

Cult of Pedagogy

The Planning Period Project

Survey Results



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www.cultofpedagogy.com

Overview

This survey was conducted by the Cult of Pedagogy website from March 1-31, 2014. The questionnaire was distributed via PollDaddy, a free online survey platform. In this period, 300 responses were collected. In general, responses suggest that (1) Teachers are often unable to use the full amount of allotted planning time for planning and grading; (2) Administrator-controlled events are often what takes that time away; and (3) Planning time significantly impacts teachers' job satisfaction.

Survey Design

Participants were asked six questions (click to view results):

1. [How many minutes of your allotted planning time did you have available for planning and/or grading today?](#)
2. [About what percent of your allotted time does this represent?](#)
3. [What activities cut into today's planning time?](#)
4. [How much time did you spend today – outside of regular school hours – preparing to teach?](#)
5. [How much is your job satisfaction impacted by the amount of planning time you get each day?](#)
6. [Comments](#)

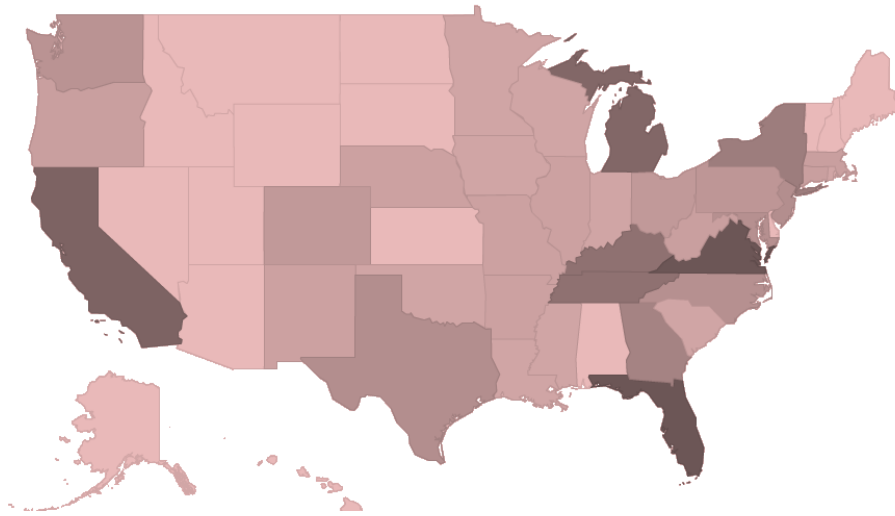
Each "response" is intended to represent one day's worth of planning time for one teacher. Participants were asked to attempt to record ten consecutive days, taking the survey once for each day. The survey was designed to allow multiple responses from the same computer.

The nature of this design clearly has some flaws: It is hard to determine whether multiple responses come from different people (for example, do 20 responses represent two teachers over ten days, five teachers over four days, twenty different teachers, or one teacher completing the survey over and over again?). PollDaddy does break down responses by state, however, and with 36 states participating (see below), it can be safely assumed that the results represent the experiences of a minimum of 36 different teachers.

Question 3 and 6 gave respondents the opportunity to comment. These comments are listed along with the results on the following pages. A space between comments indicates a change in respondent. In cases where a comment is difficult to understand, repeats an idea that has been stated several times already, or is somewhat off-topic, some comments have been removed.

Participants

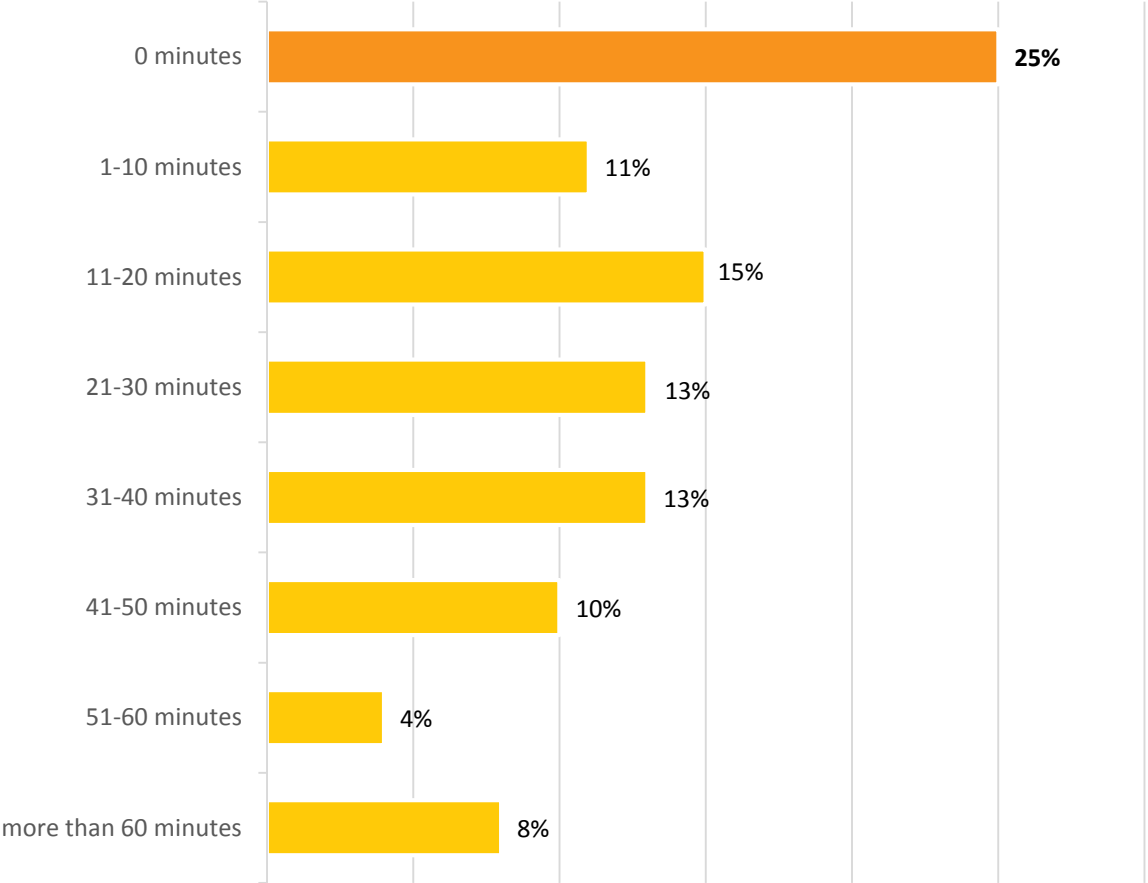
Survey respondents came from 36 states, with the most active being Florida and Virginia (29 responses each), the District of Columbia (27), California (24), and Michigan (23). States with the lightest color on the map below (such as Maine and Arizona) did not participate. One response was also submitted from Canada, and one from Puerto Rico.



Discussion

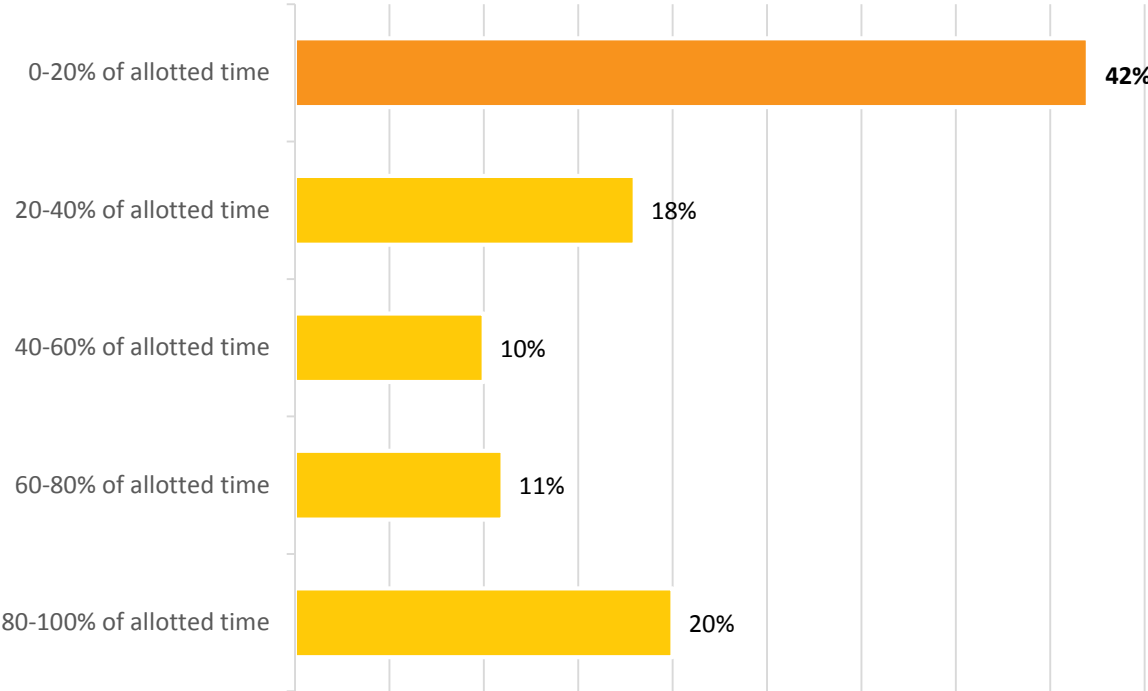
A discussion of these results and their implications, along with further reader comments, can be found on the Cult of Pedagogy website at www.cultofpedagogy.com/planning-project-results.

Question 1: How many minutes of your allotted planning time did you have available for planning and/or grading today?



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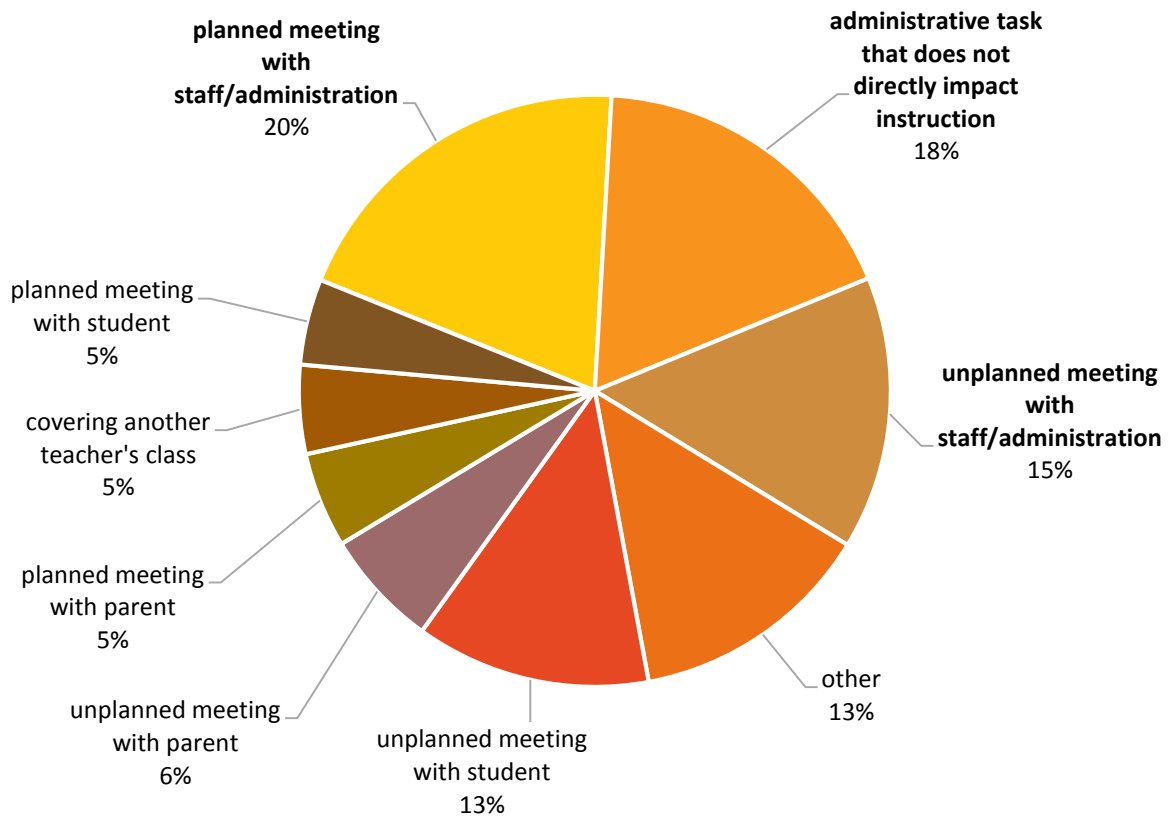
Question 2. About what percent of your allotted time does this represent?



Nearly half of all responses – 42 percent – reported that the planning time they actually got to use (represented by Question 1) represented between 0 and 20 percent of the time they were allotted for that day.

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3. What activities cut into today's planning time? (You may choose more than one.)



In examining all the tasks that take planning time away from teachers, well over half of those tasks are those types of activities that could be controlled by an administrator: planned and unplanned meetings with staff or administration (35%), administrative tasks (18%), covering other teachers' classes (5%), and "other" (13%), which the comments below suggest usually include tasks assigned by administrators. Only 29 percent of planning time was taken away by time given to students or their parents.

If “other,” explain what took your planning time today. Or just elaborate in general:

Paperwork and planning meeting, doing behavior sheets for other classes.

Organizing field trip forms, looking up students and grades at the request of the counselor for honor roll purposes, replying to emails, cleaning out mailbox.

I push in to a kinders class just before my lunch/plan time.... If they are behind schedule when I push in, I stay past my scheduled time to provide the intervention time the kids I work with are supposed to get

Required peer observation.

Professional development.

Stuffing progress report envelopes, copy & staple 100 tests & bubble sheets, read email.

Paperwork for supplemental reading program.

7.5 hours of hall duty every week; no grading of papers allowed.

I teach in a self-contained classroom and the administration changed our schedule so the students have to stay over what used to be our planning time. The theory is that the paras are supervising, but it is not working out that way and I end up with no to very little time away from the students.

Fundraising, student competition trip planning, writing PO requests, and class sponsor activities.

Writing to parents to inform them of disruptive classroom behavior.

No lunch monitor, so have to eat with kids.

Registering students.

Our principal requires us to pick our classes up 5 minutes early, so our specialists can have transition time.

Staying in computers (resource) with my students.

Our specials teacher was unable to make class today.

Made copies, responded to parent emails, responded to student emails.

Slow computer.

Team meetings 3 days a week.

Moving around due to ACT activities in the building.

Every week I do small group intervention during my planning one a week.

Multiple students making up work.

Taking yearbook photo with the honor society I sponsor and gathering paperwork for their field trip.

Being briefed on mandated PARCC field testing.

Received a new student after lunch so I had to prepare info and things to send home. This is my third new student in the past two weeks.

Meeting first 45 minutes to discuss preparing for state testing by indicating what accommodations each student qualifies for. Second 45 minutes: going through 300+ students, highlighting my 70 students, adding on students who were not included in the original list, and then sorting out which of those students qualify for SPED or ELL accommodations. (NOT DONE YET!) Next we have to come up for a plan on how WE will get students tested if they are absent on test days or if they are admitted after testing but before the testing window is closed – because that should be my responsibility!

Bathroom duty as a result of a bomb threat incident.

I got a new student today. Administrators knew of the student's arrival last week. I found out about 30 minutes before the first bell. I spent most of my planning setting up the child's desk, preparing a new student packet, and trying to find how what her dismissal transportation would be.

See staffing during my lunch, planning and after school. I also had duty before and after school. So no lunch, extra duties and 10 minute planning for 50 special ed kids all on different levels from K-3. This happens numerous times a month and breaks my contract. The solution given to me from my boss is come in later or leave early. I guess she hasn't figured out to make up the time I lose no teacher would be in the room to teach or monitor kids after the day is over.

Emailing a parent and AP about an IEP meeting.

Due to standardized testing in another grade, the schedule was adjusted and an entire grade of teachers lost their planning.

Field trip organization, parent phone calls, discipline referrals.

Helping a sub get ready for another teacher's class.

Materials and room maintenance, updating Fusion (a requirement), writing references, matting work for shows, printing work for shows, walking clear across a building for mail.

Managing and delivering testing materials.

My planning period was shortened today as a result of weather related delays.

Answering and reading emails.

Off campus preparation for a class field trip.

We had a 2 hour delay today due to snow. My planning is from 10:20 - 11:05. On delayed arrivals, student enter the building at 10:40 and the late bell is 10:50. I lose all my planning time when we have a delay.

Team meeting to complete CYA paperwork.

Checking/answering email, completing a gifted referral.

My planning period didn't exist today because of schedule changes made to accommodate state-mandated ACT testing. Instead, I was locked in with one class for six consecutive hours with no break at all.

We have music, art and PE classes during our planning time. Once a month we don't have planning.

Required meeting with team. Some of which was to be planning, but I feel it was not.

Only bathroom break of the day, having to find/copy something for someone else.

Took students to a competition. Still had to plan at home for tomorrow.

Field trip paperwork that due to Red Book accounting regulations has to be submitted daily.

One of the related arts teachers (whom my kids are with when I have a planning period) was ten minutes late.

Problems with my computer.

Standardized testing administration and preparation.

I teach special Ed. It requires tons of paperwork. I lost about 20 out of 45 min doing paperwork we were told the diagnosticians are supposed to do. I then spent the remaining time working on paperwork for an upcoming IEP meeting.

Obtaining state tests from office.

Broken photocopiers and not enough of them for our staff.

Working with students to create school talent show.

I teach an "extra" class: 7 periods out of 7. Any meetings (admin, parent, student) occur before 1st period, during lunch, and after school.

Planning weekly school Mass.

Running copies of stuff.

I'm a breast feeding mother, pumping-one of the only chances I get during the day.

Relay team and news team sponsor.

Field trip paperwork...should have been completed but my administrator allows students to turn forms in late (and there are many forms) which means I have to revisit the work I've already done, coordinate with the school nurse to return to our school to review the medical forms, etc., change lunch counts for the trip...

Due to a lack of planning by my administrator, I do not have a scheduled planning time AT ALL on Thursdays. I am scheduled to get that planning time on Friday.

Observation time.

Had to absorb another teacher's class because there was no one to cover her class while she attended a meeting that went on longer than an hour. So all of my plans went out the window and I'm baby sitting a packed room, and it's just crowd control.

Required by administration to phone call each week on Thursday/Friday all the parents of students in our 'home room' class period. I also was told to give up my lunch to monitor the detention group again without comp time.

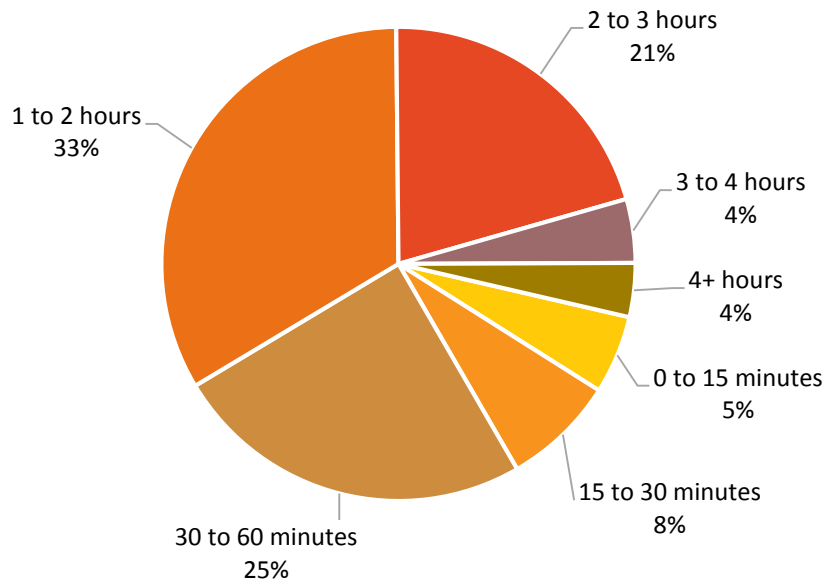
Asked by administration to perform a duty outside of my normal requirements which ate 20 minutes of my planning period. I requested comp time and was refused even though I completed the assignment satisfactorily.

Unplanned meeting with other grade level teachers.

Waiting for bus riders to get called.

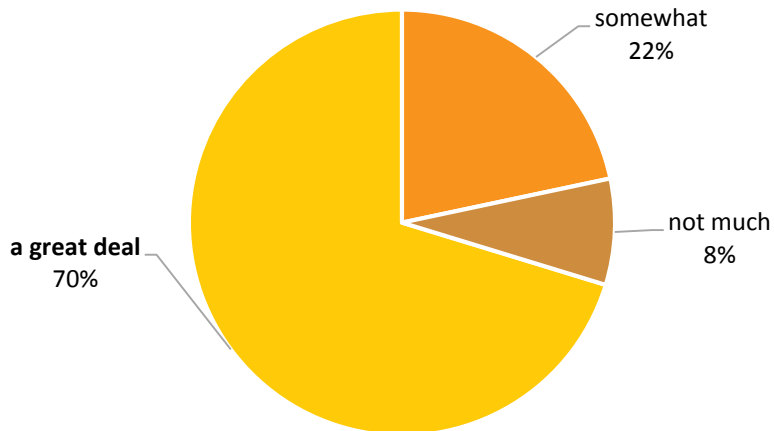
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Comments

My administrator and curriculum coordinator seem to have no respect for my time. My unstructured time each day is VERY LIMITED yet they find ever-increasing ways to schedule this time for me leaving diminishing time for me to grade and plan while giving me an increasing number of tasks and deadlines. **It is frustrating -- even dehumanizing -- to have tasks and deadlines heaped on me while having the time I need to do them taken away.** The stress and pressure of this job is affecting my health and my family life. I have had sleepless nights and stress-related health issues (migraines, grinding my teeth in my sleep). **If I had the opportunity to go back in time, I would NEVER have chosen teaching as my career.**

I am actively looking for a new job as the demands of this job continue to increase and the resources in time and support continue to decrease. I dread going to work every day and have found minimal professional satisfaction this year though my job satisfaction has been declining rapidly over the last few years.

Today's missed "planning" (I wish that time in my day could have a different name since it is NOT reserved for planning) was a planned meeting with our math intervention consultant from Central Office.

This arrangement is not something that I can do next year, it is not healthy to go without "no kid" time when you are dealing with severely emotionally impaired students all day. It is difficult to say something at this point in the year because our principal is very vindictive, even when he is doing something absolutely wrong, but **next year, damn the consequences and we will have our legal prep.**

I find that the more of my planning time that is taken from me, the less I feel compelled to spend my own time on planning.

In 17 years of teaching I've rarely had actual planning time built into my day... I come in early and stay late to get it all done...

I'm going to work on Sunday now.

I never feel prepared. Not enough time.

In addition to meetings, I was required to complete a long demographic data sheet. It took forever and only math & science teachers had to do it. Grrr!

Morning staff meeting took away planning before school as well.

I teach a self-contained Special Education unit. My planning time is overlapped by my lunch break. This occurs five hours into my day, and the amount of class/teaching time remaining after my Planning/Lunch period is approximately 40 minutes. This time has not been very fruitful in planning for the current day's teaching schedule. Because I teach the first five hours without a break, I must have EVERYTHING prepared, printed, etc. before I start class, in the morning. This usually means that I have to come in up to an hour early, each day. My planning time is spent filling out paperwork, or meeting with parents/administrators/related service providers, etc. **Often times, these meetings consume so much of my scheduled "planning period" that I do not even get to eat my lunch** (today was no exception).

Today's reason for my administrator's taking my planning was Child Study Team. In CST, the special education teacher gets a sub. She, the Curriculum Coordinator, and our school psychologist meet with the classroom teacher of a student who is placed in or moving through the tiered process for RTI. The meetings are scheduled throughout the day but during the classroom teacher's planning time. Today's meeting on one of my students who is having behavioral difficulties took my entire planning period. I've had to use class time to deal with paperwork for my 6th graders' transition to the middle school (tracking registration and enrollment forms).

Teachers are always asked to do things that are not in our job description or contract but when you ask admin to do something they say it is not my job

My principal is good about not taking our planning time up with meetings. However, this has not always been the case.

40 minutes a day is not nearly enough to plan, assess, email parents, make copies, call parents, create lesson plans, deal with discipline issues, etc.

Various committee obligations severely impact my planning time

At my school the teachers usually do not have planning or a lunch break due to volunteers not showing or not volunteering. Everyone else, including the cafeteria and janitorial staff, get to enjoy the teacher's lounge, except the teachers.

PLC meeting every Wednesday. **I HATE Wednesdays. I get no planning time AT ALL and we have a faculty meeting after school so I cannot get any work done then either.**

Our PLC is moderately effective and the work we do, the information we share could be done in fifteen minutes, leaving thirty minutes of my actual planning time.

Twice a week our team has meetings. 1 day is data day where we discuss student achievement with our administrators. The last few months it has been more of a meeting time to catch up on other items not related to instruction. This takes up the entire time allotted to planning. The other day is a team planning day where we discuss our pacing guides, lesson plans, etc.

I have two 30 minute time slots a week for planning/correcting time. This is after school. I have no time during the day for planning, it is all teaching time. I plan and correct during recesses and lunch.

STOP WITH ALL THE INTERRUPTIONS AND THE ENDLESS DOCUMENTATION OF WHAT I DO!! Give me my time so I can go home by 4 or 5 and enjoy my family and spend some time away from work!

When SOL come up in a few weeks, we have been told we will not have planning time because the specials teachers will be proctoring test.

In addition to our planning periods being used for many things other than planning, we also must eat lunch with our students daily.

Teachers are only as good as the planning they can do.

I spend more time "analyzing" data and filling in admin paperwork than I do planning, collaborating, and improving as a teacher COMBINED! I'm a second career teacher who joined the profession because I thought I would be making a difference; 2 years into it and I am seriously reconsidering this choice! Maybe Bill Gates and Arne Duncan can pay back the \$60K in student loans that I had to take out to "make a difference."

Not being able to get things done during planning means I have to do it at home. When I have to do it at home I don't get to spend time with my family.

Art teachers need time to prepare materials and display your visual work. Also, clean up, load kilns, un-load kilns. Keep up grades, web pages, e-mails, IEP's and prepare boards, examples and new unit plans.

Wake up politicians and school boards you are killing the people in this field and not attracting new people to the field. Shame on you. I love my job but hate what it's become. Paperwork, tests, more tests, useless time wasting meetings, duties that have nothing to do with teaching and my kids, and useless programs. I get the highest rating my district has every year. **This is my 26th year and the first time I find myself having to bite my lip and not let my interns see my frustration.** Yes I have also trained interns for 23 years and counting. Less and less remain now. Most are disenchanted by year 5 when they see what the field has become. Let me actually have time to teach and plan.

This doesn't include the extra time I spend with an exchange student in my class who is not proficient enough in English to maintain good reading comprehension with the high level novels I am forced to teach in my ELA classes.

As a high school English teacher, much of my planning is taken up grading the writing of my 168 students. It takes approximately 2-5 minutes per writing assignment, depending on the length and requirements. I receive one 90-minute planning period every day. However, this semester, I also have a duty that requires me to check visitors in and out of the building for 60 minutes (or more) every other day. Our building is busy! I rarely get any work done during this time.

On top of the 1-2 hours of outside planning, I now have 1-2 hours of grading, just for today. I think overall, I spend about 4 - 6 hours grading papers a week outside of contract hours. I would say that out of my 225 minutes to plan and correct a week, I get less than one third of the time to get my specific plans ready and paper graded.

7 years and burned out already due to constant planning, working outside school hours. Takes away greatly from my own children. **Will not be surprised if I'm out before year 10.**

We get 35 minutes 4 times a week for planning. However by the time you walk the kids to their class and back, it looks a lot like 25 minutes. Very little can get done in 25 minutes 4 times a week. Most of my planning is done from 8-10 pm at home.

Feeling more behind than yesterday without my full planning time. Grades must be entered online this week as report cards go home next week. I haven't had time to get caught up on that task.

It's only Monday and I already feel behind because I didn't accomplish much of what I needed to do on my planning period today.

I teach 2 very different areas: ESL and Math. I need my planning time to refocus my brain on subject matter, reflect on lesson success, and forward thinking strategy.

Regular ed teachers have been getting 2 periods a day. One is a departmental (subject) planning period, the other is a conference period. Special Ed, elective, & PE teachers only get the conference period. I have a self-contained class. That means I'm planning for math, English, Reading, science, & social studies for 2 different groups- one that's severely learning

disabled, yet expected to learn grade level content and another

Spent Sunday (8.5 hours) completing report cards. On Sunday.

I am a music teacher. At our school, planning time for classroom teachers happens while children are at their resource classes. With this situation, resource classes (PE, Art, Music) becomes looked upon as secondary because the instructional time is far less, and it looks as if we are there to 'provide a break for the teachers' rather than be part of a more regular instruction schedule. I'm at a fantastic school, but this can be frustrating for me and my colleagues.

Student load also has an impact on planning time. I have 180 students in a high school setting every day. Some teachers, with honors caliber students no less, have 75 students. 90 minutes of planning time with the work of 180 students to correct is different than 90 minutes of planning time with 75 students. I have 90 minutes of planning time, but not exactly during the school day. Teachers arrive 45 minutes earlier than students by contract. This counts as preparation time. Unlike schools in other states where I have taught and had all prep time during the scheduled school day.

Today was unusual as I decided I was going to spend the evening with my husband. So I brought home nothing! It was a special treat!

It isn't like we have a book to follow for each standard. You are expected to find all materials on your own and prepare everything for each lesson. Interrupt class to assist with student having meltdown checking point sheets. Being on 3 committees sponsoring news team basically preparing news program daily and sponsoring relay team to provide leadership opportunities for students as we are leader in me school. Scheduling leper meetings hours of paperwork. Grading papers and working with students from time I walk in to time I leave, which is a minimum of an hour and half after.

I have no time to breathe pee or eat or relax at all.

EVERY Wednesday I have PLC and do not get my scheduled planning and EVERY Thursday I do not have a scheduled planning time at all. That makes TWO CONSECUTIVE DAYS EACH WEEK that I do not get planning time. I teach elementary school so for TWO CONSECUTIVE days each week I have no time during the school day without my class other than my lunch break. I have to get my team teacher to watch my class if I have to go to the restroom or leave the room for any reason. These two days are LONG and MISERABLE.

I would have liked to have had ANY time to focus on planning for my kids today, but even my evening was dominated by events at school. I'm tired.

I think my job satisfaction would be FAR less if I had less planning time. I think I take it for granted. We're pretty much left alone to our own devices. We have the occasional meeting, but it's not bad.

In my school it is ridiculous the amount of time we get to plan. **Teachers only get one hour a week for prep time!!** And this is divided into two 30 min periods. So I get 30 min on Mondays and 30 min on Wednesdays. **It's a joke!**

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If it's not a parent/student meeting, it's a professional learning meeting, or testing info, or whatever else they can think of. **I might get 2 of my 5 planning periods each week. Ugh.**

I'm tired of penny pinching school boards and administrators, who don't mind dumping their job onto others, but don't give recognition that is due or like comp time for those efforts. I also wrote out school improvement plan earlier this year and never received any comp time for that project which took multiple hours of prep, writing, research, and revision. I requested a book to use for bell ringer material in my ELA classes last June, it's now March of the next year and the book I was told was no problem for them to order with money the school had allotted to spend on teacher material has never arrived. I will order it personally this summer for about 120.00 but I'll never get that back.

If lucky I get 10 minutes for lunch. I do planning before kids and other staff arrive and after school if lucky that no one is around.

I am done with spending time on school related tasks; so I will not respond further.