

The new master schedule offers opportunities to our students

Change is hard, we understand that. We also understand that the current Master Schedule at Aspen High School no longer fits the academic needs of the students. The reality is that we've known this for some time. This issue was present for the last four years, and we could not put this decision off any longer and the time to tackle it is now. The current schedule is broken and it is imperative that we fix it. It is also important that we honor the work of the Leadership Team and know that they made this decision after careful consideration and for the best interests of all the students of Aspen High School.

Understandably there are questions, so we want to try and address them as best we can.

What is wrong with the current schedule?

In the current schedule, students are required to have math every day, which means that most students have two out of eight blocks already scheduled.

Many students have difficulty getting into the classes they want and often take an open period simply because they have no other option.

The number of instructional hours in the current schedule *barely* meets the Colorado Department of Education minimum. This does not support the goal of academic rigor and advancement that you and your student expect.

For those students taking IB HL classes or pursuing an IB Diploma, our current schedule does not meet the number of contact hours recommended as reported in the IB audit conducted last year.

Why are you switching to seven periods?

Of all the schedules proposed by the Leadership Team and the consultant, this is the schedule that most fully answers our needs while working within our constraints.

This schedule allows students more instructional time and contact hours with their teachers. To be specific, this plan will increase student/teacher contact time from 435 minutes to 492 minutes every two weeks, which equals 18 extra class hours a year and is equivalent to four more weeks of school.

In this new schedule, students will be able to meet with their teachers four times each week; once in a 90 minute block and three times in a 52 minute class.

It is clear that Tutorial is important to both students and teachers. In this schedule students will *not lose* Tutorial.

With seven periods, teachers will have equity in their number of classes taught each semester and will increase contact time with students by two hours each week

Students will have ample opportunity to pursue their favorite extracurricular activities.

Will this new schedule eliminate the free period?

Absolutely not, In the current format, many free periods occurred because we couldn't fit the classes the students wanted or needed into their schedule. With this new schedule students will have more courses and flexibility to choose from. If a student elects to have a free period, often that can be accommodated.

This new schedule will provide several make up options to student/athletes who miss class a significant number of classes.

Will the lunchtime be shortened?

Yes. In the new schedule there will be one lunch break so that all students can be together and it will go from 45 to 35 minutes. There will be two different locations in the building where students can eat their lunch so crowding in the Commons should not occur.

How were parents included in the process?

We feel that we made many efforts to include parents in the new schedule selection process. Here is a list of communications that went out.

- A One Call Now communication went to parents Dec. 3 inviting parents to participate in this process.
- Open meetings were held on Nov. 11; Dec. 3; Jan. 14; Feb.1; Feb. 11; and Feb. 17.
- The School Accountability Committee (SAC), which is a parent organization, scheduled several open meetings.
- An announcement was added to the District Web page as well as an e-blast to all high school and 8th grade parents.

Parent input was sought and incorporated into the new schedule. No schedule is perfect and no one stakeholder group realized all of their preferences, but this schedule represents a compromise that all stakeholders had a part in crafting.

Why can't we have an eight period schedule?

There are several reasons why we couldn't include a scheduled 8th period. Tutorial was extremely important to all stakeholders and the 7 period schedule was the only final proposed schedule that allowed for that.

The new schedule needed to accommodate the shortened Wednesday schedule for faculty meetings, professional development and department and grade level collaboration times.

By adding an 8th period, we would incur difficulties with starting and ending times, bus schedules, and extracurricular activities.

An additional period would shorten classes and therefore require an extension to the calendar year.

If we go to 8 periods each student would have less contact time with their instructors. The number of periods would increase but the time with each teacher would decrease.

Math needed to meet a frequency requirement of at least 4 times per week.

We would not meet the recommended IB HL hours with an 8 period schedule.

Are we meeting the needs of the whole child?

Existing programs meant to fulfill our commitment to the whole child are still present including Experiential Education, IB diploma, musical, clubs, sports and service. We believe increasing student/teacher contact time represents a whole child commitment.

How do the values of access, flexibility, and frequency meet the needs of the whole child?

Students who choose to participate in the variety of student activities meant to meet the needs of the whole child will benefit from seeing their teachers 4 times a week

Students will not be missing the same class when participating in school activities that require early dismissal.

We hope that this information answers most of the questions and concerns that you have about the new schedule and how it might affect your student. To have specific questions about scheduling answered, please make an appointment with your academic counselor.

If you have additional questions you may access the Q and A on the new Schedule posted on the website.