

# Student-selected support

## Students select the academic support they need

Team-based practices are approaches that leverage multiple adults to create deeper and personalized learning opportunities for students.

**Strategy:** Students reflect on their progress and identify supports they need for their learning.

**Frequency and duration:** Students complete a 15-minute reflection once a week and meet with teachers four times a week for 30 minutes.

**Practice adapted from:** [SPARK School at Kyrene de las Manitas](#)

- Core educator team: 1 teacher executive designer, 3 certified teachers, 1 teacher candidate, 1 instructional assistant
- Learners: 100–120 learners in Grades 4–6
- [Elements of the Next Education Workforce](#): Shared rosters, learning paths, flexible space, flexible scheduling

In an effort to shift the ownership of learning from educator to student, SPARK School at Kyrene de las Manitas has implemented a system for students to reflect on their learning and progress, identify the academic support they need and schedule time to meet with the appropriate educator(s).

Read on to explore an adaptation of SPARK School's Student-Selected Support time.

## ▶ Students complete weekly reflections

Each Monday, students reflect on their work, grades, feedback and progress across all classes by completing a Google form (create your own copy of an example reflection [here](#)). On the form, students identify:

- The content area in which they are experiencing the most success (e.g., ELA, math, writing)
- The behaviors that are contributing to their success
- The content area in which they most need support
- Whether they need re-teaching support or whether they merely require additional space and time for practice and application
- Any specific questions they have about the class wherein they need support

This helps students start the process of advocating for specific help.

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Student-selected support time (30 minutes)	Students complete weekly reflections	Students engage in small-group targeted re-teaching and support			
Educator planning period	Educators create rosters and plan the week's small-group lessons and support	Educators adjust plans as necessary and communicate about mid-week roster changes			

## ▶ Educators export results to create rosters

Educators create a spreadsheet from students' responses. They then sort by student name to alphabetize the full set of responses and by content area to create content area-specific rosters for Student-Selected Support time.

## ▶ Educators plan four 30-minute sessions of small-group re-teaching and support

Based on the type of support students indicate they need and the specific questions they have, educators generate small groups from their content area rosters and prepare materials (e.g., re-teaching plans, anchor charts, additional practice and application opportunities) for use over four days (i.e., Tuesday–Friday) of Student-Selected Support time.

## ▶ Students attend Student-Selected Support for 30 minutes a day, Tuesday through Friday

At the start of Student-Selected Support, each student moves to the area of the learning space that corresponds to the need they identified in their weekly reflection—students who indicated they need help with math go to the math area, students who need help with writing go to the writing area and so on. Educators then divide students into the small groups they identified during their planning time and implement small-group teaching and support plans. Students may also revisit their Google form responses in Google Classroom during this time, should they need to.

## ▶ Early finishers reflect again and regroup mid-week

If, mid-week, a student has received the support they need and is ready to move on to receiving support in a different content area, they confer with their Student-Selected Support teacher and complete the reflection form once more. The educator team communicates with each other about these mid-week transitions between groups to ensure all students are accounted for at all times and each student gets what they need each day.

## Why teachers, students and families love this practice

SPARK School educators find that this practice invites students to take ownership of their learning, increases personalization and achieves these ends without overwhelming the educator team. Students and families shared that they valued knowing there was time carved out in the day when students could get extra support and indicated that they felt it alleviated the stigma that sometimes accompanies the need to receive extra help.

## Considerations for implementing this practice

**Frame this practice for students and model self-reflection:** When introducing students to Student-Selected Support time, set the stage by normalizing the need for additional help and clearly communicating the purpose of this time: to ensure all learners get what they need to be successful. Model how to open the Google form, how to reflect on progress and how to respond to each prompt. Give special attention to the importance of students generating specific, content-related questions for the educator team.

**Schedule planning time:** Schedule time to review students' responses to the form and to plan small-group re-teaching and support. For example, if students complete the form early in the day on Monday, consider dedicating team meeting time on Monday afternoon for analyzing students' responses and planning small-group interventions.

**Plan for early finishers:** As an educator team, agree on how you will communicate when a student makes a mid-week change to their content area for support and will be transitioning to a new teacher. This might look like a shared group message (e.g., text, Slack) or a quick conversation before or after school.