of their career. (Ryan, 2003).

Some of the most important factors contributing to dissatisfaction with teaching are:

- Lack of funding and resources;
- Lack of appreciation and respect for job of teaching by parents and society;
- Lack of time for preparation and collaboration in school hours;
- Unrealistic expectations, workload;
- Bloated curriculum;
- The pace of curriculum change with inadequate time, essential resources, and professional development.
- Large class sizes;
- Lack of funding for special needs programs.

Teacher Workload: New and Expanded Expectations

“The new curriculum presses teachers to substantially revise how they teach, what they teach, and how fast they teach it.” (Leithwood, Fullan, and Watson, 2003, p.23)

Elementary teachers are faced with a multitude of challenges as they are responsible to teach most subjects. Imagine the desk of an elementary teacher. On this desk are the new curriculum documents in math, reading, science, and social studies to name but a few -20 in all. The teacher has to make sense of these documents, adapt them to the

needs of the diverse learners in the classroom, tie the outcomes and expectations to multiple types of effective assessments, create links to other subject areas, and document student learning in a very detailed and anecdotal way.

For example, in Math –

This is now what teachers must do:

The mathematics curriculum set out in this document is significantly more rigorous and demanding than previous curricula. This curriculum includes a broader range of knowledge and skills and introduces many skills in earlier grades. Expectations for pencil and paper skills in mathematical operations have been raised and problem-solving skills are more stringent.” (p.3) (Excerpts from the Ontario Mathematics Curriculum – Grades 1-8).

And know:

An effective teacher is one that “needs mathematical knowledge, a comfort with and confidence in mathematics, an understanding of how children learn mathematics, and an understanding of effective instructional and assessment strategies.” (Early Math Strategy -The Report of the Expert Panel on Early Math in Ontario 2003, p.67).

Yet, McAdie (2003) notes that conditions for the mastery of curriculum are not in place. Particularly, over the last eight years, education funding has been severely cut, (MacKenzie 2002; Rozanski, 2002).

- Programs and services have been reduced.
- Class sizes at the elementary grades have increased.
- Resources for students are out of date or insufficient.
- Teacher professional development time has been cut.
- 82% of elementary teachers believe that the loss of specialist teachers makes it more difficult to fulfill their classroom roles (ETFO, 2002).
- The ability of teachers to implement multiple education initiatives in an impoverished system has been seriously compromised.

New curricula and assessment practices pose substantive challenges for teachers. Research indicates that teacher knowledge, skills, and ability to teach make the difference in student learning, so what do teachers need to do the job?

Time ... Time ... Time

Teachers do not have sufficient preparation time to effectively meet the expectations that are set out for them.

Classroom teachers in elementary schools are assigned to provide instruction to pupils for an average of at least 1300 minutes (during the instruction program) for each period of 5 instructional days during the school year.

Preparation time is the time that teachers spend out of the classroom during the school day performing a variety of activities necessary to support student learning. The amount of preparation time that teachers receive varies from board to board – from a low of 135 minutes to a high of 200 minutes.

Although demands have increased, the amount of preparation time available, for most

OCSTA is a community of professional Christian school educators working to equip and enable its members to provide Christ-centred education.

teachers, has decreased.

How Do Teachers Use Their Time?

Planning, Preparing, and Evaluating

- Preparing/marking class work, tests, exams, homework, and other classroom assignments.
- Constructing lesson plans and learning goals for the short, medium, and long term.
- Revising and evaluating programs.
- Developing individualized material.
- Preparing daily anecdotal reports.
- Preparing units of study.
- Setting up science, art, and other projects.
- Ready classrooms, labs, gymnasiums, shops, computers, equipment, and facilities used by students.
- Filling out reports required by schools or outside agencies, such as the Children's Aid Society.
- Securing and previewing films and videos for classroom use.
- Setting up computer hardware and software for use in class.
- Performing administrative work associated with extra-curricular activities, such as intramural and extramural sports, field trips, clubs, band, student council, etc.
- Preparing student portfolios.
- Photocopying.

Professional Learning and Growth

- Studying curriculum changes and consulting appropriate resource material.
- Researching new learning materials and teaching aids.
- Reading professional materials to better understand and respond to students.
- Working with teachers in training from faculties of education.
- Exploring the internet and using technology to enhance classroom learning.
- Updating conflict resolution strategies.
- Learning new computer programs.
- Understanding school board programs, initiatives, and policies.

Organizing and Supervising

- Organizing class, divisional, and school excursions.
- Organizing class/school events such as graduation, fundraising, track & field, music, plays, art, and drama.
- Assisting in the implementation of provincially mandated programs, such as province-wide testing.
- Setting up bulletin boards inside/outside class and within school.
- Devising classroom and school newsletters.
- Organizing play centers.
- Assisting in situations where teachers are required on an emergency basis to supervise students or to fill in for colleagues who may be called suddenly away from work.
- Ordering and distributing instructional materials and classroom supplies.
- Filling out and collecting necessary forms required by school and or board.
- General record keeping, inventory, and other paperwork.
- Cleaning paint centres, cupboards, and the like.

Reporting and Consulting

- Writing IEP's (Individual Education Plan).
- Writing report cards.
- Photocopying/filing report cards and filling out other necessary Ontario Student Record (OSR) requirements.
- Consulting the OSR for record of history of student development, reports, and contact with parent/guardian.
- Recording attendance on report cards.
- Communicating with the administration and office staff.
- Conferring with parents, either by phone, newsletter, or through parent visits to schools about their child's progress.
- Working with colleagues on joint classes or projects.
- Providing individualized instruction to students who are unavailable before and after school.
- Advising and counselling students.
- Attending meetings of diagnostic and remedial teams to assist students with special requirements.
- Consulting with school psychologists (about individual assessments), social workers (about child and the family wellbeing), speech pathologists (about

language development), resource teachers (about teaching strategies), the principal (about curriculum implementation and any school related matter), and experts from outside agencies.

- Consulting with co-op students.
- Meeting with teachers in training and their supervisors.
- Learning teaching strategies and classroom management techniques from colleagues through discussion and/or observation.

Teachers must now deal with the increased administrative duties of reporting and recording. This impacts on the time available to understand the curricula, design student learning activities, assess students, contact parents, interact with colleagues, and engage in individual and collective reflection.

It is obvious from this list that teachers are engaged in a myriad of activities during their preparation time. Teachers need time in order to effectively implement new curricula and assessment practices teachers need time. According to Leithwood, Fullan, and Watson, “teachers have to substantially revise, how they teach, what they teach, and how they teach it.” (2003, p.23)

Research tells us:

In other countries as each (educational) change has been introduced, teachers have struggled to manage time, energy, and resources ... the layering of multiple initiatives on schools has ultimately proved to be counter-productive as it contributed to system overload and teacher wastage. (Harris, 2003, p.36).

That changes in beliefs, attitudes, and instructional practices will not, however, occur instantaneously: systemic change will require sustained effort, time and resources, along with support from all stakeholders in the educational community. (Early Math Strategy, 2003, p.68).

Accomplishing large-scale reform is a tri-level proposition: school/district/state or province. (Fullan, Rolheiser, Mascall, Edge, 2001).

If schools are to be held accountable for student learning, then the people who run them should be judged by the extent to which they add value to the quality of classroom instruction. The first diagnosis of school failure should not be directed at teachers and students but at the way policymakers and administrators have organized resources to promote new knowledge and skills in schools. (Elmore, 1997, p.12)

The Elementary Teachers’ Federation of Ontario believes:

“Elementary education is the foundation for a child’s success in school, and in life. Investing in elementary education is the smartest thing that any society can do.”

On behalf of teachers and students, we are asking all stakeholders to:

- **Acknowledge** the importance of preparation time as a critical factor in teachers’ ability to effectively do their job.
- **Understand** the need for increased preparation time and the value it can bring to the system.
- **Commit** the funding to ensure that every elementary teacher in Ontario has 200

minutes of preparation time per cycle.

- **Allocate** the money where it will make an immediate difference.

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