

To: K-2 Research Schools
Cc: Director of Schools
Superintendent of Schools
From: Joint Committee responsible for the Research Project "Hours of Instruction for K-2"
Date: July , 2018

Subject: "Q&A" Responses to questions from the May 9, 2018, Meeting

Many questions and concerns were raised throughout the day of the Research Schools Meeting on May 9, 2018. Although several questions were addressed at the meeting, we have included those in this Q&A document for easy reference.

PLEASE NOTE: *As with any staffing related questions, school districts, in collaboration with their schools, make all decisions through the regular staffing processes and procedures.*

1. Will additional FTE be considered for school administrators in relation to this research project?

As per the *Letter of Agreement*, there is no provision for additional FTE for school administrators.

It is central to the study that the research be conducted within the existing conditions of the schools throughout the province. Understanding that administrators of small student population schools often teach a portion of their time, please see question 2 below which specifies the FTE allocation at the K-2 levels to incorporate the additional 60 minutes of instruction per day.

2. Will additional FTE be allotted to teachers and specialists?

Teaching positions at the Kindergarten, Grade One and Grade Two levels will be staffed at a 1.18 FTE. This incorporates a 0.08 FTE for the additional 60 minutes per day of instructional time.

A. Do all teachers receive the 5 periods of 35 consecutive minutes of prep time?

Yes. Overall, this is accurate, however, each school district makes specific decisions regarding staffing as local circumstances need to be considered.

The *Letter of Agreement* states, "All teachers in the research schools will be allocated a minimum five (5) periods of 35 consecutive minutes of preparation time each week or an equivalent amount of preparation time based on a longer time period (equates to 15 FTEs);". The additional FTE, stated above, incorporates this provision. Please see note re: staffing above.

B. Will the extra FTE be in place for future years after the three-year research project?

The K-2 research study begins in the 2018-19 school year and will conclude with the 2020-21 school year. As per the Letter of Agreement, “The research project and all its associated resources provided in this letter will continue beyond the 2020-21 school year until the parties conclude a new Collective Agreement”.

3. Given that we are adding sixty (60) minutes to the K-2 instructional day, is there more time being added for Educational Assistants?

The additional sixty (60) minutes will be resourced in the area of support personnel in the same way as the other K-2 hours of instruction, i.e. based on student needs. Schools are asked to work with their school district in determining supports for students, as per the protocols and procedures in each of the districts.

4. There are two (2) days allocated to the K-2 teachers in the research schools per year.

A. What are the 2 days going to look like and can they be used as half days?

The *Letter of Agreement* provides two (2) days per school year per teacher (includes administrators and ESS teachers) and are for research schools to collaborate on issues of a pedagogical nature. The work conducted during this time will be identified by them in support of the work at the school based level;”.

Schools have flexibility to decide how best to use these days (e.g. two half-days, full days, etc.) and when to use these days. Please consult with your school district to coordinate this time.

Please note: these days are release days for teachers, not student-free days. Supply teachers will need to be secured in order to use these days.

B. Are schools able to use this time before the end of the 2017-18 school year?

Response sent earlier via e-mail on June 7, 2018:

Understanding that there is planning to do in advance of implementing the additional 60 minutes of instruction at K-2, schools are able to access these days prior to the end of the 2017-18 school year. Please communicate with your school district in advance.

Please note that two days are allocated per year for the three (3) year research project for the 2018-19, 2019-20 and 2020-21 school years. Should schools decide to use one or two of the days before the end of this school year, it is part of the 2018-19 allocation.

5. Will there be opportunities for Professional Learning?

Professional learning should be based on the needs of the teachers and the teams from the school. As with the teacher professional learning plans, please communicate those to your school district. There is no plan for group professional learning as each school may have different requirements.

6. Will there be any additional financial support for specific areas of interest at the school, e.g. STEM/STEAM and/or enrichment?

There are no additional funds set aside specifically to this research study. Please communicate with your school district, as there may be processes in place to request additional funding to pursue areas of interest. This is not a part of this research study.

7. Can a school continue to offer an after-school program at the K-2 level (currently offered in that 60-minute time)?

After school programs offer students wonderful opportunities to participate in activities outside of regular instructional time and we are fully supportive of continuing these practices.

After school programmes at the K-2 levels that are currently offered in the non-instructional time, will need to be offered after the additional sixty (60) minute block of instruction similar to the grades 3 to 5 after-school programs.

8. How are results going to be proven to be related to the extra hour?

The intent of the study is to evaluate the impacts of the additional time and resourcing within the 17 research schools across the province. As this research study is exploratory, the intent is to gain insights and describe findings rather than to 'prove' or 'disprove' a particular relationship.

A. Will existing data be used in this study and what should we collect for baseline data?

Researchers are exploring the existing data at the provincial, district and school levels to determine the information that can be incorporated into the study as we do not want to burden the schools unnecessarily. Once the review of current data is complete, researchers will determine other measures that may be required and this will be communicated to schools.

Researchers will be working with schools in determining the baseline data; this is not the sole responsibility of the schools.

B. Will there be time to meet with researchers?

We do not anticipate the need for a lot of meeting time with researchers, however, the two (2) days per year allocated to teachers in the research schools may be used. Should schools require time in addition, this can be considered. Please communicate your needs to your school district.

9. What is the impact on bussing?

The logistics of student transportation for the K-2 research schools has been studied at EECD and the organization has been coordinated with transportation in each of the school districts. Should you have questions, please contact your district's transportation department.

10. Will there be central communication around this research study (e.g. power point slides, flyer)?

Yes. EECD has created a template for research schools to use in communicating with parents/guardians and other stakeholders. A brochure is being created so schools can send a consistent message to parents at the start of the 2018-19 school year.

A communique has been sent to schools announcing the 17 research schools and the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development made a public announcement in June 2018.

A. What should schools be communicating and what if parents do not 'buy-in'?

Schools should use their regular channels of communication for engaging the community in the discussion regarding the participation in the study. The Parent School Support Committee is a critical stakeholder for regular communication.

As with all individual parent/guardian concerns, they should be dealt with individually as there may be unique circumstances to be discussed. However, the addition of sixty (60) minutes of instructional time at the Kindergarten, Grade One and Two levels for these schools is considered part of the regular school day, so it is expected that all students in those levels will attend.

B. Can schools create a Facebook page to share and discuss the study across the research schools?

We certainly support communication among research schools! Unfortunately, EECD does not support Facebook as a platform due to security and privacy concerns. There are alternatives, such as SharePoint and Office 365. There are plans in place for a roll out of Office 365. This will be communicated soon through ICT.



C. Will there be days for all schools to get together again?

The May 9, 2018, Research Schools Meeting proved to be a productive and enjoyable day for schools to share and discuss several topics. The Joint Committee received many positive comments and agrees that there is great value in meeting again as a whole group.

We will be reaching out to the research schools and districts in planning future meetings.