

DECIDING ON A BELL SCHEDULE AND/OR JUSTIFYING/ COMMUNICATING A BELL SCHEDULE CHANGE (District Version)

– A Sampling Of Different Elements To Consider, Different Inquiry Approaches To Take, And Different Communications About Bell Schedule Decisions (includes a few school-specific examples as these may help inform process guidelines)

Includes examples from the following (among other) schools and districts:

- *4J School District, Eugene, Oregon*
- *Lutheran High School of St. Charles County, St. Peters, Missouri*
- *South Washington County Schools, Minnesota*
- *Hawaii Department of Education, Hawaii*
- *Riverwood International Charter School, Fulton County Schools, Sandy Springs, Georgia*
- *Montgomery County Public Schools, Rockville, Maryland*
- *Anchorage School District, Anchorage, Alaska*
- *Virginia Beach City Public Schools, Virginia Beach, Virginia*
- *York County School District, Yorktown, Virginia*
- *Homestead High School, Mequon-Thiensville School District, Mequon, Michigan*
- *Sanborn Regional High School, Kingston, New Hampshire*

ALSO includes several examples of bell schedule comparison charts and links to multiple resources

DECIDING ON A BELL SCHEDULE – ONE APPROACH

- Establish a Plan
- Set clear GOALS and meaningful benchmarks/measurable objectives
- Involve all stakeholders – teachers, students, staff, administrators, parents, Board members, Union officials, community members
- Establish a representative Scheduling Committee
- Examine the strengths and challenges of your current bell schedule – How well does it meet the needs of all students to be college and career ready?
- Revisit your school’s vision for learning and teaching and student success – What would be the ideal bell schedule to help you achieve this vision?
- Review some of the approaches that other schools and districts have used to research and decide on a bell schedule (see examples in this document)
- Survey students, teachers, and parents to solicit their ideas and input.

- Understand your parameters – for example your school is in a district with high student mobility and so it may be important to have a bell schedule that supports students who transfer in during the school year
- Develop criteria for what you most want to see in a bell schedule.
- Decide on a process for making a decision on your recommendation or recommendations
- RESEARCH, RESEARCH, RESEARCH – Use the bell schedule resources in the CCASN Scheduling Guide, but also take the time to formulate the questions that are important to your school and both contact and visit other schools that have bell schedules you are considering. Include parents, students, teachers, and other stakeholders on your visitation teams.
- COMMUNICATE regularly with all stakeholders
- As you begin to finalize your choice/choices, be sure to address benefits for both students and teachers.
- A change to a bell schedule has many ramifications – transportation, textbooks, union contracts, etc. You may need Board approval. Be sure to follow the correct protocols in your District.
- Once a decision has been made, PLAN exquisitely. For example, you might wish to phase in a new schedule. Many schools moving from a traditional schedule to a block schedule, provide professional development for teachers and then spend the first year offering block classes two days a week with a goal of fully transitioning to the block in the second year. Others pilot a new use of time with 9th graders or within a particular small learning community.

A SAMPLING OF DIFFERENT APPROACHES

4J District

Eugene, Oregon

High School Bell Schedule Criteria

CCASN Note: Start with the learning. When Districts or schools are making the choice of a bell schedule, there are many potential criteria for what makes the best bell schedule for your particular context and needs. Ideally, the criteria used in evaluating the potential of each bell schedule will support the school's vision for learning and teaching and will align with the school's student learning outcomes.

The 4j District in Eugene, Oregon used the following criteria to evaluate various bell schedules:

- 1. Meets the needs of each student to be college and career ready**
 - Allows for a rigorous course of study that all students can fully access.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is flexible to provide acceleration and remediation to meet college and career readiness standards. • Allows for embedded time for college and career information, awareness activities, goal setting, and decision-making. • Creates a carefully crafted pathway of learning that can be articulated to students, monitored and supported for all four years.
<p>2. Provides focus and rigor</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maximizes instructional time. Provides depth over breadth. • Provides a significant chunk of time to engage students. • Provides intentional teaching time, lessons, daily contact • Supports ability of the teacher to provide just-in-time feedback. • Requires minimal transition times across days and year.
<p>3. Is sustainable</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is realistic, given resources. • Reduces the number of students a teacher has at any given time. • Manages workload for teachers and students as we transition to a new schedule and beyond. • Provides appropriate and workable number of teacher preps and classes.
<p>4. Provides for consistency</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Makes fragmentation (i.e., gaps in learning) minimal. • Allows a student to have sustained learning over time • Minimize learning interruptions. • Builds reliability across district. Not dependent on which school a student attends.
<p>5. Builds collaboration in order to –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use data meaningfully to determine how to adjust instruction and curriculum. • Provide time to identify skills needed by students. • Provide district-wide time to discuss curriculum. • Provide time for professional development
<p>6. Is flexible and engages students</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides ability for student to advance at own rate • Provides choices to support student engagement. • Provides access to classes (i.e., non-core classes that light kids up. • Makes available core classes required for graduation as well as others, such as HIS, AP, and IB courses. • Provides equity of offerings. • Allows students to be fully scheduled. • Provides flexibility of scheduling for choice.
<p>7. Maximize other classes at other high schools and colleges</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allows for alignment and collaboration with higher education to allow students into

<p>courses on college campuses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Includes College Now, possibly classes via Skype.
<p>8. Fosters relationships</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fosters relationships between teachers and students over the year, during the teaching period and over four years. • Provides for a class size that promotes student-teacher relationships • Fosters community among students • Provides opportunity for advocacy.
<p>OTHER</p>
<p>Average Class Size:</p>

The Matrix used by 4J educators to evaluate potential bell schedules includes columns for:

- Advantages
- Concerns/Minuses
- Comments/Questions

Visit http://www.4j.lane.edu/files/secondaryservices/cs_summary_attachments_022112.2.pdf to view a partially “filled-in” matrix that evaluates the following bell schedule formats:

- Four Terms – Four Periods (4x4)
- Trimester – Five Periods (3x5)
- Two Semester-Seven Periods (2x7)

FYI: 4J ended up deciding to move to a Trimester bell schedule, which was first implemented at one high school in 2012-2013 and then at three additional comprehensive high schools 9n 2014-2015.

Description of the decision-making process used by 4J on the District web site:

“Decision-Making Process: How Did We Get Here?”

How was the 3x5 trimester schedule decided on?

The conversation about moving toward a consistent high school schedule began among the district’s high school principals. In January 2012, a 32-member work group was convened to review the pros and cons of different schedules and make a recommendation to the superintendent.

The work group included teachers and administrators from every high school as well as from International High School, alternative education and the Eugene Education Association president.

The work group chose 8 criteria to evaluate schedule options:

- Meets the needs of each student to be college and career ready
- Provides for focus and rigor
- Is sustainable and realistic, given our resources
- Provides consistency, minimizing gaps in learning
- Builds collaboration, providing time for staff to work together to analyze student learning, adjust instruction and curriculum and join together for professional development
- Is flexible and engages students
- Maximizes the opportunity for students to take classes at other high schools and colleges
- Fosters relationships between teachers and students and among students

The group studied different schedule options in detail, considered the strengths and concerns for each schedule, and considered input from two public forums and staff and parent surveys before deciding to recommend the 3x5 schedule to the superintendent.

The superintendent supported the work group's recommendation. The board approved the change to a 3x5 high school schedule on April 11, 2012."

See: Why are We Changing the Bell Schedule – Frequently Asked Questions for more information about the 3x5 bell format and as an example of communication about a bell schedule change with teachers, parents, students, and other stakeholders.

<http://www.4j.lane.edu/instruction/secondary/hsschedule/faq/>

Lutheran High School of St. Charles County

St. Peters, Missouri

PROCESS FOR ARRIVING AT 4x4 BLOCK SCHEDULE

The following describes the bell schedule decision process used at Lutheran High School of St. Charles County in St. Peters, Missouri

"In response to the NLSA/NCA Accreditation visit, a Climate Committee was established with the following goal: All LHS Students will experience a School Climate in which Academic Learning is a primary objective. One of the objectives established to meet this goal was:

The daily schedule will be studied and designed to maximize time in a direct learning environment.

.... A Time Use Committee was established to answer the question: “How can we create the best learning environment for our students?” In an effort to answer this question, the following actions were taken:

- A literature review was conducted to explore the options of schedules used by other high schools. This included public, private, and parochial high schools both in Missouri and in other states.
- Faculty Focus Groups were conducted to discuss what was important to keep or modify in our present schedule and to create a list of questions to evaluate other schools’ schedules.
- School Visits were conducted to evaluate the success of schedules employed by schools of all sizes, locations, and entities both public and private.
- Students of LHS were surveyed to assess what they liked, disliked, and would like to change about their school schedule experience.
- Parents were also surveyed to assess what the parents liked, disliked, and would like to change.
- Faculty (was) surveyed to assess what individual faculty members liked, disliked and would like to change in the traditional schedule.
- Student Time-Out-of-Class for athletics, field trips, assemblies, etc. was assessed with the use of PowerSchool.
- A Modified Block Schedule was proposed by the Time Use Committee to the faculty.
- Student, Parent, and Faculty Focus Groups were conducted to discuss the proposed modified block schedule.
- Faculty In Service Presentation was given by Vianney High School with the focus of teaching within the block schedule. Interest was sparked about the 4x4 Block used at Vianney since 1997, and the Time Use Committee was asked to research and compare this schedule to the proposed modified block schedule.
- Time Use Committee Members and members of the Administration did on site visits with staff at Vianney to further study their schedule and its benefits to the students. The committee also spent extensive time researching the various block schedule models in contrast to the 4x4.
- The 4x4 Block schedule was proposed, presented, and approved by the faculty in fall meetings in August 2010. A target start date of August 2011 was set.
- The 4x4 Block Schedule was presented to and approved by the LHS Board of Directors in October 2010 for implementation in the fall of 2011.
- The 4x4 Schedule was presented to a focus group of parents and students in November to better identify questions that need to be addressed as the new schedule is presented to students and their families.”

Source: <http://lutheranhighstcharles.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/07/4x4block.pdf>

South Washington County Schools

A High School Bell Schedule Inquiry

**South Washington County Schools, Minnesota –
2008**

The following is a partial description of the bell schedule inquiry process used by South Washington County Schools:

District Parameters of the Bell Schedule Task Force:

- Schedule Structure will be identical at all three high schools
- Increasing Class size/Staffing Ratio to support a schedule preference is NOT acceptable
- Resources for Class Size/Staffing Ratios at the Secondary level with NOT increase above current levels (28-6th grade; 30 for 7th-9th; 31 for 9th-12th)
- The Task Force Goal is to make recommendation on high school schedule to effectively implement in 2009-10. If not possible, implementation in 2010-2011 is acceptable.

One article/resource suggested that among the Questions to Consider were:

- If our schools are considering a change in structure of the school day, what are the specific goals we expect to accomplish by the change?
- No matter how our school day is arranged, what are the strategies we have in place to provide the classroom environment and activities that will promote higher student achievement?

Questions sent to 50 area high schools

1. School and Contact Information
2. Grade Configuration (9-12, etc.)
3. Length of School Day, Start/end time
4. Number of class periods in a day (4, 5, 6, 7, 8, etc.)
5. Do you use bells/tones to signal passing times?
6. Length of typical class period
7. Length of passing time
8. Number of grading terms in the year (quarter, semester, trimester, etc.)
9. Do you offer A/B (alternate day classes)?
10. Number of classes taught each day by a full-time teacher (3 of 4; 5 of 6; 5 of 7, etc.)
11. How long has your current bell schedule been in place?
12. Are you considering changing your high school schedule?
13. How many classes can a student take during a school year?
14. Total number of classes a student can take during their high school years.

15. Do you include an advisory period in your school day? – If yes, how long is the advisory and how often does advisory meet?
16. Do some students/grades have an alternative schedule apart from the standard schedule? If yes, please explain.
17. Do you have any “unique features” in your schedule you wish to share?

A small sampling of Schools from a more extensive chart (see http://www.sowashco.k12.mn.us/Departments/Curriculum/833_scheduling.pdf for full chart)

1 School	District	Enrollment	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
Park Cottage Grove	833	1748	10-11-12	7:30 – 2:00	4	yes	84	6	4	No	3 of 4	11	Yes	16	48	No	Yes	
Woodbury	933	1903	10-11-12	7:30-2:00	4	yes	84	6	5	No	3 of 4	10	Yes	16	48	No	Yes	
Mahtomedi	832	1129	9-10-11-12	8:00 -2:30	4	Yes	84	6	4	Yes	3 of 4	6	Yes	16	64	No	Yes	

A Sampling of data re the number of periods from some of the highest performing high schools --- source “Top US High Schools – 2008,” Newsweek. <http://www.newsweek.com/id/39380>)

School - Location	Enrollment	Periods	Information
Adlai Stevenson HS, Lincolnshire, IL	4501	8	IN 2006, 1402 students completed over 3100 AP exams; strong emphasis on professional learning communities
Bellevue HS, Washington	1430	7	AP emphasis; Advisory = “tutorial” 30-minutes daily. Early Dismiss every Wednesday at 12:40 for Staff Development. To prepare LAL students for the rigors of college, students are expected to take at least one advanced level course before graduating from high school
Great Neck South HS, Great Neck, NY	11889	9	Honors & AP emphasis. A/B alternate-day schedule. “Innovative programs that provide seniors with a college-level seminar experience, challenge them intellectually, demand higher-level thinking and writing skills, and integrate learning through thematic studies.”
Classen School of Advanced Studies – Oklahoma City, OK	1060	8	IB and AP emphasis. Foreign language required.
Walnut Hills High School Cincinnati, OH	1885	4	Honors & AP emphasis
Stanton College Prep Jacksonville, FL	1500	4	AP and IB emphasis.

Another strategy used by the Schedule Task Force involved a review of popular schedule options. This was based on several assumptions. The Task Force assumed a 6.5 hours contact day, 360 minutes class time including 30 minute lunch; however, 5 minute passing time and advisory/HR time not included. At the time (2008), assumptions also included 175 day contact

year, approximately 1250 students in each grade level cohort (5000 students grades 9-12). (The number of high school students was based on a district-wide enrollment projection.

(CCASN Note: One caveat is that there are other variations to consider and other inputs that would have been possible that might impact some of the data that results. For example, some schools offer a hybrid 4 x 4 that combines year- long “skinny” classes with longer blocked classes that are completed in a single semester term. Or typically, on a trimester system, a student completes a year of course work in two trimesters. Or, typically, on a 3x5 trimester schedule, each class is at least 70 minutes in length and often longer. Also, the following chart talks about classes each year, but not necessarily semester or full course credits earned. Or sometimes on a 7 period day, teachers teach 6 on 7; this and other variations would change the data that results.)

Note: Elsewhere in the inquiry process, the reviewers did compare credits earned on a variety of bell schedule formats.)

Schedule	Clas s (day)	# Terms , Days/ term	Minute s (class)	Total class minute s each day	Hour s (term / class)	Studen t classe s @ day	Studen t classe s @ year	Classe s 4-years	Teache r classes @ day	Teache r Classe s @ year	Staffin g (class size)	FTE require d
Description												
Current 9th	6	3/58	56	336	54	6/EQY	18/yea r	(18)	5	15	30	48.4
Current 10-12	4	4/44	86	344	63	4/day	16/yea r	(48)	3	12	31	161.3
Combined								(66)				209.7
4 x 4	4	4/44	86	344	66	4/day	16/yea r	64	3	12	31	215
5 x 3	5	3/58	68	340	81	5 day	15/yea r	60	4	12	31	202
											30	209
6 x 2	6	2/87	56	336	54	6/day	12/yea r	48	5	10	31	194
											30	200
6 x 3	6	3/58	56	336	64	6/day	18/yea r	72	5	10	31	194
											30	200
7 x 2	7	3/87	47	329	68	7/day	14/yea r	56	5	10	31	226
8 x 2	8	2/87	41	324	59	8/day	16/yea r	64	6	12	31	215

SPOILER ALERT: South Washington County School District decided on a 3 x 6 trimester bell schedule with the option of an additional early/late period. The 3x5 Trimester bell schedule is a commonly utilized bell schedule format in both Michigan and Minnesota.

Minnesota Department of Education graduation requirements do not appear to require foreign language; however, both health and fine arts are required.

High Schools in South Washington County, Minnesota operate on a Trimester Schedule. A Sample of the Daily 6 Period Bell Schedule from Park High School follows:

Zero Hour	7:15 – 8:15 a.m. (Monday-Thursday)
Period 1	8:35 – 9:28 a.m.
Period 2	9:34 – 10:27 a.m.
Period 3	10:33 – 11:26 a.m.
Period 4	11:32 a.m. – 1:05 a.m.
A Lunch: Lunch 11:26 – 11:56 a.m.	
Class 12:02 – 1:05 p.m.	
B Lunch – Class 11:32 – 11:49 a.m.	
Lunch 11:49 a.m. – 12:19 p.m.	
Class 12:19 – 1:05 p.m.	
C Lunch – Class 11:32-12:12 p.m.	
Lunch 12:12 – 12:42 p.m.	
Class 12:42 – 1:05 p.m.	
D Lunch – Class 11:32 a.m. – 12:35 p.m.	
Lunch 12:25 – 1:05 p.m.	
Period 5	1:11 – 2:05 p.m.
Period 6	2:11 – 2:05 p.m.

A Sample of a Student’s Course Planning Worksheet from Woodbury High School follows:

Freshen Year

	Trimester 1	Trimester 2	Trimester 3
Summer			
1	English 9/ Honors 9	English 9/Honors English 9	English 9/Honors English 9
2	Math	Math	Math
3	Science	Science	Science
4	Geography/AP Human Geography	Geography/AP Human Geography	AP Human Geography
5	General Physical Education		

	(or take in Grade 10)		
6			

Sophomore Year

	Trimester 1	Trimester 2	Trimester 3
Summer			
1	English 10/Honors English 10	English 10/Honors English 10	English10/ Honors English 10
2	Math	Math	Math
3	Science	Science	Science
4	World History/ AP World History	World History/AP World History	World History/ AP World History
5	General Physical Education (if not taken in Grade 9)		
6			

Junior Year

	Trimester 1	Trimester 2	Trimester 3
Summer			
1	English 11/AP Language and Composition/IB English	English 9/Honors English 9	English 9/Honors English 9
2	Math	Math	Math
3	Science	Science	Science
4	U.S. History/AP U.S. History/IB History	U.S. History/AP U.S. History/IB History	U.S. History/AP U.S. History/IB History
5	Economics/AP Government (or take in Grade 12)		
6	Health (or take in grade 12)		

Senior Year

	Trimester 1	Trimester 2	Trimester 3
Summer			
1	English 12/AP Literature and Composition/ IB English/CIS Writing Studio	English 9/Honors English 9	English 9/ Honors English 9
2	Political Science/AP U.S. Government/ CIS Political Science	AP U.S. Government/ IB History/CIS Political Science	Economics/AP Economics (if not taken in Grade 11/IB History)
3			
4			

5			
6			

** CIS = College in the Schools. Involves college curriculum from University of Michigan, taught in high schools

Hawaii Department of Education

Criteria Used to Determine a Schedule

A Partial List of Criteria used to determine optimum schedule models – including school calendars, teacher schedules, and bell schedules for the 2014-2015 school year in the State of Hawaii. *NOTE: The Hawaii Department of Education is a single school District for all of the public schools in Hawaii.*

Teacher Work Year

- No more than 190 work days. This includes 189 full work days and 6 hours for use in multiples of ½ hour increments contiguous to teacher work-day.

Work Days without Students

- First 4 days (including 2 days for administrator-initiated activities and 2 days for teacher-initiated activities)
- 1 day scheduled between semesters for grading and other teacher-initiated activities
- 2 days for school planning and collaboration (determined by school’s leadership group and administrators, with input from faculty); (encouraged to align days across complex areas to support common planning)
- 1 day at the end of the school year
- 1 day for participation in Teacher Institute Day (dates set by HSTA)

Hours contiguous to the teacher workday for collaboration and professional development:

- 21 hours, for use in 1 hour increments: for DOE-directed job-embedded professional development that extends the work day of teachers (focused on Common Core State Standards, data teams and formative instruction, response to intervention, and teacher evaluation)
- 6 hours for use in multiples of ½ hour increments for DOE-directed in-service training, school program planning and assessment, or principal-teacher evaluation conferences beyond the regular work day of teachers
 - Not to exceed 1 ¼ hours; scheduled in advance; and contiguous to the teacher’s work day
 - Teachers must have input on the training activities

Teacher Schedule

Per day: 7-hour day; work day may not extend beyond 4:30 p.m.; duty-free lunch period of no less than 30 minutes; no more than 180 consecutive minutes without a break, lunch or recess of no less than 15 minutes

Per week: 5-day week; schools may use rotating block, or other non-traditional schedules, as long as teachers' work time does not exceed a 35-hour work week.

Note: in the full document

(www.hawaiipublicschools.org/DOE%20Forms/State%20Reports/302A-251_report.pdf) , there are also guidelines specific to "self-contained classes" and "departmental classes" For example, for departmental classes, the following are the criteria per week: 1285 minutes of instructional time, 225 minutes of preparation time in blocks of not less than 45 continuous minutes; 150 minutes of duty free lunch periods in blocks of not less than 30 continuous minutes during the teachers' regular work day; 440 minutes to be used exclusively for meetings (faculty, departmental, grade level, curriculum) passing, opening, and closing time; recess; homeroom; scheduled activity periods on a voluntary basis; and study hall.

Per semester: 6 teacher preparation periods per semester may be used at discretion of Employer for training, planning, and assessment, or principal-teacher conferences.

Student Learning Time

School Year 2013-2014 and 2016

All Schools: 180 days

Secondary schools: 990 student instructional hours (1650 student instructional minutes per week)

School year 2016-17 and 2017-18

All schools: 1080 student instructional hours

School Year 2018-2019

All schools: 190 days

All schools: 1146 student instructional hours (1800 student instructional minutes per week)

Course offerings

Secondary students have access to coursework in order to earn more than 6 credits per year

Sample Excerpt from a typical BELL SCHEDULE AUDIT

Approximation of Instruction Minutes for District Schools on Regular and Block Schedules

School	Minutes Per Class	Regular Schedule	Block Schedule	Total Instructional Minutes for Two Weeks
Apple HS	54	X		540 minutes
Banana HS	96		X	480 minutes
Grape HS and Kumquat HS	56	X		560 minutes
Orange HS	102		X	496 minutes

Difference in instructional time (here defined as seat time) for schools over a year (here defined as 180 days)

School	Instructional Seat Time Per Course		Difference in Instructional Seat Time per course as compared to schools with maximum seat time	Difference in Instructional Seat Time per course as compared to schools with Maximum Seat Time in Weeks
	Minutes	Hours		
Grape HS and Kumquat HS	9856	164.3	No Difference	No Difference
Apple HS	9504	158.4	-5.9 hours	-1.2 weeks
Banana HS	8448	140.8	-23.5 hours	-4.7 weeks
Orange HS	8704	145.1	-19.2 hours	-3.8 weeks

CCASN Note: Other Districts/High Schools have done similar comparisons of instructional time supported by various bell schedules with different results. For example, in the State of Hawaii, 5 minutes of each separate class offered each day is designated as opening and closing class activities and is not considered as instructional time. Thus, in a comparison of a traditional seven period class schedule with a 4x4 block schedule, the 7-period schedule would have three more class openings and closings (an additional 15 minutes of non-instructional time each day or an additional 75 minutes non-instructional time each week) as well as more passing periods for additional loss of instructional time. There are other variables to consider.

Sidebar: Instructional Time As An Important Criterion For Considering Bell Schedules

As you examine various bell schedule choices, to what extent are you considering the time devoted to instructional activities versus non-instructional activities in your choice of a bell schedule?

How will each bell schedule maximize the amount of time scheduled for teaching and learning?

What other values do you want the use of time in your bell schedule to reflect? For example, how much time is allotted for common planning time/collaboration for teachers? Or is there time allotted for student advisory/adult advocates to meet regularly with students? Do what extent is any Flex time for interventions and enrichments provided? Does the bell schedule include opportunities for extended/ expanded learning time? Other?

Approximate Time Comparison Chart

For purposes of this Time Comparison Chart, students have a 7.25-hour school day (7 ¼ hour; 435 minute school day). Depending on your own context, you should adjust accordingly.

It should be noted that CCASN found a trend toward longer school days, including the use of expanded learning time, and, in some cases, longer school years. If you school day is shorter, please eliminate one or both advisories, shorten faculty collaboration time, OR shorten class times slightly as needed to meet your parameters. The comparisons below also include a passing period before and after lunch; one of those passing periods could easily be eliminated as many schools only include a passing period following lunch.

This comparison chart does not include adjustments for multiple lunches OR for some of the innovations in the use of time we found with the length of classes varying for different purposes on different days, or rotating schedules with eight courses a term/year but only six classes meeting each day, hybrid schedules that involved some face-to-face time and some on-line learning, etc. As always, there are other alternatives.

This is simply a template that features one set of possibilities. Use this table as something that is not set in concrete, but as an example of some of the variables you need to consider when choosing a bell schedule. Make your own comparison chart that reflects your local context and values (i.e., daily advisory and/or flex time; longer blocks of time for deeper learning, twice weekly collaboration time, etc.) and the actual times from the bell schedules of schools you visit and/or research.

	3 x 5 Trimester	4 x 4 8 A/B, Hybrid	6 period	6 period A/B w. one day all 6 periods	7 period	7 period A/B w. one day all 7 periods	8 period
Class Time	76 (2 days a week); 68 (2 days a week) 57 one day a week	96 (2 days a week); 87 min. (2 days a week); 74 (1 day a week)	62 (2 days a week); 56 (2 days a week); 45 (1 day a week)	47 (x1); 125 (x 2); 115 (x 2) each class meets 3 times a week	48 (x2); 53 (x2); 40 (x1) each class meets daily	53 (x1); 93 (x4) each class meets 3 times a week)	45 (x2); 42 (x2) 34 (x1) each class meets daily
Lunch	30	30	30	30	30	30	30
Passing Time* (5 min.) (Includes twice a week advisory/flex/ seminar) NOTE: Often schools on block schedules build in longer passing periods. You should adjust accordingly.	25-30	20-25 (Passing time is not exact for all versions of a 4x4 hybrid or 8 A?B hybrid.)	30-35	30 (x3)** ** 10-15+ min. passing periods on long block days; 5 min. on short period days ...	35 40	35 (x1) 33 (x2) min. includes slightly extended passing, esp. between periods 1-3 on block days	40- 45

<i>Advisory &/or Flex &/or seminar* (In this scenario, Advisory/flex meets twice a week for 30 minutes unless otherwise indicated. Some schools have daily or once a week advisories. Adjust accordingly.</i>	35 (x2)	30 (x2)	Twice a week for 34 minutes (or move 5 minutes to one a.m. extended passing)	30 (x2)	29 (x2)	30(x2) (on same days as faculty collaboration)	30 (x2) advisory before lunch; no passing period between advisory and lunch
<i>Approximate 90 minute Collaboration Time for Faculty - late start or early release day (100+ min split into 2 days on 7 A/B</i>	90 minutes once a week	89 min once a week	90 min. once a week	93 min. once a week	90 min. once a week	Twice a week – 52 min. – either early release or late start for students (Both collaboration & advisory on same 2 days)	88 min. once a week; no passing period between collaboration and 1 st
Sub Total	435	433 --435	432 -	435	435-436	435	436
Minutes per Class per week (Approximate)	345	440	281	287	242	239	208
Minutes per Full year Equivalent Course per year	8760 (Each course meets once a day for 2 trimesters)	7920 (Each course meets one term daily or every over day for the full year)	10,116	10332 (Each course meets 3 times a week.)	8712	8604 (Each course meets 3 times a week.)	7488
Credits per year	7.5	8	6	6	7	7	8
Class meetings per year per full credit course	120	90+	180	108	180	108	180

- Passing time does not include any “passing time between 0 period and 1st period. The minutes involved in passing time begin with the passing period between Period 1 and Period 2. Passing time is also attached to the beginning and end of lunch.
- Some schools, especially those on block schedules, may build in a morning nutrition break (essentially an extended passing period). This is not currently reflected in the use of time above.

Comparing (Partial) Faculty Cost Factor Of Several Common Bell Schedules

	3 x 5 Trimester	4x4, 8 A/B, Hybrid	6 period or 6 period A/B	7 period or 7 A/B	8 Period	4x4 A/B or 8 A/B or Hybrid (teacher teaching 7)
Student Load (Student takes...)	5 (7.5 credit courses for year)	4 each day or 8 each year)	6	7	8	8
Teacher Load (teacher teaches..)	4/5	3/4 or 6/8	5	5 or 6	6	7
Faculty Cost Factor (% of faculty teaching during any period during the day)	80%	75%	83%	71% (5) 86% (6)	75%	87.5%

Cost factor also needs to consider other factors such as teacher burnout from teacher overload. (i.e., teachers teaching six out of seven courses OR seven out of eight courses.) Advocates of the 4x4 argue that the cost of textbooks is cheaper since instead of every 9th grader needing a particular science text at the same time; half the 9th graders would use the textbook first term and the other half would use it second term. When textbooks cost over \$100 each x half your students, the savings on textbooks can balance out some of the faculty costs.

Schools and districts, too, find other solutions. At one school that has used the 4x4 for sometime, the faculty formally agrees each year to have larger class sizes (larger than the union contract in exchange for keeping the 4x4 block.) Another school has a close relationship with a University School of Education and uses teacher interns to bring down the cost of faculty and make more creative scheduling possible. At still other schools, the cost of release periods for Linked Learning pathway leads and/or College and Career Academy lead teachers is paid for by the industry partnerships. In other cases, a city or other government agency has invested in the schools or the District has received a grant, providing funding for as much as 2.5 FTE (full time equivalent teachers) to each high school to support the scheduling of pathways/academies and so the faculty “cost factor” can be squishy, depending on how a bell schedule is actually implemented at the school/district. Nevertheless, especially in hard budget times, it is an important factor to keep in mind when we consider sustainability of a bell schedule.

Other Common Criteria For Comparing Bell Schedules:

- Time allotted for each course
- Cost (staffing required)
- # of Textbooks needed each term/cost of textbooks needed each term
- Student load
- Teacher load
- Meeting format
- Time for WBL (internships, etc.)
- Time for dual enrollment, early college, etc.
- Requirements of district or state policies
- Requirements of union contracts

Riverwood International Charter School

Fulton County Schools
Sandy Springs, Georgia

Another Example Of Time Comparisons From A Specific Set Of Bell Schedules Reviewed By A Riverwood International Charter School Scheduling Committee:

See PowerPoint with details of pro/con perceptions for each of 4 models at <http://school.fultonschools.org/hs/riverwood/Documents/Bell%20Schedules/Bell%20Schedule%20Presentation%20Jan%202014.pdf>

Process

September – Stakeholder Survey with 800 responses, primarily staff and parent

- o Student Support Responses
- o Design of Day/Schedule Responses
- o Flexibility Responses
- o Vote by leadership to move forward with evaluating options

October – Scheduling Team Makes Commitments

- o One member per Department
- o Committed to making decisions to support all students, teachers, meeting the needs of our population, considering equally any schedule
- o Who We Are/Who do We Want to Be Discussion to Guide Evaluation

Oct/Nov – Evaluation, Elimination of 17 schedules

- o Personalization, Pedagogy, Productivity, narrowed to 3-4
- o Discussion of implications and costs
- o Pros/Cons developed for 3 schedules compared to current (w/variations)

	6 Period	7 Period	5 Block Trimester	8 A/B
Passing Time	35	40	30	25

Lunch	30	30	30	30
Class Length	56	50	72	90
Time Per Course	10,080	9,000	8,640	8,100
Choices	6	7	7.5	8
Class Meetings Per Year	180	180	120	90
Percentage Core (E, M, Sci, SS)	5/6 (67%+)	4/7 (57%)	4/7.5 (53%)	4/8 (50%)

Other Findings of the Riverwood High School Scheduling Committee included:

6 – period Traditional Schedule

Cost Factor – 5/6 (83%)

5- period Trimester Schedule

Cost Factor – 12/15 (80%)

7 period

Cost Factor - 5/7 (71%), 6/7 (86%)

8 A/B

Cost Factor – 6/8 (75%), 7/8 (87.5%)

The survey used at the high school and the student and parent results can be found on line at

<http://www.shawadmin.com/RICSSchedule/uploads/4OptionsSurveyResults.pdf>

(Retrieved February 2014)

Montgomery County Public Schools

Rockville, Maryland

Looking at elements of another bell time work group process:

(Note, although this is a High School Bell Times Work Group, because of transportation issues involving the bussing of many students to school, the work group needs to take a systems approach and consider impacts on elementary and middle schools as well as high schools. In many of the Districts CCASN researched, parameters for bell schedules were frequently determined by tiered bus schedules with staggered start and end times for elementary, middle, and high schools.)

From the Summary of High School Bell Times Work Group:

Criteria for Evaluating Options

Deal Breakers

- Is not focused on student achievement
- Too costly (but would consider a plan that phases in a change, thereby spreading increased costs over multiple years)
- Is not the right thing to do for students
- Adversely affects non-affluent students/families
- Creates inappropriate bells (start times) for any student
- Has a significant negative impact on non-school activities

Must Haves

- Must address needs of primary stakeholders
- Must have “sleep education”/health education for students
- Benefits must be clear and unassailable
- Must be the right thing to do (willing to consider costs for options that will produce real benefits)
- Must be a true net gain

Participants discussed the following:

- Potential bell time options with significant costs were compared to the “maintenance of effort” costs to demonstrate funding difficulties. A one-year bell time change may be cost prohibitive. A suggestion was made to phase in any costs associated with a bell schedule over a few years.
- “Budget neutral” ideas are preferable. However, an option that enhances achievement and is a “fabulous idea” is worth including, if the expense can be justified.
- The group was reminded that the charge of the group is not only to evaluate costs, but to generate options for the superintendent of schools to consider.
- Options that shift athletic practices from after school to before school are not desirable. A suggestion was made that students choosing to participate in a sport for a season might be acceptable, considering that participation in a sport is a choice, and the season for a sport lasts for roughly one third of the academic year.

Student Voice _ Student members presented data they collected from a student-generated survey of 70 middle school students (60% 8th grade, 26% 7th grade, and 14% 6th grade.)

Questions:

- Do you think beginning middle school at 7:55 a.m. is too early? (60% yes)
- Do you think beginning high school at 7:25 a.m. is too early? (89% yes)
- Based on any older sibling, friends, and what you have heard today, do you think high school bell times should be changed? (86% yes)
- If high school bell times are changed and it DOES impact the middle school bell times schedule, would starting/ending school later negatively impact your parent/guardian’s schedule (63% yes)
- If high school bell times are changed and it DOES impact the middle school schedule, would starting/ending school later negatively impact your after school activities? (58% yes)
- How much do you sleep on an average school night? (average response: 6 hours 48 minutes)
- If school were to start/end later, would you go to sleep (earlier: 7%; later: 33%; same: 58%)
- How often do you doze off or lose focus due to sleepiness in 1st or 2nd period? (Everyday: 43%; 2-4 days of the week: 22%; 1 day a week: 16%; rarely: 14%; never: 4%.)

Discussion of proposal that shifted elementary and middle school bell times by 10 minutes, lengthened the elementary school day by 10 minutes, and started the high school 50 minutes later.

Options regarding start time were discussed; preliminary vote on several options. Awaiting results of high school survey. (NOTE: Results of student and parent surveys are included in Final Report, see link below)
Next meeting

“The Report of the 2013 Bell Time Work Group: Sleep Needs of Students, Scheduling Practices, and Options for Consideration (The 2013 Bell Times Report)

See FINAL REPORT of the 2013 Bell Times Work Group, presented by the Superintendent of Schools to Members of the Board of Education on October 8, 2013:

[http://www.boarddocs.com/mabe/mcpsmd/Board.nsf/files/9C2M2258FE43/\\$file/10.1%20Rpt%202013%20Bell%20Times%20Work%20Grp.pdf](http://www.boarddocs.com/mabe/mcpsmd/Board.nsf/files/9C2M2258FE43/$file/10.1%20Rpt%202013%20Bell%20Times%20Work%20Grp.pdf)

Current Bell Times for MCPS:

High School	7:25 a.m. – 2:10 p.m.
Middle School	7:55 a.m. – 2:40 p.m.
Elementary School Tier 1	8:50 a.m. – 3:05 p.m.
Elementary School Tier 2	9:15 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.

Recommendation: to pursue a modified Option 1A, increasing the elementary school day by 30 minutes rather than 20 minutes.

High School	8:15 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.
Middle School	7:45 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.
Elementary School Tier 1	8:50 a.m. – 3:35 p.m.
Elementary School Tier 2	9:15 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Anchorage School District

Anchorage, Alaska

FAQ Budget Questions

Seven-period secondary schedules

A Sampling Of Questions And Answers From The Faq On Budget And The Proposed Change To A Seven Period Day

See full FAQ Budget at <http://www.asdk12.org/budget/faq/>

“Why are we considering a change to secondary schedules?”

As a district, we are committed to our [Destination 2020 goals](#); which include increasing student proficiency and the graduation rate.

However, due to projected flat funding, the district expects a budget gap of \$49 million over the next two years which means schools will have fewer teachers.

With fewer teachers, it will become logistically impossible to continue providing core instruction, meet the need for increased academic support and intervention classes, and still offer quality electives such as advanced placement, world languages, art and music.

With the current budget proposal, keeping a six period schedule would result in increased class sizes and the elimination of specific elective classes, programs and options for students.

Through budget meetings and public comments, it is clear the community wants the district to maximize opportunities for students.

The seven-period schedule utilizes the staff a school has in order to continue offering opportunities for students, including academic support classes and elective offerings.

Example

- If a school has 100 teachers who teach 5 of 6, there are 500 periods or sections available to students.
- If those same 100 teachers teach 6 of 7, there are 600 periods available.
- Now, let's say this school faces staffing reductions and loses five full-time teachers, this is displayed on the bottom row of the chart. By moving to a 6 of 7 schedule, the school will still be able to offer more periods and opportunities to students than it had with the previous 6-period schedule and more staff. (The arrow points from where we're at to where we're going.)

Teachers	5 of 6	6 of 7
100 FTE	500 periods	600 periods
95 FTE	475 periods	570 periods

Will all schools have the same seven-period bell schedule?

While there are advantages to having all secondary schools on the same bell schedule, the unique needs, traditions, and programs within each school community need to be taken into account.

As has been true in the past, within the limits of the traditional daily starting and ending times, all schools will have the opportunity to develop their own bell schedules. Seven period days, block periods, rotating blocks, daily "skinny" periods, number and length of passing periods, lunchtime configurations, advisory periods, and even professional development time are all possibilities that can be considered when developing daily and weekly bell schedules.

Doesn't a seven period schedule result in less time per each class?

The amount of available time for each class will depend on a comparison between a school's current school schedule, number of passing periods and corresponding minutes per class per week with whatever new schedule is developed. Regardless of the schedule developed at each school, the need to make the most of every instructional minute available is paramount.

A review of five ASD current school schedules shows that, depending on the schedule, student contact time may increase with a 7-period schedule.

	ASD 1	ASD 2	ASD 3	ASD 4	ASD 5	7 period option	7 period option (mod. block)
Period 1	264	260	280	275	273	240	244
Period 2	255	270	260	265	267	230	238
Period 3	255	260	260	265	265	230	236
Period 4	260	260	260	265	265	230	230
Period 5	261	260	260	265	265	230	236
Period 6	260	260	260	265	265	230	236
Advisory					30		
Period 7						230	236
WEEK	1555	1570	1580	1600	1630	1620	1656

How will middle schools be affected by the seven-period schedule?

In the proposed budget, the team planning period will be eliminated. That equates to about 35 teachers, which is a savings of about \$3.5 million. An additional reduction of nine teachers is the result of annual enrollment adjustments, for a total of 42 fewer teachers at the middle school level.

- Teachers will retain their daily planning period.
- Teaming will also continue to the extent possible. Building a schedule is a complex process that principals and their leadership groups are working on. Whether this means two-, three-, or four-person teams, or other configurations, is up to the needs of the school and what works best for them.
- Though there won't be a daily planning period for team teachers, principals are trying to find ways to allow team teachers to still have a common instructional planning period. It wouldn't provide for planning as a team daily, and teams may not be able to do all they've done in the past, but it would be a common time that could be used to discuss student concerns or to plan instruction.
- Other creative means of providing time for teachers to meet and plan are being looked at as well.

Middle schools will not transition back to the junior high concept where students move independently through six or seven different classes. The middle school approach that focuses on students, and in which students and teachers are organized in teams to support the academic, social-emotional, and developmental needs of every student will continue.”

Virginia Beach Schools

Virginia Beach City Public Schools

Virginia Beach, Virginia

<http://www.vbschools.com/curriculum/high/content/pdfs/SchedulePresentationStudents.pdf>

“A High School Schedule for 21st Century Learners”: This 12-page document describes the proposal of the High School Master Schedule Committee to the School Board regarding a recommendation to adopt a new bell schedule. The recommendation is for a hybrid AB schedule with some courses that would be offered on a 4x4 schedule. “The kind of courses that would be offered on a 4x4 are the ones that are typically roadblocks to graduation such as Algebra 1, Earth Science, English 11 and English 12 The majority of the courses offered would remain on the AB block schedule.”

Video: High School Schedule Recommendation: Hybrid 4 X 4

York County School District

Yorktown, Virginia

York County School District High School Schedule Committee discuss a scheduling option that would best meet the needs of YCSD students. Participants describe their process of arriving at this recommendation.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uuGE01dIsUQ>

Trimester Schedule Considerations Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ's)

Homestead High School, Mequon-Thiensville School District, Mequon, Michigan

Includes answers to questions such as: Why is a schedule change being considered? When and how will the question of moving to the trimester schedule be made? Who is on the HSST (High School scheduling team)? How and when can parents provide input on the schedule decision?

http://www.mtsd.k12.wi.us/cms_files/resources/Trimester%20FAQ%20Final%202.pdf

Frequently Asked Questions (Students/Parents/Guardians) – Move from 4x4 Block to 7-period with teachers teaching six out of seven classes as cost saving measure.

http://coralspringshigh.browardschools.com/images/CoralSpringsHigh/PDFfiles/Frequently%20Asked%20Questions_students_parents_guardians_0420.pdf

VIDEO: COMMUNICATING ABOUT A PROPOSED SCHEDULING CHANGE: SRHS Proposed Bell

Schedule Change for 2014-2015 (worth a view)

Sanborn Regional High School

Kingston, New Hampshire

For a good example of one how a school administration or a scheduling team might communicate a proposed change in the bell schedule to faculty, students, and parents, see the

short video presentation by the principal from Sanborn Regional High School, Kingston, New Hampshire regarding Sanborn's 2014-2015 bell schedule change proposal. This is also a good example of the evolution of a bell schedule to meet the needs of personalization and learning and teaching. http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Br_zzgl26sc
Also available at rhsprincipalsblog.blogspot.com/2013/09/proposed-bell-schedule-change-for-2014_10.html

We will continue to update the bell schedule resources in the CCASN Master Schedule Guide. If you are aware of a bell schedule that supports student learning and achievement and includes innovations in the use of time or know someone we should talk with about a particular District or school bell schedule, please share your bell schedule examples and resources with Patricia Clark (patricia510@gmail.com) and/or Phil Saroyan (jp9@jps.net) from the College and Career Academy Support Network at the University of California Berkeley, Graduate School of Education.

We are especially interested in learning more about best practices in the field for a bell schedule decision process and the ways in which Districts support effective Master Scheduling. Thank you.