



Snoqualmie Valley

Public Schools

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TO: Joel Aune, Superintendent
FROM: Jeff Hogan, Assistant Superintendent
RE: High School Schedule Advisory Committee Recommendation
DATE: June 20, 2017

The High School Schedule Advisory Committee (HSSAC) began meeting in March 2016. The primary purpose of the HSSAC was to study alternative bell schedule options that would better accommodate programming, as a result of new state graduation requirements (CORE 24). A revised bell schedule would also provide an opportunity to potentially address additional objectives, such as a growing interest in Project/Problem Based Learning, and improving interventions for struggling learners, among other needs. The committee comprised of teachers, an SVEA representative, administrators, students and parents was tasked with making a schedule recommendation to the Superintendent, sometime during the 2016-17 school year, for implementation in the fall of 2018. Throughout the process, the committee engaged students, parents, and staff through numerous collaborative engagement opportunities, including focus groups, information nights, surveys and listening sessions. Below is a short recap of the process, followed by the recommendation, as presented, and approved (via consensus model) by the Mount Si High School staff on June 13, 2017.

The committee met several times in the spring of 2016 and developed group norms, agreed on a decision making model, and reviewed research on high school bell schedules. In September of 2016, short surveys were developed asking students, parents and staff for input on schedule priorities. In October, three guest speakers shared their experience and perspectives around various schedule options under consideration. In addition, we shared information provided to the committee by AWSP outlining how schools across the state were responding to the challenges of meeting the new requirements of CORE 24. In November of 2016, the committee engaged in deeper conversations with students, staff, and parents to collect additional feedback and input. At the end of 2016, and by consensus agreement, the committee narrowed its focus to three schedule models:

- 4x8 alternating block
- 3x5 trimester
- 7 period alternating/modified block

When the committee resumed meeting in January 2017, another update and listening session was conducted with the Mount Si staff, and the committee began refining a rubric for further evaluating schedule options. The committee took a deeper dive into each schedule option by examining prototypical 4-year student schedules for different groups of high school students. The committee also discussed implications on professional development needed to transition to a block schedule and/or trimesters, as well as budget and class size implications for each of the three bell schedule options .

By mid-February 2017, the committee arranged and made site visits to:

- Federal Way High School to see the 4x8 alternating block
- Kelso High School to see the 3x5 trimester
- Mercer Island High School to see the 7 period alternating or modified block

Much was learned from the site visits, however a common thread emerged. It became apparent that all three schedule options under consideration would result in:

- longer class periods 2 or more days per week

- 15-20% fewer instructional hours per course credit
- more course options for students
- a need for professional development and time to make revisions to course scope and sequence

In March 2017, an additional focus group meeting was conducted with students, and a parent information night was held to gather more input on the three schedule models. By consensus agreement, the committee eliminated the 3x5 trimester schedule model, and the 4x8 alternating block.

A separate high school committee working on an “advisory” model provided an update on their work, and how advisory would be piloted and rolled out during the 2017-18 school year.

Since April 2017, the committee focused its attention on variations of the 7 period alternating or modified block schedule. Three options emerged with minor variations within each:

- 7 period alternating/modified block schedule with 2 block days per week
- 7 period alternating/modified block schedule with 3 block days per week
- 7 period alternating/modified block schedule with 4 block days per week

Over the next few weeks, the committee met with the Mount Si High School staff three more times to share updates and gather feedback on these options. In addition, a student survey was also conducted to gather additional insights. On May 19, the 7 period alternating/modified block schedule with 4 block days per week recommendation was presented to the Mount Si Staff. Unfortunately, consensus was not achieved (only 44% of the staff present supported the recommendation).

In early June, the committee met two more times to review the staff feedback and revise its’ recommendation. After significant discussion, a recommendation emerged that received a high level of support by the committee (with 22 thumbs up or sideways, which indicated support and/or support with reservations, and only 1 thumbs down, which indicated no support).

The recommendation presented to the Mount Si High School staff is as follows. The HSSAC recommended the adoption and implementation of the 7 Period – 2 Blocks per week Bell Schedule beginning the 2018-19 school year with the following provisions:

- Block Days: Block days will be initially scheduled on Tuesday and Wednesday with each instructional block being approximately 88 minutes in length.
- Additional Block Days: Opportunities to add additional block days (beyond 2 days per week) will be scheduled occasionally during the 2018-19 school year (to give staff and students an opportunity to “experiment” with a schedule with more block time).
- Seven Period Days: Seven instructional periods per day will be scheduled on Monday, Thursday, and Friday. The seven periods on Monday and Thursday will be approximately 48 minutes in length. The seven periods on Friday Early Release will be approximately 31 minutes in length
- Pride Time: Pride time (advisory) activities will be scheduled on Wednesdays.
- Teachers will teach 5 of 7 classes. Additional prep/open minutes may be used for the following:

Office hours, Professional Development, Collaboration, SIP Building/department focus, time for interdisciplinary teams to meet, revising scope and sequence (this is still be bargained).

- Professional Development: PD will take place for staff prior to the 2018-19 school year focusing on effective instructional strategies for use during the extended instructional blocks (Block Periods) during the week.
- Future Schedule Evaluation/Modification: The schedule will be evaluated prior to the end of the 2018-19 school year using a survey administered during the school day to ALL staff and students. Future modifications to the schedule (i.e. increase in the number of block days) will be based on the outcome of the survey data (majority support/vote).

The recommendation was presented to the Mount Si High School staff on Tuesday, June 13 - followed by a brief question and answer period. A paper ballot vote was taken. With 93 ballots cast, a little over 90% of staff supported the recommendation of the committee. I am pleased to recommend we commence planning in earnest, for the 7 period modified block schedule, with two block days per week, as described above, for implementation in fall of 2018.