

Wilkinson County School District Early Release Days and Professional Learning Communities Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Why do we have Early Release Days?

The Wilkinson County School District recognizes that in order to focus on improved student learning to address common priorities and goals that time is needed for planning, collaboration, professional development, and communication. On these days, students will be dismissed two hours early from school so that teachers and other educators may meet, collaborate and develop methods and programs to improve student academic achievement.

During Early Release Days, each building will work collaboratively on planned meaningful activities aimed at improving student learning. Such activities could include team meetings, classroom program and activity planning, group consultation, curriculum development and assessment, specialist meetings, etc. All planned activities will be developed around building, grade, and/or unit level student achievement data.

Does early release result in the loss of instructional time?

No. Additional time is built into the student schedule to account for dismissal. Students meet the instructional minute requirements as determined by the GaDOE. Historically, WCSD has had full-day and half-day dismissals sporadically dispersed throughout the calendar. Early release takes the old half-day and full day dismissals and redistributes the time into 14 Early Release Days. In essence, no student instructional time is lost. Time is simply distributed differently based on research and the best format to facilitate ongoing, targeted, professional development focused on student achievement.

How do Wilkinson County Schools professional educators utilize Early Release Time?

Traditionally, teachers have been isolated in their classrooms because time was not available for them to meet as entire grade level and department teams. The early release schedule enables educators to work and learn from each other. Early release allows teachers to align, revise, and develop curriculum, assessments, and learning activities. Depending on the initiative, this work is done at the building, grade or district level.

Among the issues explored during early release days are school improvement plans, classroom assessments, the review and analysis of standardized assessments, and the implementation of District academic improvement initiatives. By having consistent time available, teachers can be engaged in meaningful professional development that gives them the skills and strategies they can apply to their classrooms, sometimes the very next day. Teachers can examine how the strategies are working and reflect and collaborate with colleagues on a consistent basis to identify what works best.

Why do teachers need Early Release Days?

Education, like many other occupations and professions, is changing rapidly. Research tells us that students learn more efficiently when teachers are equipped with improved teaching practices and strategies based on the ability to review and interpret student achievement and behavioral data. The goal of these Early Release Days is to increase teaching efficiency so that student learning continues to improve.

Where can I find out more about teacher collaboration and early release days?

For additional information, please contact your school principal or central office at 478.946.5521.

District Vision:

*Making Students Competent Builders of a
Globally Competitive Future*

District Mission:

Expand - Empower - Excel (E³)