

EARLY DISMISSAL COLLABORATION TIME

Background:

Elk Island Public Schools supports regular, sustained and structured collaboration time for its employees—knowing such an emphasis contributes to improved student learning and the quality of education within the Division. The Board of Trustees, through approval of the annual Division calendar as per [Board Policy 2: Role of the Board](#), supports early dismissal of students on Wednesday afternoons for the purpose of providing optimal and frequent opportunities for school leaders, teachers and support staff to collaborate with an explicit focus on improving student learning and building collective efficacy.

Definitions:

Division Collaboration:

a system-wide approach that values collaborative, action-focused responses, data-informed discussions and timely support to ensure all students and staff can experience success. Key components include:

- **Collaborative Planning Meetings:**
provide staff with the opportunity to collaborate and work in teams to create resources, materials, lessons and strategies to support teaching and learning in their classrooms.
- **Collaborative Team Meetings:**
ensure an opportunity for team members to celebrate successes for students, identify students with key issues, determine effective classroom responses and build upon the collective capacity of the team.
- **Collaborative Data Review and Monitoring:**
refers to opportunities for staff to collaborate to discuss, create and review school education plans (SEPs) and school data analysis, review assessments and plan for interventions, collaboratively mark assessments such as common exams and Government of Alberta assessments, collaboratively develop student support plans (Individualized Program Plan (IPP)/Instructional Support Plan (ISP)/Behaviour Plan), student medical/safety plans, transition planning.

Early Dismissal:

Wednesday afternoons have been designated as job-embedded collaborative learning time. Students are dismissed from school one hour prior to their regular dismissal time. Staff remain at school for one hour of collaboration time starting 15 minutes after student dismissal.

Procedures:

General Procedures

1. School administrators are responsible for planning and co-ordinating school-based collaboration during early dismissal times.

2. Administrators will complete a school-based early dismissal collaboration plan that is to be submitted to the Superintendent or designate, by June 30, for implementation the next school year.
3. High schools choosing to add rewrites and academic coaching into their school-based early dismissal collaboration plan, must do so by scheduling it alongside collaboration activities and ensure there is an equitable rotation of staff.
4. School-based early dismissal collaboration plans will focus on the following as they pertain to the school context:
 - 4.1. On the first Wednesday of each month, early dismissal will be allocated for staff meetings.
 - 4.1.1. Full-time certificated staff shall attend monthly staff meetings.
 - 4.1.2. Part-time certificated staff and all classified staff shall attend monthly staff meetings for the duration of the meeting that occurs within the employee's scheduled work hours.
 - 4.2. Other weekly early dismissal collaboration shall be allocated for:
 - 4.2.1. Collaborative team meetings: Staff will have the opportunity to engage in collaborative discussions that focus on key issues related to students and strategies to address them. [Sample templates](#)—a Collaborative Team Meeting: Pre-Meeting Organizer Template and a Collaborative Team Meeting Template—are available to support meeting preparation, facilitation and documentation of celebrations, key issues and action items.
 - 4.2.2. Collaborative planning meetings: Staff will have the opportunity to identify a team focus that will guide their planning, creation of resources, materials and strategies in areas that will make a meaningful impact on their pedagogy and student learning. A [sample template](#)—Collaborative Planning Template—is available to support the development of a focus area, timelines, responsibilities and actions.
 - 4.2.3. Collaborative data review and monitoring: Staff will have the opportunity to work on key areas of collaboration that are common across all schools such as collaborative data analysis, marking of assessments, looking at student work protocols, intervention planning, development of student support plans and SEPs.
 - 4.2.4. Three times a year, school administration may allocate an early dismissal for teachers to work on reporting and communicating student learning.
5. School collaboration teams shall submit high level summaries from collaboration meetings to their principals, who in turn will collaboratively share school successes and challenges at leadership meetings.
6. Collaboration time is designated for one hour on scheduled early dismissal afternoons as per the Board-approved Division calendar. Staff are not required to work beyond the one hour.
7. Existing hours for educational assistants in the current calendar shall not be reduced. Educational assistants who are being paid now to work until the regular dismissal

time would also be required to participate until their usual end-of-work-day time. They are part of the critical team focused on improving student outcomes.

Staff Commitments

8. Early dismissal days have been scheduled in the Board-approved Division calendar for one hour every Wednesday. As such, staff are expected to prioritize scheduled collaboration time and make every effort to book appointments that do not conflict with early dismissal collaboration.
9. Extracurricular activities are an integral part of schools, and the Board appreciates the time and dedication staff give to support students; however, staff also have a responsibility to their collaboration time. As such, staff who also coach or lead extracurricular activities will work with their school administration to:
 - 9.1. request later game/event times for Wednesday afternoons/evenings with the organizing body when playing outside of their school/community and
 - 9.2. plan tournaments/games/events that occur in their school on Wednesdays following collaboration.
10. In situations where sections 9.1 and 9.2 are not feasible, school administration will approve an appropriate time for the applicable staff member to be excused or the event to begin. Staff may not miss more than three collaboration sessions per year for extracurricular activities.
11. When absent on a Wednesday afternoon, staff are required to enter leaves into Atrieve, even if substitute staff are not required.

Reference:

Administrative Procedure 130: School Calendars
Teachers' Collective Agreement