To: All Principals

From: Dr. Dani Pfeiffer, Deputy Superintendent

 David Brower, Performance Management Officer

 Shannon McCann, FWEA President

MEMO

Date: September 2016

Re: Early Release Understandings

We are collaborating to clarify Early Release Days in our district for the 2016-17 school year. This time is important to how we support our 23,000 Federal Way scholars. The intent of this memo is to provide background and details for all staff. In the service of continuous improvement, Association and District leadership are committed to working together to seek feedback from staff in the Spring to monitor and adjust Early Release Days for next year.

As stated in our Collective Bargaining Agreement, Section 7.1, Association and District leadership affirm that “The purpose of the District is to create educational experiences for all students that will result in continual improvement in their achievement, meet the goals and standards of the state and local community, and prepare all students for the challenges of the 21st century. All resources should focus on that purpose.”

The parties agree and affirm that Early Release Days are a resource for this purpose, and are also in alignment with the newly created Strategic Plan.

The parties recognize that Early Release Days are made possible, in part, by a three year state waiver that Federal Public Schools received from the state of Washington in 2014.

This state waiver grants us the permission to reduce some of the hours of the 180 student days in order hold three (3) Data Days to “provide time for teachers to deeply analyze specific assessment data including state assessments and progress monitoring through our [district-wide] assessments and classroom based assessments…to be able to use this data to develop goals for students and determine instructional and intervention needs” (CBA Article 7.2.A.1.o).

In the 2015-16 school year, the structure of these days was changed to provide for late start and early dismissal times, as part of the 34 hours of time agreed to be allocated in section 7.2.A.1.n of our Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA). In 2016-17 school year, this time has been organized into thirteen (13) 90-minute early dismissals, which retain the same purposes and contractual parameters as Data Days, as indicated in the state waiver and in Section 7.2.A.1.o of our CBA.

Our Collective Bargaining Agreement stipulates that ”Data Day agendas are collaboratively developed within the professional learning community,” and that “agendas may include review and planning of school improvement plans, data analysis (including but not limited to target students), reading, math, discipline, attendance, grades, content (classroom data), planning for Tier 2 instruction, solidifying core instruction (CCSS), teacher evaluation work, and Smarter Balanced assessment” (Article 7.2.A.1.o).

Both Association and District Leadership recognize the value of these days as essential time for educators to accomplish the core work of improving student achievement for all scholars, in support of School Improvement Plans and the Strategic Plan. In order to maximize the effectiveness of these days and protect them for their designated purposes, and to honor the community trust, the Association and the District agree to the following:

* Each Early Release provides educators time to do their core work as described in Article 7.1.F.1: “designing, planning, and supporting instruction; diagnosing, evaluating, and supporting student learning;” which includes analyzing system-wide and classroom-based data to ensure that each scholar is making growth in alignment with the District Strategic Plan.
* When using the Early Release time for PLC collaboration, teams will use the 4 correlate questions of the Dufour model to analyze, discuss, and plan for student growth and to pursue professional development
	+ What is it we expect our students to learn?
	+ How will we know when they have learned it?
	+ How will we respond when some students do not learn?
	+ How will we respond when some students already know it?
* At least once per semester (twice per year), sites will analyze system-wide data using District provided protocols to monitor and evaluate current progress towards their school’s Strategic Plan goals. The system wide data will be provided to principals in January and May in an electronic format that will be shared with staff. (Sites, using site-based decision making, may choose to do this in their PLC groups, or as whole staff group, and will also choose to use either early dismissal time or may choose to use commensurate time in staff meeting, or a combination of both).
* At least once per semester (twice per year), sites will review the School Improvement Plan, focusing on their selected Signature Strategies, looking at relevant data (such as attendance or discipline, etc.). (Sites, using site-based decision making, may choose to do this in their PLC groups, or whole staff group, and also choose to use either early dismissal time or may choose to use commensurate time in staff meeting, or a combination of both).
* Flowing from the requirements of the state waiver, after each Early Release Day, PLC groups, or schools if the work was done as a whole site, will submit an agenda of what occurred during Early Release Day. A sample template will be provided, showing the key elements that must be included. Teams can use this template or one of their own choosing that includes these elements to be communicated to the District and state.
* Specialists, including, but not limited to, Librarians, PE teachers, Music Teachers, Functional Core Teachers, SEB teachers, CTE teachers and other teachers who do not share standards with others at their site, have the professional choice to use any/all Early Release Time to meet with job-alike colleagues from other schools on all the Early Release Days, with the exception of the Early Release Days their site has chosen to look at system wide data or reviewing the School Improvement Plan, as they are an integral part of the school.
* In order to build capacity for expert facilitation, the District will train the PLC leads (as self-determined by each PLC group), Principals, and Instructional Coaches at each site in an after-school training. FWEA participants will be compensated for this training at Curriculum rate.
* In recognition of the time needed to gather as a District to kick-off the Strategic Plan, the District will pay each FWEA staff member 2 hours at per diem rate to compensate for the time displaced by participation in the Staff Rally. This pay is in recognition for the displaced time and the time is not expected to be made up elsewhere. This 2 hours of pay will appear on the October paycheck.
* During all Early Release Days, no certificated FWEA staff member is to have any student supervisory duties. In the event of late pick-ups, bus delays, students returned to school etc., principals are asked to arrange for coverage to ensure all students are safe at all times. It is understood that athletic coaches who have away games may have to leave early for travel, but are expected to attend PLCs and other Early Release Day activities.
* ESP Members will be able to meet for professional learning community collaboration during Early Release Days, as scheduled collaboratively by the Association and District (section 4.7).

The parties recognize the significant value of this time and commit to upholding the community trust and supporting the Strategic Plan as indicated above for the benefit of all our Federal Way scholars and educators to make Federal Way Public Schools the best place to learn and teach. The parties commit to monitor the effectiveness of these days through Labor Management Committee during the 2016-17 school year, seeking input from Association members and District leadership, and to include PLCs and Early Release Days as a subject of bargaining.