

Inclusionary Practices & Systems

MASTER SCHEDULES

WHAT ARE MASTER SCHEDULES?

Master schedules provide structural supports for inclusion of students with disabilities in general education classrooms. They establish school-wide schedules for children with and without disabilities in general education settings. They identify what content students learn, where they learn, and who they learn from at any given time in their school day. They also identify and organize corresponding services and supports such as speech services, occupational therapy, and physical therapy.

WHY ARE MASTER SCHEDULES IMPORTANT?

WHAT ARE THE OUTCOMES?

Master schedules ensure that students access intervention services and supports in inclusionary education settings and that they meet the unique needs of each individual student while promoting implementation in general education classrooms.

IMPORTANT THINGS TO REMEMBER:

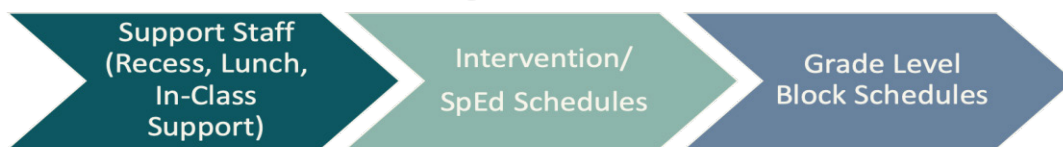
- When working with master schedules, educators should be prepared to identify services and supports for all students, to set aside adequate co-planning and preparation time, to distribute students into grade-level classes with appropriate level of need in each classroom, divide specialists among classes and across specific time frames, and show flexibility to accommodate shifts in services and supports throughout the school year.
- Schedule students with identified services and supports into classrooms first.
- During the development stage, use post-it notes with students and their corresponding identified services and supports to distribute to classrooms. This process may help to visualize classrooms as well as provide an easy way to move students around at the beginning of this stage. Once further along in creating a master schedule, move the post-it notes to a spreadsheet.
- Many teams find using Google forms to be helpful, as edits can easily be made and saved.
- Remember that special education is a service, not a place.

CASE STUDY: MASTER SCHEDULING MCMICKEN HEIGHTS ELEMENTARY

Until 2014, McMicken Heights Elementary School in SeaTac Washington had “siloes” or separate special and general education systems and structures, a system that didn’t work for any of its students and didn’t reflect the school’s otherwise collaborative culture. Its staff began to examine what it meant to be an inclusive school and soon realized the need for a master schedule to support an inclusive culture with a rigorous, accessible, and equitable instructional program driven by special education services. Staff devised a master schedule that would support success (intervention) blocks, co-teaching, and common planning times for grade-level teams with special education teachers. It would also address organizational barriers such as making sure that itinerant staff are scheduled in a way that supports the school’s inclusive mission.

Today McMicken’s master schedule includes a daily morning meeting to support social and emotional learning, success groups at all grade levels so special education teachers can provide SDI without pulling students from core content. Specialist times are scheduled concurrently to provide collaborative planning for grade level teams. The process of creating the schedule is shown below:

Process For Building A Master Schedule



- Need to make sure there is enough coverage for recesses/lunches
- Intervention blocks are supported by classified staff – can’t overlap with other activities
- Work with LRC/EBC/Co-Teachers to determine the time and content of each intervention block
- Determine the classified staff that will support each intervention block
- Once support schedule is figured out – grade level teams can determine when core content will be taught so it is not interrupted by pull out supports

RESOURCES

1. **Kussin, S.** (2008). *How to build the master schedule in 10 easy steps: a guide for secondary school administrators*. Corwin Press.
2. **Cook, L., & Friend, M.** (1995). Co-teaching: Guidelines for creating effective practices. *Focus on exceptional children*, 28.
3. **Villa, R., & Thousand, J.** (2016). *The Inclusive Education Checklist: A Self-Assessment of Best Practices*. National Professional Resources, Inc./Dude Publishing.