



Improving Time-Tracking for Title 1 and Grant Activities:

A Guide for K-12 Schools

Your K-12 school relies on funding from various sources—local and state governments, grants from corporate and community foundations, and the federal Title 1 program. To effectively allocate funding from these sources, you must carefully track the time employees spend on a range of student support activities and tie those activities back to your overall budget.

As many schools can attest, the process for accurately tracking the time teachers, assistants, and administrators spend on externally funded activities isn't always straightforward or easy to accomplish. Manual time-tracking can expose your school to lost time sheets, calculation errors and inaccurate budget coding. Moreover, using paper or spreadsheets can be onerous and frustrating for all involved, especially for teachers and other professionals unaccustomed to tracking their time.

Thankfully, comprehensive time-tracking technology provides an efficient solution for helping K-12 schools track employee time and see how Title 1 and grant funds are being used. Use this guide to gain valuable tips for overcoming time-tracking challenges and managing your school employees more efficiently.

The Importance of Time-Tracking in K-12 Schools

Though tracking employee time may be easier to imagine in industries such as food service or manufacturing, it is also critically important in K-12 education environments. Teachers and administrators wear many hats, and they routinely split their time between different activities, many of which may need to be allocated to different budgets.

Having a well-organized budget isn't the only reason to track time accurately. Time-tracking is also critical for making sure your school uses Title 1 funds and other grant money as intended. Here are three key reasons to accurately track employee time in your school.

Title 1 Funding Requirements

A key component of the [1965 Elementary and Secondary Education Act \(ESEA\)](#), Title 1 provides federal funds to schools where at least 40 percent of enrolled students come from low-income households. Grants are also available to schools with lower numbers of Title 1-eligible students. According to research featured in Education Week, [70 percent of public schools](#) and half of all public school children receive Title 1-funded education services.

In addition to showing improvement in test scores and other metrics among students receiving Title 1 aid, it's critical to demonstrate how you allocate Title 1 funds to programs such as tutoring, testing and after-school programs. The best way to keep track of Title 1 spending and budget allocation is to accurately track the numbers of hours employees dedicate to those activities throughout the academic year.

70% 

of public schools and half of all public school children receive Title 1-funded education services

Variations in Employee Activities

Time-tracking in the K-12 environment goes beyond having teachers clock in or out. It must capture the many activities teachers and administrators are involved in on a given day. Employees can earn supplemental pay for work related to specific projects funded by one-off grants or have routine responsibilities associated with Title 1 services. For example, teachers may earn a consistent salary for day-to-day teaching, but may have opportunities to earn extra pay when performing other duties such as leading school programs or providing after-school help.

According to a survey conducted by the National Center for Education Statistics, 44 percent of teachers said [they received additional compensation](#) for extracurricular or additional activities in their school system, earning an average extra \$2,630 per year. Tracking the time employees spend on other work allows you to avoid waste and compensate everyone fairly at agreed-upon rates. Teachers and other school employees may be eligible for extra pay for any of the following activities:

- Bus or carpool duty
- Cafeteria supervision
- After-school detention monitoring
- One-on-one or group tutoring
- Advisory duties for clubs
- Sports coaching

Alignment of Labor Costs Against Budget

Tracking supplemental pay to employees who perform duties related to grant work, Title 1 and other projects can be a massive undertaking. You need an accurate count of the hours they spend on those activities, and you also need to align their time to the proper budget. When you have a reliable time-tracking solution, you can track hours, assign them to the right budget codes, and have a real-time view of how your payroll costs compare to your budget for specific activities.



The Challenges of Tracking Time for K-12 Employees

Time-tracking is a necessity in the K-12 school environment, but using just any time-tracking solution won't get you very far. Tracking employee time with paper, clunky desktop applications or outdated technology is inefficient and makes it harder for teachers and others to record and submit their hours. Without a user-friendly, automated solution for tracking time, your school can be plagued with a host of headaches related to collecting hours and recording them against the correct budget.

When considering your time-tracking needs, keep in mind the need to overcome the following challenges:

The Potential for Error

In a busy K-12 school environment, no two days are the same. Teachers often have their hands full with their regular teaching schedule, and administrators work throughout the day putting out fires, supporting students and answering parent inquiries. Adding extra activities on top of all that can make for a hectic day.

Without an easy and quick way to track their time allocation, teachers and other employees may put off reporting hours or get sidetracked by other priorities, leading to errors and late submissions. Underreported or over reported time caused by errors in manual calculations puts budgets out of whack. It can also paint an inaccurate picture of the amount of time spent on Title 1 and grant activities.

The Complexity of Tracking Title 1 and Grant Activities

Employee work hours spent on specific activities must align with the corresponding budget. Otherwise you could end up allocating funds incorrectly. Employee time dedicated to Title 1 activities must tie back to the designated Title 1 cost code (some of which are as long as 26 digits), or you can easily confuse budgets and accidentally overspend.

Similarly, during the COVID-19 pandemic, schools using government grants to cover costs related to activities such as sanitizing efforts must code those activities according to the specific grant. To ensure a clear picture of spending for each budget, it's critical to provide teachers with a clear process for tracking their activities, reporting hours and submitting them for approval.



Budget Deadlines and Requirements

Tracking time for supplemental pay requires a sense of urgency. Without it, your school can exhaust a budget before all employee hours have been submitted and recorded against the correct budget. Employees who wait too long to turn in their timesheets can experience payment delays, or worse, the school may be forced to take money from another budget to fill the gap. This not only causes budget misalignment, but it can also make it more challenging for school districts to justify spending to taxpayers and other stakeholders.

There are many reasons to accurately track your employees' time, and the solution you select should help you overcome the budgeting and time-tracking challenges that are unique to K-12 organizations. Time-tracking software that satisfies your need for efficiency and accuracy will help you successfully operate your school budget and stay informed about how employees spend their time.

How TCP Helps to Streamline Time-Tracking in Your K-12 School

Given the challenges associated with tracking the time employees spend on activities outside their traditional duties, it's necessary to have a solution that not only eliminates the need for paper tracking, but also makes it easy to match employee time with the correct budget line item.

[TCP's time-tracking software for K-12 schools](#) allows you to track all the various roles employees play, including their activities related to Title 1 and other grants. With an intuitive, user-friendly design and tools configured to your school district's unique needs, you can make time-tracking a breeze for teachers, administrators and other employees.

The key capabilities of TCP's time-tracking solution for K-12 schools include the following:

Enhanced automation:

TCP technology replaces time-consuming, error-prone manual processes, so school employees have more time to devote to their day-to-day. Automated time recording and time-sheet processing provide a more efficient user experience, so employees can say goodbye to paper time sheets and submit their hours in just a few clicks. Also, our TimeClock Plus software integrates with a range of [payroll solutions](#) for more streamlined workforce management.

Weighted and blended calendars:

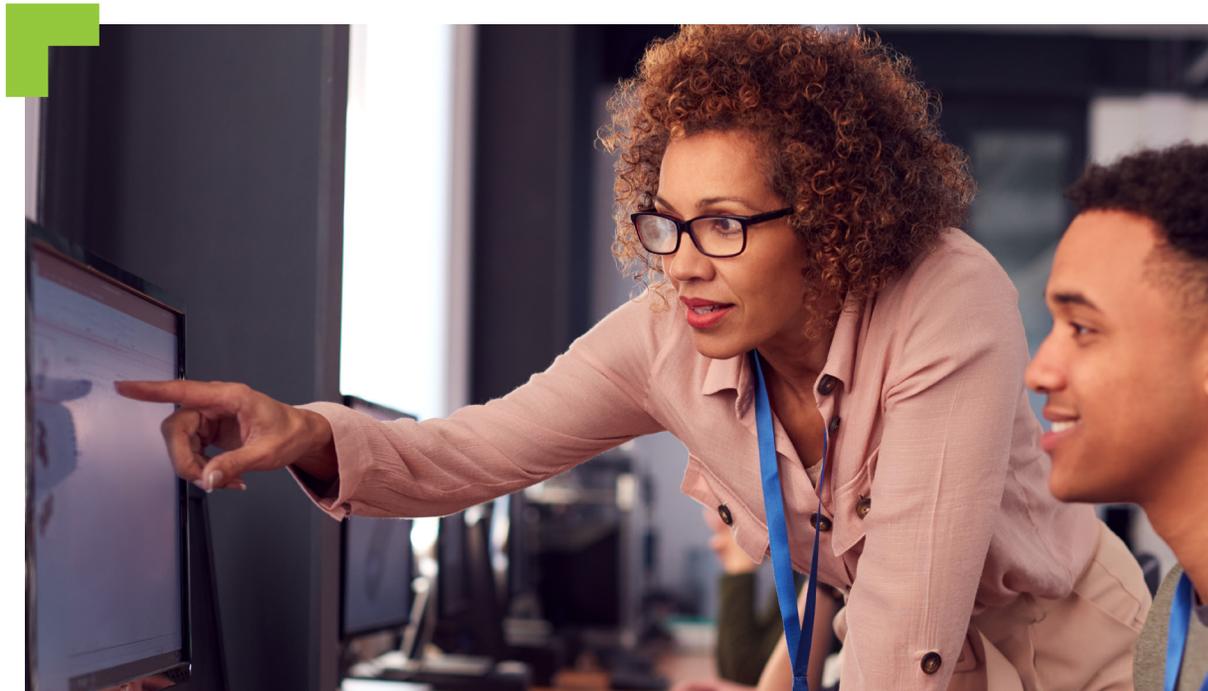
In an age when teachers are likely to do much more than teach, you can access tools for managing employee time for different roles and different pay rates. By tracking the hours of employees who divide their time between multiple roles or activities, you can also eliminate overpayments and get greater visibility into earned overtime.

Dashboards and reporting:

Our [cloud-based dashboard](#) helps you manage employee hours, exceptions and attendance from a single, user-friendly portal. As a result, you can get real-time visibility into spending against budget and run reports to show year-over-year trends in employee time allocation.

Real-time budget management:

To help you keep track of every dollar of Title 1 and grant funding, TCP's time-tracking technology offers robust tools for tracking spending in all of your budget accounts. As soon as employee hours are submitted and approved, you see the direct budget impact. That way, you can take immediate action on corrections or other items that need your attention.



Anywhere mobile tools:

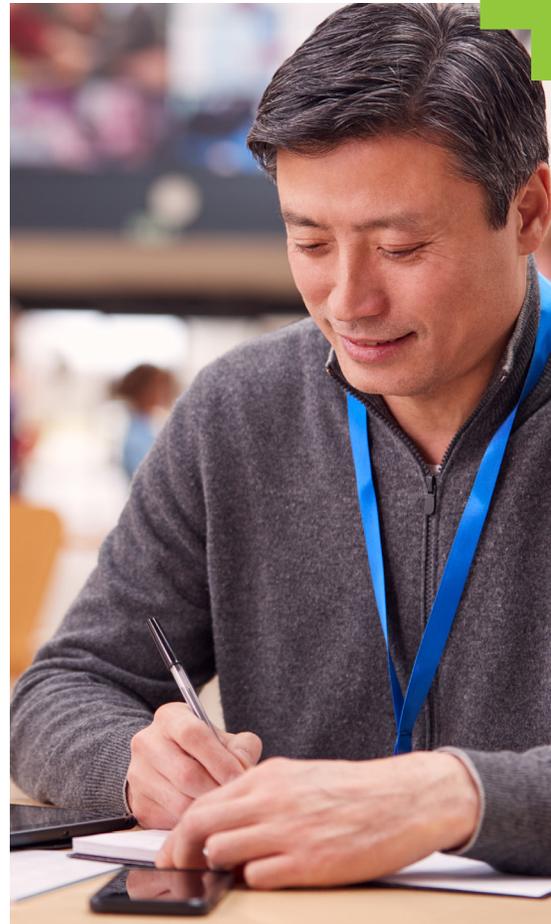
Whether employees are in the classroom or at home on virtual learning days, they can easily record time spent on Title 1 and other activities. Our [MobileClock app](#) offers added flexibility and helps you collect employee time from any location.

Customization:

Expand your time-collection ability with TCP's configurable TimeClock Plus software and hardware for use in multiple school locations. You can also enhance your workforce management capability with our integrated time-clock solutions, including [thermal sensor technology](#) to support your COVID-19 health and safety efforts.

Data security and compliance:

Our accessible time-tracking solutions meet rigorous Web Content Accessibility Guidelines compliance standards. In addition, SOC 2 security compliance helps us [keep your employee data protected](#).



Conclusion

Managing your K-12 budget requires the right tools for recording the time employees spend on specific activities. Whether you've grown frustrated with manual time sheets or you want to shift to more modern time-tracking software, TCP has a complete suite of customizable technology solutions to help you manage your school's time-tracking needs. Trusted by more than 3,000 schools nationwide, TCP's best-in-class time-tracking solutions can help transform your workforce management capability, saving you both time and money. Contact us today to [schedule a free demo](#).



Start working better. Today.

866.783.9890 | www.tcpsoftware.com | **Your Workforce Ally**

©2020 TimeClock Plus, LLC. All rights reserved.