

KNOW YOUR RIGHTS

Planning and Prep Periods

The Texas Education Code reads as follows:

Section 21.404. Planning and Preparation Time – *Each classroom teacher is entitled to at least 450 minutes within each two-week period for instructional preparation, including parent-teacher conferences, evaluating students' work, and planning. A planning and preparation period under this section may not be less than 45 minutes within the instructional day. During a planning and preparation period, a classroom teacher may not be required to participate in any other activity.*



Of course, a planning and prep period is duty time, not a free time when employees could leave campus or engage in non-school related activities. But this period for instructional preparation is to be used at the teacher chooses and may not be hijacked by administrators without the consent of the teacher.

The attorney general of Texas ruled that “may not be required to participate in any other activity” means it is unlawful for administrators to mandate attendance at group sessions during the teacher’s individual planning and preparation period. The commissioner of education has noted that this law does not prohibit a teacher from voluntarily participating in a meeting or group planning session during the teacher’s individual planning period—but participation must be at the teacher’s discretion.

Planning and preparation time totaling 450 minutes must be provided over every ten school days (“two-week period”). You are entitled to at least 45 minutes, uninterrupted, for each planning period granted; it can’t be divided up into smaller segments.

If you are given additional planning time beyond the state-mandated 450 minutes over a two-week span, then for the additional time you can be required to attend group planning or a departmental meeting. For example, if you are given 500 minutes for planning and prep over a ten-day period, you can be required to attend a staff meeting for up to 50 minutes of your planning and prep time within that period.



If you believe your rights have been violated, or if you have further questions about this law, please call 281-847-3050.