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Richard Smith



Rebecca DuFour



February 1, 2010

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# The Schedule Won't Let Us Devote Time to Intervention

The most effective school systems in the world ensure that all of their schools have a process in place to monitor each student's learning on an ongoing basis and a systematic plan of intervention that provides a struggling student with additional time and support for learning (Barber & Mourshed, 2007). It certainly seems to make sense that any school that claims its mission is to help all students learn would have a plan for responding when some students don't learn.

One of the critical questions all schools must address when they begin the PLC journey is "How will we respond when kids don't learn?" We contend that every school should have a plan that guarantees students who are struggling to learn an essential skill or concept will receive additional time and support in a way that is timely, directive, and systematic. Furthermore, this assistance should not require the student to miss new direct instruction. Most of the educators with whom we have worked do not dispute our premise that a school that claims its mission is to help all students learn should actually have a coordinated plan in place for responding when some students don't learn. Unfortunately, they go on to explain that "The schedule won't allow it."

This explanation has the benefit of demonstrating our good intentions—"We would love to intervene when kids do not learn"—at the same time it absolves us of responsibility—"Alas, it is simply impossible given our schedule." Blame is assigned to an inanimate, abstract concept (the schedule), while people are exonerated for failure to act.

We find this position puzzling, and we offer these questions to educators across North America:

- Did you mean it when you said the purpose of your school or district is to help *all* students learn? Was that a sincere declaration of intent and priority or politically correct hyperbole?
- Do you recognize that some students will require more time and support for learning than others? We are unaware of any researcher who has concluded all students can learn if time and support are constants rather than variables in the learning process.
- Do you agree a school's schedule should reflect its purpose and priorities?

- Have you created a schedule that ensures you have access to all students who experience difficulty in order to provide them with additional time and support for learning?

When we pose these questions, one at a time, to educators, it is disheartening to hear them say, “Yes, we are committed to helping all students learn; yes, we recognize some will need more time and support if they are to learn; yes, a school’s schedule should reflect its purpose and priorities; but, no, we do not have a system of intervention in place because the schedule won’t let us.” A school’s schedule should be regarded as a tool to further priorities rather than as an impediment to change. Our advice to educators is simple: Your schedule is not a sacred document. If your current schedule does not allow you to provide students with something as essential to their academic success as extra time and support for learning, you should change it!

The schools and districts listed under [Evidence of Effectiveness](#) on this site have all created schedules that not only allocate time for teachers to work in collaborative teams, but also provide time and support each day for students who need assistance. These schools rely on different schedules. For example, Adlai Stevenson High School has eight 50-minute periods per school day, with one of the periods reserved for lunch. Cinco Ranch offers a seven-period day with 30 minutes for lunch. Three Whittier Union high schools have six periods on Mondays, then alternate three periods on a block schedule Tuesday through Friday. Both Lakeridge Junior High School and Prairie Star Middle School operate a modified A/B block schedule, but their schedules are different in many ways. Jane Addams Junior High has a nine-period day. Boones Mill and Highland elementary schools’ schedules have some similarities, but they are not identical. Schedules can differ. However, schedules should (1) give school personnel access to students who are experiencing difficulty learning during the school day and (2) ensure students receive additional time and support for learning in ways that do not require them to miss new direct instruction.


It should come as no surprise that the “world’s best-performing school systems” ensure that every school monitors the learning of each student on a timely basis and implements a systematic intervention plan to assist struggling students rather than let them fall behind (Barber & Mourshed, 2007). It’s time to acknowledge that if your school is not providing this level of support, it is not because the “schedule won’t let us;” it is because you have chosen not to.



Adapted from *Raising the Bar and Closing the Gap* (DuFour, DuFour, Eaker, & Karhanek)  
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Posted on December 08, 2011

## The challenges of school scheduling | The REAL School Design Blog

[...] challenges of school scheduling Posted on December 15, 2010 by Gabriel A recent post by Rick and Becky DuFour, long time advocates and authors of numerous books on professional [...]

*Posted on December 16, 2010*

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### Rowena

I wholeheartedly agree with this article. Every school should provide intervention for their struggling students. When necessary, the school's schedule must be changed to accommodate this. At our school, we provide a good bit of intervention daily for reading (30 minutes of pull-out time with a reading interventionist as well as 45 minutes of in-class centers/small group with the teacher). We fall short where math is concerned. Beginning next year, the reading interventionist will also provide math intervention to those students who need it. Thanks to federal stimulus funds, our district has been providing very meaningful professional development. I believe we are on the right track.

*Posted on October 13, 2010*

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### ecampbell

At the school I teach at, we have remediation programs running for those children who need it as soon as they walk through the doors in the morning. We also have remedial reading programs happening throughout the school day, as well as an after school remediation program. I feel that these programs are necessary to help our students "grasp the basics", but there is no time at our school set aside for each teacher to remediate where needed within the daily schedule. Our schedules include exact minute intervals that each subject is expected to require. I think that as teachers, we are expected to constantly review "old" material as well as introduce new material. The "old" material, should theoretically build upon their knowledge base. My school recently began guided math and this allows for the teacher to work more closely with the students during math time in order to ensure that the student has grasped the concept. So far, the reaction to the guided math is positive. I am hearing a similar complaint however - there is no time to reteach anything. The pace at which we have to teach is ridiculous! Most teachers on my grade level have a common planning time, and we are required to meet as a group every week to discuss questions, or concerns. Due to the hectic schedules, we do not spend a lot of time collaborating about when and how to remediate or extend for those students that need it. My goal is for my students to learn what they have to learn by June - not by the end of the quarter just so they can pass the test.

*Posted on October 12, 2010*

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### madison.payne

At my school, we have what is called Extended Learning Time (ELT) during the first period of the day. During this time, students can receive remediation in either reading or math, based on their state test scores. There are some other ELTs that focus on regular or gifted students in science and social studies. This is a great first step for intervention, but sometimes I feel as though we could have more remedial ELTs. We tend to have a high population of students that are low in math and reading, but we can only have a certain number of students in a remedial setting, and we only have

a few teachers for these classes. There is also after-school tutoring for the students, where they use two different computer programs to improve in reading and math. However, the programs are not aligned with the standards for their grade level, and I feel that the students need a teacher. Another school that I did my student teaching at had a schedule that I felt allowed for more student support. They had ELT in the morning during breakfast, they had a 45 minute lunch period which allowed for teachers to have "lunch and learn", and they had an extra recess every Friday where failing students could receive extra help. Based on my experience there, I agree that the schedule has to be designed to benefit the students. My school has started this somewhat, but I feel that it can certainly improve.

*Posted on August 04, 2010*

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### Joe P.

The high school that I teach at came up with a solid intervention plan this year. We call it "Prep Intervention". In our school, freshmen and seniors tend to get most of the attention. We have numerous interventions set up for freshmen, like on-campus lunch if failing a class, etc. However, sophomores and juniors tend to slip under the radar. This intervention is aimed at them. If there is any academic concern about a student, a teacher will recommend them to "Prep Intervention". The teachers that have the same prep period will meet with this student and help in any way possible. It has been really successful so far, however, we do have some teachers that refuse to give up their "personal" time which is unfortunate. When and if we get all teachers on board, this will really help in preventing students fall between the cracks.

Joe Prior

*Posted on June 09, 2010*

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### Rick and Becky DuFour

AgnewM,

I have a good news and bad news response to your question. First of all, kudos to your school for attempting to carve out time for intervention and enrichment. Thirty minutes three times a week isn't a lot of time for intervention, but it is a start. The bad news is, that what you are proposing isn't intervention. It is three 30-minute study halls for all students, and I am not aware of any research of a correlation between mandatory study hall and improved student achievement.

I side with the math and science departments on this one. Tutorial time should be required of students who are not being successful, but should not be required of students who are meeting all expectations. Your plan is treating every student in the school the same – every student whether proficient or not, whether a freshmen or senior, whether completing work or not is following the same schedule. Intervention specifically sets out to differentiate the schedule for students and provide positive incentives for students who are being successful and systematic structures for additional time and support for students who are not. In trying to provide this service to the entire student body, including students who don't need it, you will not be able to provide the focused, intensive support for the students who do. My prediction is that you will abandon this practice within 3 years and declare that systematic intervention doesn't work, even though what you are proposing does not represent systematic intervention.

You don't provide enough details about your schedule for me to offer suggestions, and I don't know

your state's rules and regulations. I'm not clear on how you could find time for study halls but not time for targeted tutorials. I assume you are requiring kids to attend, not because you expect it to benefit them, but because you are trying to meet state mandates in instructional minutes. I question whether or not this does in fact meet the mandate since it is clearly not instructional time. I suggest you would be better off seeking a waiver from your state to reserve this time for targeted tutorials as part of an action research project to improve student learning. Most states are becoming more flexible if schools can demonstrate that they are getting better results.

I do know that in Adlai Stevenson High School in Lincolnshire, Illinois we had no problem giving responsible upperclassmen free time and off-campus privileges and didn't feel the need to put them in study halls. I encourage you to go to the evidence of effectiveness link on [allthingsplc.info](http://allthingsplc.info) and do a search for high schools and middle schools. You'll find over 50 schools that have faced the same challenges of contracts and minutes that were able to find creative solutions that allowed them to carve out time for intervention. You can go to the websites of those schools or contact the principals, you can get information on how each did it given the parameters they faced.

If you start with the assumption that the schedule you have must remain the same and now let's provide intervention within it, you will probably fail. You have to start with an assumption that our schedule reflects our priorities, because it does. Right now, other priorities are driving the schedule. When helping all kids learn becomes a priority, you will make adjustments to your schedule because all of us recognize that all kids will not learn if time and support for learning are the same for all students.

Rick DuFour

*Posted on May 20, 2010*

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## AgnewM

Mr. and Mrs. Dufour,

Our high school is about to pilot a schedule that includes 30 minutes most Monday's for teacher collaboration and three 30-minute tutorials each week. We had a substantial debate about whether those tutorials should be targeted, meaning only those students who are struggling should attend them, or mandatory, meaning all students should attend. The mathematics and science departments were in favor of targeted tutorials, as we believed removing the students who neither need nor want extra help allows us to focus on the students who do need help, and having the carrot of a longer lunch or shorter school day could encourage otherwise unmotivated students. The English and social science departments argued for a mandatory tutorial, pointing out that all students can make use of extra time to do assignments and get help from teachers.

Furthermore, we ran into several structural problems with the targeted tutorial. Specifically, if we took time from lunch or lengthened the school day we would have to alter teachers' contracts, and if we took time from class we would need to keep campus closed to maintain our level of instructional minutes, creating substantial supervisory issues.

In the end, these structural problems, combined with unwillingness on the part of the faculty to work longer without additional compensation, led us to adopt a mandatory tutorial without lengthening the school day or shortening lunch (each period was shortened by a few minutes), but there are those of us who still believe a targeted tutorial would be far more effective. Based on your experience, do you believe a mandatory tutorial can work, or is a targeted tutorial really the only

proven strategy? If the latter, how have other schools overcome the supervisory and contractual problems?

Thank you very much for your time and assistance.

-Morgan Agnew  
Terra Linda high school

*Posted on May 11, 2010*

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### **Rick and Becky DuFour**

Lsumme

For expert advice on the block schedule in middle schools, go to Evidence of Effectiveness link on the PLC blog and read up on Lakeridge in the Alpine Valley School District of Utah. Principal Garrick Peterson has helped the school win recognition as the "Best K-12 School in Utah" after moving to a block schedule and building in time for systematic intervention and support.

Rick DuFour

*Posted on May 10, 2010*

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### **LSummers**

Our 6-8 grade middle school is looking to radically change our current schedule for the 2010-2011 school year. We are looking at extending our day and implementing 90 minute blocks (English and Reading; Math and Religion; Science and Social Studies) with an Advisory block in the morning, Enrichment and Academic Support in the middle of the day, and daily Physical Education and Exploratory classes at the end of the day. Any advice or input on the logistics of putting this together would be greatly appreciated. What works? What does not?

*Posted on May 03, 2010*

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### **Rick and Becky DuFour**

Whitney,

The following link will take you to a document that describes several different secondary school schedules that are crafted to provide intervention to students during the school day and time for teams to collaborate. <http://www.allthingsplc.info/pdf/tools/POI-interventionschedules.pdf> Most of the schools named in this document are also on this site under "Evidence of Effectiveness" on the following link: <http://www.allthingsplc.info/evidence/evidence.php>

You can read more about them and other high schools included on the site. Feel free to contact any school on the site to request more information about their schedule and practices.

*Posted on April 26, 2010*

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**Rick and Becky DuFour**

Ketner226,

When PLC schools are not able to designate two intervention blocks per grade-level due to lack of time and human resources, they often designate some weeks and/or days for L.A intervention and others for math. Often, students who only need support in one area of the content are provided that support each day.

The schedules included in the Highland Elementary School entry under “Evidence of Effectiveness” on this site provides an example of both math and L.A. intervention blocks.

*Posted on April 20, 2010*

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**Staff at [www.allthingsplc.info](http://www.allthingsplc.info)**

Linda A,

See the link for “Secondary Intervention Schedules” listed under Tools and Resources on this site. You can also contact any school listed under “Evidence of Effectiveness” if you want more information regarding their schedules.

*Posted on April 20, 2010*

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**Rick and Becky DuFour**

angie20046,

In a PLC, the school provides a systematic response to students who are not yet being successful – intervention is not left to each individual teacher to figure out. We encourage you to share the examples on this site (see schools under “Evidence of Effectiveness”) of school-wide systems of intervention with your colleagues and administrators, pool your collective wisdom and expertise, and develop a plan of intervention and enrichment for your school.

*Posted on April 20, 2010*

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**Rick and Becky DuFour**

carolnivery,

When PLC schools are not able to designate two intervention blocks per grade-level due to lack of time and human resources, they often designate some weeks and/or days for L.A intervention and others for math. Often, students who only need support in one area of the content are provided that support each day.

The schedules included in the Highland Elementary School entry under “Evidence of Effectiveness” on this site provides an example of both math and L.A. intervention blocks.

*Posted on April 20, 2010*

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**Whitney**

I'm now serving on a committee that will modify our high school's bell schedule for next year so that it'll incorporate some type of PLC / "work with struggling students" time. We use block scheduling. Is there anyone else who works at a school that has a block schedule but that incorporates this work time into it as well? I've been asked to bring some examples back to our next meeting (next week) of schools that have successfully done this. Any help would be appreciated. Thanks in advance.

*Posted on April 19, 2010*

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**joneal**

I definitely agree with this concern. Teachers barely have enough time to get any extra things in. I think we need time to collaborate with other teachers, to help with learning different strategies and procedures. Discussing concerns and issues with other teachers, sometimes helps not to feel like you are the only one going through things. With teachers collaborating then this gives us more time to study on how to better our students and help them become life long learners. Maybe we can do more one on one time with struggling students, which to me many of them learn better when its one on one.

*Posted on April 07, 2010*

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**smhartle**

I am sure this article speaks to me as it does many other educators out there. One of the biggest challenges I face daily is trying to find enough time to "get it all done". I am thrilled that my school has adopted a new program for progress monitoring our low performing students, however, when you have a classroom with 7 students whom you need to progress monitor weekly and pose interventions daily, when does the teaching of new core content take place? I find it almost humorous that we are required to follow suit with these new implementations, yet not provided with the time to do it effectively. Our system is backwards. "Do more with less" is the philosophy. Someone needs to be reminded that we are educators, not magicians. We can only do so much with the time we have. It would be beneficial for my school to have a block of time designated strictly for interventions, data collection, and progress monitoring. This way, on and above level students are given that block to expand their knowledge base in a group of peers of similar academic strength. Given this block of time would be a gift to each and every one of us as well as our students. We would be given the quality time to teach (which is rare enough), and our students would get the quality learning experience they deserve.

*Posted on April 07, 2010*

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**Andrew**

Finding time and developing a schedule for intervention is only the beginning. My district has required that every school build in a common intervention time into their schedules. The problem is that principals have received mixed messages concerning how they are to use this time. Some have been told that this intervention time is strictly for literacy. Others have been told that they should alternate between literacy and math every other week. Also, many campuses don't seem to



have a plan concerning materials that will be used during intervention. Some simply grab the nearest test-prep booklet from the shelf while others have students playing "educational" games. So I am witnessing a situation where the time for intervention is available but the conversation concerning how to best utilize this time to positively impact student achievement is rather disjointed.

*Posted on April 07, 2010*

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### **fletcherj**

I strongly agree with this article. In the school that I currently teach we do not have the proper time to reteach a skill for students who do not grasp the skill the first time. The pacing guide did not account for these students. As educators we are given allotted time to teach the standards necessary for students to be promoted to the next grade level. What happens with the students that did not grasp the standards the first time? Do I move on and risk my lower achieving students not meeting the standard on the state test? Then who is accountable?

*Posted on April 07, 2010*

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### **yostm**

I agree with Pamela when she says, "it is time to change from doing things as usual and we should thrive to meet the needs of our students rather than the needs of our curriculums and schedules". I am a sixth and eighth grade special needs teacher, and there are so many times when students are on a completely different level than our curriculum suggests. I would love to give them the important skills they need to get by in life, rather than just get them to pass a state test. Of course, I incorporate the main life skills into their content, but some students don't have the capacity to get beyond that. Sometimes, it's not fair to the students.

*Posted on April 07, 2010*

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### **LStokes**

I agree with many points in this article. When a school/teacher blames the schedule for not having time it does need to be changed. We have to take responsibility for what our students are comprehending. There has to be a way to incorporate the much needed time for our students. We can't let the students continue to fall in between the cracks, or fall to the waste side. Our students need a confirmation for teachers that we know you may have a struggle with some things and we are here to help.

*Posted on April 07, 2010*

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### **Todd**

I totally agree with this article. If the goal of schools and teachers is to make sure each student learns then we as a district should do whatever is necessary to make this happen. At our school, we do have a plan in place to make sure we are able to put forth the effort to reach every student. First, it is worked into our schedule that throughout the year, once a month, we have an early

release day that we as a teaching staff use as a staff development day. Here, we get together with our "teams" and discuss ways to make lessons better and discuss any problems we have with any of our students. Also, our school is broken into 4 communities. Each community has a designated lunch period. During this lunch period we can choose to have extra time with a group of students or to get together with our team and work on a lesson. As a teacher, our schedule also has a lunch and planning period built into it. This allows time to eat your lunch during that time and then have more time to work with students or teachers if need be. I think that schools need to have time allotted into the schedule to make sure we are getting maximum effort and knowledge to and from our students.

*Posted on April 07, 2010*

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### Kim

My school definitely needs to come up with a more effective schedule that allows for collaboration among teachers. Since we do not have an appropriate schedule, many teachers feel isolated. The school's schedule should reflect its purpose and priorities. If my school created a schedule that ensures that we have access to all students who experience difficulty in order to provide them with additional time and support for learning, I believe that we would have less students referred for special education.

*Posted on April 07, 2010*

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### ballard0016

I would agree that school administration and teachers need to sit down together to come up with the most effective schedule. Some teachers are reluctant to changing their schedule, but this is where the teaching community needs to intervene. It might help to present those reluctant teachers with some hard evidence to show them that change is essential and change can be for the best. Not all students are going to get the information after one lesson, and spending additional time with certain children is crucial for learning.

*Posted on April 06, 2010*

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### Ketner226

At my school we are given time for intervention in reading, but we have had to be creative in finding ways to provide intervention in math. Myself and two other teachers have for a year grouped our students together then divide them into three groups. I know this is not ideal but it has helped us. The top group is the largest and the teacher gives them enrichment. The middle group is slightly smaller. Our lower group is the smallest and we have parents that help the teacher work with that group so that there are two adults in the room. We present the lesson whole group to our class for fifteen minutes and then they go to their "Team Time" class. Students needing extra support are given that by having two adults work with them every day during math. Does anyone have another way that works for them?

*Posted on April 06, 2010*

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**Linda A**

We have been following the PLC model at our school for a few years. This article has been enlightening and has reminded me of the critical question we must continually be seeking the answers to, "How will we respond when kids don't learn?" What we are missing in our high school is exactly what this article is about. We are missing a plan of intervention. We do not have anything worked into our schedule besides teachers making students stay in at noon or after school. This strategy is not working. Thank you for the insight from this article and the comments from other educators. I will be discussing this article at my next PLC group meeting.

Does anyone have any advise or scheduling strategies that are working within your high school?

*Posted on April 06, 2010*

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**Michelle Horne**

Having extra time in the classroom for interventions is a very difficult task to manage. Most schools truly believe that they want to meet the needs of all students; however, when it comes down to actually formulating a plan for each student - well that is a different story. I am the second grade math teacher at my school. I have been very fortunate this year in that my school has come together as a professional learning community to focus on math and to find ways to provide additional assistance to struggling learners. As a team, we analyzed the previous year's state test scores and targeted the students who did not meet the standards or who barely met. These students were assigned a faculty member whom acts as an encourager for a particular student. In the 4th and 5th grade, the students received extra help from a lower grade teacher assistant who is a math wizard. They also participate in an after school tutoring session. 2nd and 3rd grade teachers used stations so they could give the extra help that those students needed. Also, all students (2nd - 5th) were shown their previous year's state test scores and were encouraged to make a goal as to what they wanted to make this year. These goals were shared with parents at a meeting to make them aware. Involving mentors from the community is also a valuable tool for all students however they are struggling, academically or any other way.

*Posted on April 06, 2010*

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**dawn weststrate**

I totally agree that schools are often reluctant to change their schedules to meet the needs of students. I work as a prorammig consultant for young children and I have found that when I suggest to some teachers that they change their day so that their struggling students can experience more success they are totally against it. For our young children with severe anxiety and resulting behaviors starting with an academic task can set them off for the day. Instead I would recommend starting with centers or story time so that the child can ease into the routines and activities. I also agree with the push in model of intervention. It is an effective way to help students with their social skills and at the same time teaching them the lagging skills that they may have.

*Posted on April 06, 2010*

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**Pamela Hawke**

This statement is often very true. Our school schedules are often so packed, that there is little or no time to focus on the matters that truly should be focused on. Our regular classroom sessions are focused for the faster learner and the slower students are left behind. The quality time that should be spent with these students is not available. Instead, the schedule is crowded with activities and events which leave little or no time. The slower students are now pushed further back and things just become more complicated. I believe that our schedule should be more student and not curriculum centered and in this way, our students will be able to benefit more.

*Posted on April 05, 2010*

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#### **angie20046**

Although my school allows us time for intervention, we are not provided any resources. Daily intervention is expected of us with no classroom aids, intervention specialists, or budget to further our curriculum. Some days it is almost impossible to provide intervention to every student that needs it due to no outside help in the school.

Last year I was very fortunate to have a parent volunteer give her time daily to work with three struggling learners. I suggest if your school is not giving support, find all possible outside resources possible.

*Posted on April 05, 2010*

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#### **carolynivery**

It would be wonderful if we could have intervention for all subjects. Nevertheless, I have noticed that most interventions are in Reading. At my school we have a two hour reading block which is great. What about those students that are weak in Math. When you have 20+ students in your classroom, it is hard to set up intervention time for all students. Even when you group them according to their weakness, time is still a issue. Yes, my district state test scores are lower in Reading but Math is not far behind. We need intervention slots for both Math and Reading.

*Posted on April 05, 2010*

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#### **curcio98**

I believe that schools that are dedicated to ensuring the success of all students need take a look at what they are NOT doing in order to achieve this goal. By stating that time is not allowed for this type of intervention is placing blame on others. By doing this, they are coming up with excuses that are not acceptable. They need to face reality. It seems to me that districts that place blame on others really don't want to change.

Without change in education, success is not possible.

*Posted on April 04, 2010*

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#### **Pamela Hawke**

It was just recently that I was thinking about the packed time table that my school presents. This schedule does not leave time for much needed intervention. The students on a dialy basis move from one academic area to another without having anytime to receive the much needed help. many teachers often seek to fulfil these time schedules rather than cater to the needs of the students. I believe that our schedules are too packed and they do not necessarily cater to the needs of our students. I am of the opinon, that it is time to change from doing things as usual and we should thrive to meet the needs of our students rather than the needs of our curriculums and schedules.

*Posted on April 03, 2010*

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## J9nine

Many aspects of education, alongside scheduling, cater to the “average learner”, a student that does not learn too quickly, but at the same time does not require any additional assistance. The students that require school systems and educators to adjust traditional methods and question conventional practices are pushed aside and ignored. You are correct in saying that it is done indirectly and maybe even unconsciously, but the fact of the matter is it is still happening in schools everyday. Some school systems may call this an unfortunate happenstance, a by-product of limited resources. Perhaps what they really mean is that it is unfortunate that we are asked the questions above and have to answer them to concerned educators and parents so often. The reality is that this misfortunate is laid upon the students, whom have no resources to combat its negative consequences. Let's keep asking these “unfortunate” questions to aid in the fortune of our students. Thanks

*Posted on April 03, 2010*

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## hedwards

I am speaking from a different perspective as I teach ESE students. However, we have some students who are really struggling, who do need extra support from what they are already receiving in the ESE classroom. We do not have the ability to send them to another classroom for that support. the supports that are suppose to come and pull the students as far as speech and occupational therapy, I have them come into the classroom to work instead of pulling the students out. The unfortunate thing that is continuing to happen is the increase in student to teacher ratio in the ESE classroom which does make it difficult to give the students the support that they desperately need. The way in which I have been able to manage my time efficiently is all in taking data. I have created individual data forms for my students to assess their progress on their IEP goals and the areas of deficiencies. From their I have put them into small groups based on their ability level where I work with them for Direct Instruction, for those students needing additional support I pull them one-on-one for more specific academic work. I also create my own schedule and change the schedule as it needs to be depending on the student's needs. I know that my situation is a little different because I teach ESE, however, we are still facing the same problems and concerns in the classroom.

*Posted on March 29, 2010*

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## Becky DuFour

If the primary teachers are concerned that the students are moving around too much, work with them to create a better plan for intervention. For example, rather than sending struggling students out of the classroom to get extra support, create a “push-in” model for intervention in which classroom teachers from across the grade level, working hand-in-hand with instructional resource and support staff, take collective responsibility for all students of that grade level during the identified intervention/extension/enrichment block(s). Using formative assessment information, create flexible, fluid learning groups for intervention, practice, extension, and enrichment of the essential skills, concepts, and dispositions. Bottom line, every school that is committed to helping all students learn -and every team within that school - must have a plan to give students extra time and support to learn at the highest possible levels. The details of that plan should be “owned” by the people involved – if the current plan isn’t working for the first and second grade teachers, have them create and implement a better plan, using the evidence of what’s working and what isn’t to continually tweak and fine-tune the plan.

Hope this helps  
Becky DuFour

*Posted on March 24, 2010*

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#### azimmer

It's that time of year again to create schedules..... at the NSDC presentation by Rick and Becky, some creative schedules were discussed and I thought I could find them on the website, but no luck. Are there some schedules out there at the elem. level that fit a PLC time into the week along with some intervention blocks. I know during the session there were some great ones presented. Thanks

*Posted on March 23, 2010*

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#### kcraig

We have a group of primary students (current grade 1 and 2) we are really concerned about - low functioning academically. While we have embraced the PLC model, and have been practicing for several years, I am feeling a pushback right now - primary teachers are suggesting that the reason students are not performing well is because they are "moving around too much due to intervention times" and "have no sense of community" established...and they this THIS is why they are not meeting expectations. Their rationale doesn't make a lot of sense to me; I have a hard time with it because I think it goes back to an adult issue regarding release of "their kids"....which is an old story, and one I thought we had gotten past. Maybe this is just a plateau; but I am getting discouraged. Any words of advice regarding how to "best steer the ship and hold us steady" so we can get through these rough waters? (This has been a challenging year after several great years in our PLC journey.) I keep hearing in my head Rick and Becky's comments about "stopping points/pitfalls along the way" and I just want to keep us moving forward. I reread the chapter in Raising the Bar and Closing the Gap related overcoming barriers...but I guess I am needing a bit more support! :) Thank you...

*Posted on March 16, 2010*

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#### jaellner

In the class we are taking right now, we were just talking about the concepts of effective practice and popular practice. Scheduling appears to be more popular practice. Kudos to the schools who realize they can create whatever is best for learning vs. jumping on the bandwagon of popular practice.

*Posted on March 09, 2010*

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### **karen l fitzsimmons**

I'm hoping to hear from some elementary principals...what have you done to help alleviate teachers' aghast about sending some of their students to another room to work on specific skills during intervention time? My first grade teachers have been able to see the benefits of their intervention, whereas the third grade teachers are fighting it because they say they are ultimately responsible for their students' scores on the state assessments. Is there an activity that we could do at a faculty meeting (only held to address major concerns and professional development – otherwise used for data/intervention team meetings) that would show the importance of relying on each other?

I don't have the staff to help the students who need interventions without using my classroom teachers. So each grade has an intervention slot along with a reading/writing and math slot. They look at their data and determine what interventions are needed and which students need to attend the interventions. The rest of the students either receive additional help or have enrichment in either reading/writing or math depending on the data. I acknowledge that the teachers are being asked to do more – collect data – check for fidelity – design lessons for those not in interventions (the interventions have specific lessons). I try to give them extra time – not having faculty meetings, giving them additional time in the AM (data teams – at least twice a month - where they look at the group data) and during our professional development days, whenever possible.

What step have I missed?

*Posted on March 08, 2010*

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### **Gail Wold**

I agree wholeheartedly with the authors' assertion that we cannot make truly significant changes in our schools unless we are willing to challenge the status quo. The old cliché, “If we keep doing what we've always done, we will get what we've always gotten,” is true of student performance. The real question for schools unwilling to consider a new scheduling paradigm is, “How is what you've always done working for you?”

*Posted on February 01, 2010*

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