

*MFT Filename: Opening week presentation and proposal language  
First presented on March 21, 2019*

*The following proposals made by the Minneapolis Federation of Teachers, based on input from educators, parents, students, and community members, are subject to modifications and additions throughout the bargaining process. It is mutually understood that all dates will be updated in the contract as part of any agreement.*

**Being prepared before students arrive on the first day of school, supports teacher effectiveness and student outcomes for the entire year.**

But before a single lesson planned, there are a countless number of things a teacher must do:

Rooms that have been cleaned over the summer, must be put back together. Desks, tables, chairs and shelving wiped down due to soap residue or dust. Furniture must be rearranged into a thoughtful floor plan, since it was moved, or stacked on one side of the room. Teachers put on their interior design hat and determine things like, "can all students see me and the Promethean board?" "Are high traffic areas clear?" "How can I arrange the seating to prevent distractions and allow me to monitor all students no matter where I am in the room?" They arrange work areas where students go for math and reading groups, learning centers, and where students can work independently, when needed.

Then they move on to the nuts and bolts. A welcome letter is prepared which contains a supply wish list. IEPs, 504s, health plans, achievement data are reviewed for each student as available. The classroom website is updated. Classroom libraries are unpacked and organized. Tools and materials are organized and placed in accessible locations for students. Name tags and locker tags are made. Folders and notebooks are labelled. Records are helpful, but check-ins with last year's teachers and phone calls to families are invaluable. Curriculum is inventoried, developed, revised, or checked out if it was turned in last year. Technology is collected, plugged in, updated, and tested. And don't forget the preparing of the reserve teacher folder and for the office and go-kits filled with class lists, and all relevant student documents in case of emergency.

Only after cleaning, organizing, ensuring that they have all the materials, tools, and curriculum they need, and trying to get to know their students through records and conversations - can a teacher catch their breath and start lesson planning. But this isn't just a planning for the first day of school, it's differentiated lesson planning for a week, **and** creating a scope and sequence for the year, or a syllabus for the quarter. It's copying, constructing, practicing, and revising. It's collaborating with colleagues in trips to the bathroom, connecting with new students touring the halls, responding to administrators with last-minute fires to extinguish, it's a flurry of production amidst unavoidable distractions and necessary interruptions to workflow. It's intellectually hefty work, it's exhausting, and it takes energy, focus, and reflection. All of this and more require time and time is scarce.

During the 2011-13 negotiations, the district realized that teachers needed more time to be ready for the first day of school, and during the 15-17 round, 2 ½ uninterrupted, consecutive days for planning and preparation during opening week were put into contract language.

What I've just shared doesn't give justice to all the things that teachers do before students arrive, like waiting in line to make copies, putting up bulletin boards, or gathering supplemental resources - but I'm

sure after listening to my colleagues, you'll have a better understanding of what it's like to set up an effective classroom and be ready for students, and why we are asking for more time at the beginning of the year.

**(Introduce Teacher Presentations)**

So - given there are 9 duty days before the first student day this fall, and you've heard how 2 ½ days just isn't enough to be ready for students, we're asking for 4 consecutive, uninterrupted, days during opening week for planning and preparation.

## Article 2 Teacher Assignments and Schedules

### 2.5 Length of the School Year:

#### 2.5.1 Teacher Duty Days:

- a. The teacher duty year will be made up of 196 paid duty days, which include the six (6) paid holidays within the regular school year.
- b. **Opening Week:** As part of the 196-day work year, teachers shall have ~~two and one-half (2½)~~ ~~five (5)~~ **three (3)** consecutive **and uninterrupted** days set aside in the opening week of the teacher's year, **and one (1) additional day to be scheduled as one whole or two half days at the district's discretion. This time will be teacher-directed and there will be no administration- or district-planned meetings, staff development, or other activities on these days.** These days shall be uninterrupted to allow teachers to prepare and collaborate for the upcoming year, **including, but not limited to: unpacking and arranging learning spaces, unpacking and confirming functionality of classroom and instructional technology, planning with co-teachers and grade-level and/or subject or course teams; creating and curating curriculum for the first weeks, as well as outlining and defining a scope and sequence for the year; reviewing student data, records, IEPs, and 504s; cleaning and organizing rooms; conferring with counselors, special education, and general education teachers regarding schedules; and managing last minute tasks such as students who register after spring, making copies, preparing nametags, assigning lockers, among other essential activities to prepare for a successful and welcoming first day of school for students.** ~~There shall be no meetings, staff development, or any other required meetings on these days.~~
- c. MEA Conference – Flex Day: Teachers shall have the option to have an additional uninterrupted duty day at the start of the school year by flexing the MEA Conference day (i.e., third Thursday) in October. Teachers who choose to flex this day for an additional duty day at the start of the year shall have the MEA Conference day in October as a non-duty day. If a teacher chooses not to flex the MEA Conference day, that day in October will be a duty day. This day shall consist of any of the following activities per choice by the individual professional:
  1. Attendance at the MEA Conference.
  2. Optional staff development offered by the site or the District that is also offered at other times during the year.
  3. Optional collaboration time with fellow teachers and related service professionals that is collectively determined by those professionals.
  4. Any other work at the site that the teacher/related service professional

deems necessary.

**Proposal verbalized 5/30/2019 by MFT**

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