



## What do teachers do when students are not in school?



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The answer?  
A lot!

The following will take you into the meetings, into the classrooms, to show you how teachers spend their time improving student learning on these important learning days for our staff.

**On a typical day teachers spend the vast majority of their day working with students.**

In addition, professional learning is also embedded in the daily, collaborative work of our teachers and staff.

All teachers participate in what we call professional learning community teams, on a weekly basis. In these teams they focus on individual and collective on student learning needs.

**Teachers also have larger blocks of time during the year to work together when school is not in session.**

There are eight days within the school year when teachers are working and students are not at school.

Two of these days are reserved for professional learning activities and staff training. This professional learning relates directly to district and school initiatives.

In addition, three “early release” days (school lets out two hours early) during the school year provide essential blocks of time necessary for teachers to learn and work together.

Another four days primarily involves preparation for

conferences and grading, as well as professional learning activities.

The final two days are spent meeting with parents during fall and spring conferences.

As you can see, the days students do not come to school are extremely busy for our teachers, engaging in professional learning, communicating student learning with parents, and planning, personally and collectively, to meet the varied needs of their students.



**We want to provide you with more than a general overview though. Here is a snapshot - a sampler - of what teachers and principals were doing “when students were not in school.”**

### August Workshop Week

**Spring Lake Park District Welcome Back**  
Due to the generosity of the Panther Foundation, Spring Lake Park was fortunate to host Dr. Crystal Kuykendall for our opening workshop presentation.

She is the author of six books including *From Rage to Hope: Strategies for Reclaiming Black & Hispanic Students*, a national best seller offering tips and strategies to enhance student performance, achievement, and effectiveness.

Dr. Kuykendall challenged staff to be “Messengers of Hope” for all students, urging them to move past obstacles, differences, diversity, and other restraints.

“Hopelessness is one of the most pervasive illnesses in society,” she said, and “you have the power to impact positively the lives of others, to restore hope, and to renew lives.”

### Northpoint Elementary School

Northpoint staff continued their work in partnership, committed to sharing, developing, and enriching professional practice together.

Staff met as a whole group to recognize and commit to the systemic alignment of school initiatives including:

- Personalized Learning,
- Systems of Intervention
- 21st Century Fluencies.

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### Park Terrace Elementary School

Park Terrace Staff used their professional learning time as a kick-off to becoming an International Peace site for the 2011-12 year.

This work aligns with their previous study of Responsive Classroom theory and will enhance the positive intervention work that Park Terrace has been working on over the past year.

### Woodcrest Elementary School

During workshop week, the Woodcrest staff learned together, focusing on Personalization and Engagement with students and families, facilitated by the school's Learning and Equity Team.

This included staff learning and reflection on behavior, equity, and engagement.

### Westwood Intermediate School

Westwood Intermediate and Spanish Immersion staff participated in several learning activities focused on the Westwood Continuous Improvement Plan to better understand the implementation and learning work for the year.

Major topics included developing a better understanding of the 21st Century Fluencies, System of Interventions, and

meaning of Student Engagement.

### Westwood Middle School

The middle school was chosen to be part of Learning Forward's Learning School Alliance. This is an honor bestowed on 12 schools from across the nation.

As part of their work for the Alliance, middle school staff completed an analysis of effective Professional Learning Communities and worked in small groups to model various strategies for engaging in the work of studying student work.

Colleagues modeled effective strategies and then practiced to sharpen their skills.

### Spring Lake Park High School

The high school was also awarded a coveted spot in the Learning School Alliance program sponsored by Learning Forward. This means that out of 12 schools in the nation chosen for this program, two were from the Spring Lake Park School District.

To assist in their team prepare for this endeavor, during workshop week, Spring Lake Park High School staff worked on implementation of projects to refine high-performing professional learning communities.

Staff will continue their work in the area of Meaningful Relationships and build on practical knowledge and skills based upon foundational book studies from the previous year.

The staff will also learn more about how to effectively support all students in the area of literacy across content areas.

Improvements in literacy results will enhance levels of college readiness across all grade levels.

### Learning Alternatives Community School

Learning Alternatives teachers had conversations around the continuous improvement, learning plans, and improving student results.

Groups of teachers used protocols to reflect on the implementation of Problem-Based Learning (PBL) and worked collaboratively to define a parent communication system to engage more students and families.

Staff also had guest speakers from Avalon school present their journey with Project-Based Learning.

