

AEA Info about Academy and Collaboration (this will be in our next newsletter)

Academy

We have been hearing a lot of concerns about Academy and intervention. Academy is becoming a 2nd prep period for many. Even for those who aren't "prepping" in advance, academy can be exhausting working with different kids who need help on different things, etc. There is also frustration at the pressure from admin to "tag" kids, especially when the kids don't have to show up if they are tagged. There are also questions of who has priority in tagging and where does student responsibility come into play. We have also heard that at one site, departments were told that at least one of their academy offerings had to be targeted intervention. And we are also getting questions about why class time is being interrupted for things like counseling visits when we now have academy.

From the MOU:

"All full time certificated staff members will engage with students during the Intervention/Tutorial periods two days a week. Part time teachers shall also engage in Intervention/Tutorial as their schedule permits. Teaching new material essential to the course will not be allowed. **Certificated staff members will work within departments to develop plans and options for students during these periods within the established framework** (see the FAQs). The department plan will be reviewed for approval by a site administrator."

From the FAQ's:

The main purpose of offering two tutorial/ intervention periods within the student schedule is to offer embedded time for students within their daily schedule when they can receive needed help.

Currently students are expected to see teachers during lunch, before or after school to get help or make up missed work, a system that is not utilized well for the most at risk students. Additionally, teachers are spending time at lunch, before or after school and during passing periods to try and help the students who are struggling. **The primary purpose of these periods is to allow for systematic school-wide support and intervention.**

Students should use the time to make up or retake missed classroom assignments, labs, tests, quizzes. Students may also use this time to study, complete homework, work on group projects and more.

The following are proposed programs that **may be** delivered during the second tutorial period:

- Freshmen boot camp - series of topics relevant to freshmen ranging from study skills to decision making
- Senior symposium series - series of topics relevant to seniors ranging from college application help to transition to post high school life.
- Digital citizenship, cyber safety
- Counseling visits
- Rallies and assemblies
- Open gym programs
- Open studio programs
- Enrichment presentations

It is important to note that use of the tutorial/intervention period for the programs listed above will be limited to keep the primary purpose of the period in mind.

If a teacher wants to see a specific group of students, can they request for those students to come to a particular tutorial?

Yes. It is our goal to utilize scheduling software designed to **allow for teachers to "tag" certain students to attend their tutorial session. Students would also be able to request to see teachers during tutorial sessions.**

As you can see from the language above, academy was never meant to be a 2nd prep for anyone. It was supposed to be a time for us to be able to help students instead of both us and kids having to give up lunches, stay late afterschool, etc (or at least not have to do these as often). Departments plan what they do for academy but there is NO requirement for at least one offering to be targeted intervention. Students can make up work, get extra help, or use it as a study hall. It is **OK** for teachers to set their academy period to be a quiet study hall and to limit the number of students to a reasonable number (and then turn extra kids away since kids will sometimes show up anyways). When we shared the concern of this becoming an extra prep with the standing committee (AEA reps plus site and district admin), site principals really wanted people to reach out to them if they were feeling this stress and they seemed to genuinely not want this to be a prep, etc. Tagging is optional and I know we are seeing pressure about kids with D's and F's but I also

understand the frustration of (1) the kids don't have to come if they are tagged, (2) the software (teachmore) is very clunky so batch tagging is time consuming, and (3) how do we get kids to be responsible for themselves? I have tagged kids on occasion. I also talk to them and tell them to come in or write a note on their exam/paper. I find it easiest to tag kids right as I am grading something when I am realizing that more than a few kids had trouble with a concept or skill. But, ultimately, it's up to them. I also tell kids who try to come to my academy and are tagged elsewhere they need to go where they are tagged. Please encourage teachers at your sites to not make academy something onerous for them and that it is OK to have quiet study hall.

Collaboration

We have been discussing coming up with a list of examples of things that "count" for collaboration and these examples are below and will be our next newsletter so that people are aware that they have options outside of the prescribed things some site admin are encouraging.

I have put in the MOU language below about collaboration:

During the designated staff collaboration periods, certificated staff will collaboratively work on the development of curriculum, assessments, instructional practices or support services. Teams will be able to select from an established menu of curricular collaboration options or have the option of submitting an alternate collaborative proposal. A process of administrative approval will be established to approve the collaborative topics and to support additional uses of collaboration time not already on the established list.

And from the FAQ's

Why is there high value in additional teacher collaboration time?

Teacher collaboration is valued highly in the AUHSD in our efforts to support the learning of all students. It allows our teachers to share best practices. It allows our teachers to work together to innovate, solve problems and identify new approaches to their teaching. It allows our teachers to identify the most essential learning outcomes and come to agreement regarding how to measure that learning. It allows our teachers time to plan for the optimal utilization of the tutorial/intervention periods. It allows our teachers to examine equitable grading practices.

So, in addition to the options provided by your site administration here are other options that are perfectly reasonable collaboration projects:

- collaborative work on curriculum (aligning to new textbooks, optimizing for block schedule, etc)
- developing common assessments
- collaborative work on best instructional practices for block (timing, transitions, etc)
- collaborative work with special ed to modify curriculum
- collaborative work with people outside your department/subject on cross curricula projects
- collaborative work on the development of curriculum for new courses (NGSS Living Earth, HSD, NGSS Chemistry of Earth, etc)
- for singleton teachers (or others) - collaboration with colleagues at other sites, either in person, or digitally (google hang out)
- collaboratively reviewing and discussing quarter or semester grades
- more detailed planning of academy (note the main time for planning academy is on a Weds am and this option should only be utilized if it's what YOU want not because admin tell you to use it that)
- collaborative work on essential standards and learning outcomes

The key to all these options is (1) people are not working alone, and (2) this isn't prep (copy) time. People have to be on campus working with colleagues collaboratively on some project.

To be able to do one of the collaborative projects listed above instead of what is "on the menu" at your site? People need to make a proposal to the principal. This should be an email that includes who they are going to work with, where and how often (Every week? Every other week? Once a month?) they are meeting and what their goal is in doing this project. All involved should be cc'd all who are involved. There shouldn't be any problems with approval as the list above completely follows the spirit of the MOU and FAQ's.