



# It's About Time

## Learnings from a staffing innovation pilot

In spring 2022, in response to local leaders' concerns about teacher retention, Education Forward DC funded a staffing innovation pilot to support schools in exploring how they might innovate on their staffing model to increase teacher satisfaction and boost retention. The project was simple but ambitious: schools opted in to receive 50 hours of consultant support to pilot an innovative approach to their staffing before the end of the 2021-22 school year.

Read the full white paper at [www.edforwarddc.org/itsabouttime](http://www.edforwarddc.org/itsabouttime).

### Strategies piloted

- More Flexible Time**  
Providing more autonomy to teachers to balance responsibilities, inside and outside of school.
- Changes to Student Supervision**  
Creating more time for teachers by reducing the amount of their non-instructional time spent supervising students.
- Improved Collaboration**  
Using staff collaboration time more intentionally and productively.
- Improved Planning Time**  
Adjusting teacher planning time with attention to both sustainability and results.



### Lessons learned

#### There is not a clear solution to teacher sustainability.

Some leaders arrived at different solutions than what they originally anticipated, especially as they collaborated with teachers throughout the project.

**Freeing up time for teachers is difficult, but possible in small amounts.** Small-scale shifts can have meaningful impact on teacher experience.

**A particularly challenging year.** Even with consultant support, many school leaders found it difficult to think creatively about new approaches, and lead teachers to do the same, while battling the exhaustion of last school year.

**Bigger changes need bigger investments.** More radical solutions to teacher sustainability will require larger investments of time and financial resources.

**Some schools are primed for innovation.** Pilots were most successful when there was strong alignment across the leadership team and an existing level of comfort among staff about the idea of mid-year experimentation.

**Process matters.** Successful pilots included teachers "at the table" throughout the process. Some included student input as well.

**"A very small thing can make a difference. It is important to ask teachers what they want, but then any step forward can be a really good step."**

*- Participating School Leader*