

Timestamp	Email Address	Text
3/22/2024 14:04:31	[REDACTED]	What are the things staff and the middle school committee should consider as they work through the logistics of the 7-period schedule option? 85 minutes seems like a big transition from elementary school to middle school. Do all the teachers feel capable of successfully manage 85-minute long classes? It will be hard on the kids and the burden will be all on the teachers.
3/22/2024 14:07:40	[REDACTED]	Choices for more electives and high achievers. My family does not want to lose an elective More instructional time is appreciated and time for SEL is needed, and this is good prep for high school periods but how will 5th graders adapt to 6th grade. Are they able to pay attention long enough? What is the length of time of an normal 5th grade class and how much more is it with this 85 min? What do other middle school aged schedules look like around the country (and even in other countries) and how well do they work? What is the normal length of one period?
3/22/2024 14:12:27	[REDACTED]	When you say some kids will have fewer electives - which proportion of kids will have fewer choices? Percentage? Group characteristics? I just attended the info session with Julie Thompson, and at first glance I think the proposed schedule looks good. I particularly like the dedicated SEL/advisory period, as I think that's really important at this age. I also like the opportunity to have longer class times (blocks), since sometimes there are subjects/projects that benefit from a longer contiguous period of time to work on them. I have a 6th grader that just started middle school a few weeks ago (we just moved to the area), and he wanted me to stress how much he likes the electives, so it would be really important to give the students their first elective choice if you're proposing to cut the number of electives. Thanks and keep up the good work!
3/22/2024 14:14:16	[REDACTED]	I guess this is a done deal - so you are for sure moving to 7 periods; what training will teachers be given to change their lessons to accommodate this longer bell schedule? don't increase Class size - why Wednesday & Thursday - when one of those days is an early release day. Keep three electives - advisory period is vague - SEL learning is happening in home room now - smaller class size will allow for more time student/adult connection - is there data that was assessed to get to this idea? What middle schools are doing this? How is a long block schedule developmentally appropriate for MS brains - my kid doesn't even have homework so that is an unbound reason to move to this. Afternoon blocks need a break. Aligning to HS isn't necessary - because they are in MIDDLE SCHOOL. They can do HS when they get there. keep eight periods - rework the schedule to accommodate the needs. This is a HORRIBLE idea.
3/22/2024 14:53:31	[REDACTED]	This is not a good idea. First of all- 1) how will the class size change (obviously it will increase- bad idea); 2) How will the disruptive behaviors in the longer class times be managed? Because the teachers are already having to spend a lot of time doing that. I have a daughter who needs "focused instruction". She does not need specialized help, but she is not so smart that she can do work independently. She needs instruction to learn. Absolutely NO to the Wednesday afternoon. Ridiculous. No brain break there. Please. Why, exactly, are we preparing 6th graders for a High School schedule? My extremely high achieving and functioning 9th grader (who went to Crittenden- look her up) finds 90 minute academic periods tiring. There is something called aptitude. These kids need TIME and SPACE to develop and mature for H.S. They don't need a HS schedule thrust on them. And losing an elective- the very thing these kids need MOST to SEL... You MUST send this to the students. They have a voice. Shame, shame. My daughter started a (respective) petition, where is that now? You need to offer many Zooms for parents- and ones that actually occur during lunch, before work, after work...I was seeing parents this afternoon. Have the kids who need extra support come to school early (like during the pandemic) and feed them breakfast and then instruct them. "0" period Don't change everything for the entire school. Who is teaching the SEL? What will be taught? I would like to see that curriculum outlined.
3/22/2024 17:42:20	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED] My daughter [REDACTED] will be submitting her own survey.

Timestamp	Email Address	Text
3/25/2024 1:55:58	[REDACTED]	<p>What are the things staff and the middle school committee should consider as they work through the logistics of the 7-period schedule option?</p> <p>What data is driving this decision and why are we rushing to change the schedule when there is no indication that 7 classes would be in any way better than 8? If adding instructional minutes to core classes comes at a cost of taking away an elective (a class that keeps kids academically engaged and enhances their school experience), it is a BAD TRADEOFF. Taking an elective away will make kids less engaged in school and likely lead to LOWER, not better test scores.</p> <p>The absolute best thing about our middle school is the option for 3 electives a year. Kids thrive when they have the ability to participate in lots of different classes that they are legitimately interested in. Having more electives enhances their school experience and helps keep them engaged in their core subjects. You are taking something that is great and are actively making it WORSE.</p> <p>The proposed new schedule adds instructional minutes to the core subjects but dramatically reduces the overall quality of the students' school experience by taking away an elective, meaning we are trading quality over quantity here. The result will be that kids are less engaged in their core classes and have a worse school experience overall. Decreasing the quality of the kids' school experience is NOT the way to make test scores go up.</p> <p>Furthermore, one of the stated reasons for changing the schedule is the need for more SEL instruction. If this is actually the case and the district values social emotional learning, then we need to better understand what SEL actually is. The best way the students can experience social emotional learning first-hand is through being able to participate in MORE electives - having many types of classes that cater to different needs, strengths, and interests is the epitome of teaching to the "whole child". How can anyone think that the new proposed advisory period (with no clear plan for what SEL curriculum will be taught and who and how will be teaching it) would offer more or better SEL instruction than giving the students an option to have an additional elective of their choice?</p> <p>This is a BAD plan and there is no clear reason to rush into it. Not enough time has been spent researching alternatives or understanding the obvious trade-offs. The district says that no schedule will make everyone happy and this is true, but in this case they came up with a schedule that makes NOBODY happy. The students hate it, the parents hate it, and even many of the teachers hate it. Why does this sound like a done deal and why are we rushing into something that is so poorly executed and so poorly received?</p> <p>Many parents and students are not on board with the 7-period schedule. As such, staff should not be thinking about "logistics" related to this schedule. Instead, the district staff should take a step back and re-evaluate their assumptions.</p> <p>Reach out to the community and have an earnest conversation about the trade off between instructional time for core subjects as opposed to extra electives and enrichment. Where do parents and students land on this question?</p>
3/25/2024 1:59:56	[REDACTED]	<p>Assuming an answer before the conversation starts means the district staff is not actually engaging the community for feedback.</p> <p>A lot more input is needed from students and parents as well as teachers to ensure that the new schedule works for everyone. Here are a few of my thoughts, but this is not comprehensive.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -The 85 minute classes on Wednesday and Thursday seem too long for middle schoolers, especially with minimal breaks, saying classes will be adjusted for brain breaks is not a sufficient explanation, why make the change if the teachers need to change what they are doing so much? -Fewer electives is concerning, at middle school age, students should be exposed to many opportunities, this proposed change is in the wrong direction, one possibility to consider would be to do electives for less than the full school year. -All students I have talked to are happy with the current schedule and don't want to change, what evidence is there that the current schedule isn't good for the students, and that the proposed change would be better? -What evidence is there for the claim that students are more likely to get their top choice of elective?
3/25/2024 19:53:08	[REDACTED]	

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		<p>Our family is in favor of retaining the 8-period schedule. We feel that access to more electives during these formative middle school years is incredibly important.</p> <p>Concerns about the proposed 7-period schedule:</p> <p>Offers fewer electives - Middle school is a unique time in life where students have an opportunity to explore a diverse range of electives. Dr. Rudolph mentioned during the March 15, 2024 Community Check-in that with the new 7-period schedule, some electives could be eliminated and that class size for electives would increase, which in my opinion are both undesirable outcomes. Not only would students have fewer electives per year, but the elective options would decrease while elective class size increases.</p> <p>85 minute periods - I am really concerned that some students may not do well with such long periods. My children have shared that even with the current schedule, some students already have difficulty focusing for the entire period. While the block periods may mirror the high school schedule better, these students are middle schoolers, not yet ready for high school. If class time is disrupted due to lack of attention/engagement or behavioral issues, then the longer periods would not result in the intended longer instruction times. I could imagine that some students may be less motivated to attend school on these longer block days.</p> <p>Implementation time - My hope is that the district will retain the 8-period schedule. However, if this 7-period schedule is to move forward, teachers and staff need adequate time to plan and implement these changes effectively. Teachers would need time to adjust their lesson plans to accommodate the schedule changes and time to receive professional development. Also, the advisory period needs to be well-defined to ensure that it is effectively used for the benefit of students. All this takes time and effort. I am concerned that overhauling the schedule for the upcoming 2024-2025 school year is too ambitious; there would be a significant amount of work to do in mere months for teachers and staff who already have much on their plates. If the district is set on a 7-period schedule, please give teachers and staff ample time to plan and execute the changes in the most effective manner. We do not wish to rush to change (with good intentions) at the expense of students and teachers.</p>
3/26/2024 13:36:26	[REDACTED]	<p>Thank you for allowing us the opportunity to weigh in. I hope you will seriously consider our concerns as you move forward in the process.</p>
3/26/2024 16:53:48	[REDACTED]	<p>It appears that a change is being considered without any evidence to show that it will work. How do we know that "time" is the gating factor to higher achievement in core subjects, rather than a lack of other resources (proper teaching methodologies, proper texts, etc.)? What other improvements can be made without cutting electives? Can we look at more successful schools that have kept their electives and follow their model?</p>
3/28/2024 11:20:18	[REDACTED]	<p>What is the scientific / data-backed basis for making these changes? It is my understanding that numerous studies have been done showing that active involvement in the arts (currently 2-3 electives at Graham) improves academic performance. This change would reduce the opportunities for arts enrichment. As the parent of a child with an IEP, the move to two electives would mean that my child must choose between having instructional support and only one elective, or give up his instructional support class to have two electives. I am also concerned about the large impact this class schedule change would have on our English-language-learner students, as they would also have less opportunity to take electives. The learning that takes place in elective courses is so important to providing a life-long love of learning in our students. MYWSD is lucky to have a strong suite of possible electives for our middle school students. For example, the music and art programs are so valuable and build very strong student community. My child has also greatly enjoyed the science electives that allow the students more creativity and flexibility to apply their new scientific knowledge in open-ended exploration. It would be a great educational loss if we needed to decrease our elective programs.</p> <p>Additionally, as an instructor of college students, I find that a class period of 80 minutes or longer is quite challenging for 20-year-olds to maintain focus. I think a longer class period would be extremely challenging for middle school students. I do not believe that the longer class-time would lead to better learning outcomes. There must be scientific studies on this topic that have explored what length of learning time is ideal for student focus and retention of knowledge for this age group. Based on my personal, anecdotal experience, I would be quite surprised if longer class-times were found to improve learning in core subjects. Simply adding up the total minutes of student "contact time" per year does not equate to student learning.</p> <p>Finally, moving to fewer class periods per day would also cause several practical challenges. For example, if the number of teachers at the school remained the same, increasing the length of time of each class would by necessity mean that the number of students per class would have to increase. Increasing the number of students in the classroom has been shown in multiple studies to lead to poorer classroom learning and poorer classroom behavior. Fewer class periods per day would also significantly decrease teacher flexibility in terms of times that are available to them for class preparation and planning. Thus, we would be asking our teachers to have more kids in their classes for longer amounts of time, while providing them with less time for preparation. This is not fair to our hard-working teachers.</p>
3/28/2024 14:48:24	[REDACTED]	<p>For these reasons, I don't think the proposed changes best serve our students or our teachers.</p>
3/28/2024 17:09:23	[REDACTED]	<p>What should you consider? How about not assuming that a solution decided with no parent or student input is the right decision? How about presenting this NOT assuming that the 7-period schedule is the correct answer? Why was the Site Council completely bypassed in this process? Why was the first time any parent or student heard about this the board meeting? This is an abuse of the educational process and you should be ashamed.</p>

Timestamp	Email Address	What are the things staff and the middle school committee should consider as they work through the logistics of the 7-period schedule option? 1. Retaining all three electives is crucial as they play a significant role in keeping middle school students engaged. Removing these options risks making school dull and less stimulating for them. 2. Integrating Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) into the middle school curriculum rather than isolating it as a separate class is imperative. 3. Regarding longer class periods, it's worth considering whether they truly benefit middle schoolers in terms of maintaining engagement and attention. Generally, it's recognized that 11-14 year olds often struggle to sustain focus for a full 90-minute period without breaks or varied activities due to their shorter attention spans at this developmental stage. 4. Get ALL middle school students feedback. They have not been asked yet. Their voice is EXTREMELY important. After reading the proposal carefully, I actually don't mind the proposed schedule. I asked both my son's (sophomore and 8th grade) and they felt that the 3rd elective had usually been something they didn't want or weren't excited about, so two electives that were their top choices would have been preferred. My eldest started MS pre-pandemic so he experienced it all: 2 electives, 1 compulsory wheel, and 3 electives. He's doing fine. I did have a few requests or suggestions: 1) I hear parents worried about the decreased choice. Pre-pandemic, I vaguely recall there being 2 wheels offered amongst the elective choices - one more science based, and the other more arts based. Is it possible to offer more wheels? That way families/students who do want more variety will have that on offer. 2) With the longer periods, I'm concerned that time will be used for "homework" time, which may equate to goofing off for many students. It would be great to know that teachers received coaching and/or planned the longer periods so that they truly were used to delve into the subject matter or provide targeted instruction. And hopefully less time for kids to mess around in class. 3) In theory, I like the idea of the SEL component. However, please let it be taught in person using a defined curriculum, so it is engaging and of value. If they end up sitting in front of a video and then coloring mandalas I think it would be an opportunity lost! The kids could all benefit from things like financial skills, organization, study skills etc. So maybe there's scope for it to be really in depth.
3/28/2024 17:30:03	[REDACTED]	<p>Thank you for reading!</p> <p>I'm concerned that middle school is an important time to explore interests and the 3 elective schedule works so well for that. The HS schedule works bc of the way the credits requirements and much wider offerings work out. The middle school has only so many and most kids will miss out on finding new passions.</p> <p>I'm also concerned about students ability to benefit from longer class periods because of attention. This is turn will make it harder for staff. I think it's unfair to ask those who don't need the extra help to forfeit an extra elective. It feels like we the more we keep focusing on "more academic time" and testing and stuff we lose things that help our kids develop other strengths. Electives aren't just for fun. These allow kids to discover possible lifelong dreams. What about kids who are not athletic having 85 min of PE? Why is that even necessary? If you want social emotional learning try teaching kids more about self care, public speaking, life skills, conflict management, mindfulness, etc. It feels like we seem to take good things within the district and bring them down to meet the lowest folks instead of trying to bring the lowest up to the highest all in the name of equity. Also teachers are concerned about missing a prep period. I think this block schedule is a mistake. There must be a better way than what is proposed if you must.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Explore the possibility of having more half-year electives (so kids get to have 2-2 electives, instead of 2 whole-year electives) 2. Please really plan and think through the SEL "curriculum". Tweens put down any SEL classes! Maybe more "fun" ways — scenario Kahoot, team competition, movies, etc. ?! And there is no need to do SEL EVERY week. 3. Other topics for "Advisory" period--- DEFENSIVE Biking/Road safety, Puberty talk (separate boys and girls. Non-binary get to choose either). Time management/Organization skills, Dangerous teen trends (fentanyl, Zyn patch, Tiktok addiction, etc.), small cohorts (home team?) activities (short field trip, treasure hunt, circle of trust, etc.). Locker room "bully" 101, etc. 4. Last but not the least — please communicate to parents more clearly WHY this change QUICKLY happened. Many parents (or even teachers?) were totally shocked and caught off guard. Hoping for a better UPPERONT communication process for any big change like this. 5. Please explain (and set the correct expectation) when kids are asked to rank the elective choices--- does that mean it's way more likely they will get the top 2 choices? or will NOT get the choices they did not list? I know it's hard, but maybe if people know it increase the likelihood of getting kids' preferred choices, then parents will feel less upset. <p>Thank you as always for all the hard work. No decision will please everyone!</p>
3/28/2024 17:34:49	[REDACTED]	
3/28/2024 20:03:17	[REDACTED]	
3/28/2024 20:17:11	[REDACTED]	
3/28/2024 21:20:51	[REDACTED]	

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3/29/2024 7:36:16	[REDACTED]	<p>Suggestion Make if an ACT period to empower the students. I have sent this to Julie Thompson from Crittenden Middle School this is the Mountain View Los Alto High School District Model.</p> <p>Reason: Empowering the Students will help with their social emotional learning and in the absence of a validated treatment program that can be quickly taught to group of willing staff, teachers, parents or contracted personnel empowering our students is a very good start. Knowing there is a need for Social Emotional Learning (SEL) and finding the right approach for Middle School Aged Students is a challenge. Asking teachers to step out of their roles as instructors/educators is unfair and setting both the students and the teachers up for frustration. The Proposed Mental Health First Aid is not sufficient to help the student during the Social Emotional Learning. It is unclear if this is the proposed program to be used during the SEL time.</p>
3/29/2024 9:02:31	[REDACTED]	<p>Question: Please address the approach the district is planning for the social emotional learning time. The logistics of it at this time have not been adequately presented. The top priority for our family is to maintain 3 electives. We strongly prefer an elective over advisory. Thanks</p>
3/29/2024 9:32:47	[REDACTED]	<p>1) Will the staff that are currently assigned to electives be reassigned to a core subject? Will this allow for smaller class sizes? 2) Will the 2 electives match the students? Or will they be placed again in electives they do not want. 3) For staff that cannot be reassigned what happens to them? 4) In cases of cost savings due to decrease of staff will the funds be applied to hiring more core teachers to reduce class sizes? 5) Which electives will be eliminated? How will that decision be made? 6) When do the kids provide their 2 electives choices? Will there be a priority system? Don't use the new 7 period schedule at all</p>
3/29/2024 11:31:4	[REDACTED]	<p>I suppose the current 8 period with 3 electives</p>
		<p>85 mins class time is very long. If kids are able to manage and absorb the content in the current time what will they do in 2x the time. Get bored and not challenged and take part in virtual or non constructive content. One of the main reasons to choose Graham is the number of electives my child gets to try out. Middle school is the time to explore the interest and stretch themselves to try new things. With limited opportunity across the 3 years it would be a loss in opportunity not easy to override. Coming into Graham we do really appreciate the quantity and quality of electives and we would like to see that strengthened in terms of skilled talent teachers and not the other way around.</p>
		<p>SEL is a great topic and focus. However if it's not done in smaller group settings where kids can really feel safe to open up it may backfire and prove less affective according to studies.</p>
3/29/2024 12:39:01	[REDACTED]	<p>the issue is about gathering more funds to support the staffing needs of 8 period please share with us My 6th grader has GREATLY benefited from having 3 wonderful electives this year (Spanish, GMS, Coding through Math). He has grown so much exploring subjects outside of the traditional coursework. These electives have been a great way for him to develop confidence trying new things, work with supportive mentors and peers, satisfy his social emotional needs, and enhance his overall learning. My son, and his sibling who will start at Graham next year, are already worried that they may be forced to choose 2 out of three 3 electives that they love so much. As a parent, I believe the diverse offering of electives at Graham is one of the school's biggest strengths. I strongly urge you to keep the current 8-period schedule which is serving our students so well.</p>
3/29/2024 13:27:15	[REDACTED]	<p>My observation is the kids having the best time fitting in at school, thriving socially and academically, and having an overall positive experience are the ones that have found a community of shared interests with other students and teachers. Having 3 electives makes our district special, and gives the kids the chance to discover choir, photography, orchestra, GMS TV, etc. These connections they make other kids the teachers who lead them are the things that build community. Thank you to all the teachers who lead these classes – and the extracurricular activities from DND club to track. Let's not jump to sacrifice this unique advantage our schools have, and what I believe really addresses the SEL challenges kids at this age face.</p>
3/29/2024 15:14:54	[REDACTED]	<p>Appreciate hearing parents valid points during the meeting today 3/29/24. Will kids really benefit from the change, what are their feedbacks, what will gain, what will lose, will gain be bigger than loss? What would be most valuable for their middle school experiences. I echo that losing electives are not a good idea, more important than "preparing" for high school. They will adjust to high school when they are in high school.</p>
3/29/2024 15:17:53	[REDACTED]	<p>On the principal call today, there was suggestions that the SEL classes may be over Zoom. I think you will find near unanimous parental and student feedback that</p>
3/29/2024 15:18:06	[REDACTED]	<p>is not a worthwhile idea and a waste of time at school. Please only consider in-person options.</p>

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3/29/2024 15:24:46	[REDACTED]	<p>What are the things staff and the middle school committee should consider as they work through the logistics of the 7-period schedule option?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Consider how multiple 85-minute block periods throughout the day will physically and mentally affect children ages 11-14. 2. If we are to move to longer blocks, the District must prioritize play-based/project/hands-on learning! Computer-based learning can only go so far, especially when we are talking about the mental health of our children. 3. Moving to only two electives removes choice, student agency, and adolescent development. 4. Music and Art have been scientifically proven to improve brain function. Why do less of this? I agree with the concept of moving to 7-periods instead of 8. Eight classes/year seemed like a bit much. I would rather see a deeper focus for a more manageable number of classes. A few thoughts on the proposal below: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. I wonder whether 37 minutes/week on SEL is truly necessary or if it would be more productive to split up that block to add more time to the 7 periods. 2. I would hope that the extra class time is used on actual teaching and learning rather than more time for the students to twiddle their thumbs. My overall impression is that aside from the Math classes, a lot of the Graham curriculum is not very challenging for the smarter students. Students who have mastered the basic curriculum are left to entertain themselves. I would like to see more Honors courses offered at Graham (like what is done with Math 7.2) to keep the advanced students challenged and engaged. <p>The new 7-period schedule primarily adds an Advisory period at the end of the day, three days a week. However, it's not clear how structured or beneficial the Advisory will be, especially when compared to choosing a third elective.</p> <p>My concern is that students may not take the Advisory seriously, particularly those at the end of the day who could use the extra help the most. Meanwhile, students who are academically stronger or more advanced in social-emotional learning (SEL) might find it unengaging or redundant. For them, adding a new learning opportunity is advisable.</p> <p>Hello how do u have the new schedual STOP THE CHANGE, KEEP 8 PERIODS!!!! WE SHOULD DO 8 PERIODS</p> <p>How will breaks be structured into the longer 85 minute blocks? Will breaks be standardized or at the discretion of the teacher? I would like to speak in favor of the advisory period. [REDACTED]</p> <p>That kids have an attention span of 10 seconds Please tell more about this social emotional class. What is the content? Is it mandatory? How many classes a week? How long is this class?</p> <p>Teacher prep time MUST be protected against substitute teaching Teachers should not be considered a solution (giving up their prep OR taking on an overload of students in collapsed classes), should the district fail to retain teachers for the duration of the school year in coming years.</p> <p>Instructional minutes in core classes is significantly more important than students spending half of their school day in elective classes, especially given the gaps MVWSD is seeing in their literacy and math scores at the middle school level.</p> <p>Students happiness</p> <p>In coming 6th graders, 7-8th graders are looking forward to an active life and developing friendships through activities and I fear that if there is no class to focus on extracurricular activities (ie. the arts, marine biology, coding, and so on). We will instead perpetuate the denigration of mental health, which is what we claim to have heightened focus on in the first place. The extracurricular activities help middle school children to find their niche or group that have commonalities. I think that if we were to add a forced class then it should be something that would help children with life skills, etiquette, cooking, it shouldn't be yet another class forced upon them to give them more homework or reading material for those not needing it due to IEPs/504, longer PE time for those that are unable. It should be something tangible and tactile. That is why children love school extracurricular activities, it's interactive, engaging, and works their minds in a way that sitting in yet another class doing more work and staring at a screen just will not give them.</p>
3/29/2024 16:16:59	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
3/29/2024 18:40:43	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
3/29/2024 20:54:02	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
3/29/2024 21:39:42	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
3/29/2024 22:02:24	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
3/29/2024 22:47:25	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
3/30/2024 10:02:31	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
3/30/2024 10:58:48	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
3/30/2024 11:19:17	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
3/30/2024 14:48:11	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
3/30/2024 14:50:24	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
3/30/2024 14:51:56	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
3/30/2024 21:54:02	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
3/31/2024 14:06:12	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]

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		<p>What are the things staff and the middle school committee should consider as they work through the logistics of the 7-period schedule option?</p> <p>One of the features that made our middle schools special is the opportunity to take multiple electives. This is something that students and parents TREASURE, yet it is being taken away with no good reason other than a vague desire for SEL, which has not even been defined in any tangible way.</p> <p>Like many students, my daughter has ADHD. Maintaining attention and focus is already a major challenge during the current 45-minute classes. With 85-minute classes, it is virtually guaranteed that she will be unable to stay focused and engaged. For kids with ADHD, 85-minute classes is dooming them to failure. It is not only unfair to them, but discriminatory against their disability.</p> <p>Note that there was NO inclusion of parents or students involved in the creation of this new schedule proposal, which is unacceptable. And it feels like the district is ramming this new schedule through in spite of overwhelming opposition from both students and parents. Who is the district serving here? Shouldn't parents and students have some kind of say in such a major schedule change?</p>
3/31/2024 20:59:48		<p>1. Find ways to maintain election options, maybe with shorter courses, breaking up elective wheels to select by trimester. Compare with other districts!</p> <p>2. Need more details on SEL content and how it will be delivered. 3rd party, video, lecture formats will be ineffective at best, counter productive at worse.</p> <p>Keep current schedule. Maintain the electives.</p> <p>Please listen attentively to the students who are in this day to day at school and learn from them what worked and didn't work for them in reality. Sometimes adults' good intention may not land it well in reality because we don't open and value their inputs.</p> <p>Pushing out this scale of schedule change without working collaboratively and inclusively with students and parents before hand is hurting the trust with district board and superintendent.</p>
3/31/2024 21:57:27		<p>1) One of the justifications for this change is SEL. SEL is expected to be woven into the fabric of every single class and should not require a separate class. The tenets of SEL include "identity, sense of belonging, and agency." These are the very same factors that are taken away when the students are given less free choice with regard to the classes they take. Most students are against this change. Forging forward on eliminating an elective against the tide of the students' wishes is the exact opposite of providing students with a "sense of belonging."</p> <p>2) An 8-period block schedule can provide for focus time in core classes. It is not necessary to eliminate an elective to achieve additional core class time. To date, there has not been a clear explanation as to why the change is necessary. There has not been any data presented to justify the change. I would love to see a clear "problem statement" as to why this is being done, some valid data analysis to show that the change will be beneficial, and some studying of models to be sure that "GMS is on the best course. Currently, this is the "guess and check" method, and our kids are the guinea pigs. I understand that it is less work for teachers to have fewer periods, but eliminating an elective is not in the best interest of the students.</p> <p>3) My child is an engaged straight-A GMS student. The electives offered and the friends my child has made in those classes are what keep my child engaged at GMS (despite the fact that an alternative has been offered). If you continue to take away the good things that keep students engaged, you risk losing some of the most engaged students. Also, several prominent studies have shown that more engagement in the arts leads to higher academic performance, higher standardized test scores and lower dropout rates (see NEA's report on "Arts and Achievement in At-Risk Youth" from 2012, for one of many examples). Reducing the opportunities to engage in the arts by eliminating an elective can have a lasting devastating impact on the school.</p> <p>4) Points 1-3 above "jump the gun." Why is the committee recommending a 7-period schedule in the first place? Why is this not being made transparent to the parents and student body? How do we know, without investigating it, if "time" is the most important factor in improving performance? In other words, how do we know it is not teaching effectiveness or class materials that are at issue? This jump to a 7-period schedule is rushed and haphazard at best. Slow down, define the problem, provide the data analysis, and THEN propose a solution.</p> <p>Incorporate the weekly advisory class into PE, 85 min classes are too long, teachers prep class, lack of community inputs, finding alternative schedule to keep 3 electives and also increase core subject minutes. Middle schools should not be the same as high schools.</p> <p>Have we evaluated the option of making social-emotional learning an elective? One of the things that my son is most looking forward to about the transition to middle school is the ability to choose his own coursework. In addition to this proposed change, we will likely "force" him to continue to pursue Spanish as he is coming from Mistral and there is no continuity for the bilingual program. Together, this leaves him feeling as though he no longer has any autonomy and being robbed of any benefit of the electives.</p> <p>An 85 minute period is too long for a middle school student. They do not have the attention span to absorb material for that long. 85 minute periods will result in wasted class time that does not advance learning.</p>
3/31/2024 22:35:59		
3/31/2024 23:34:18		
4/1/2024 12:06:04		
4/1/2024 13:25:59		

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4/1/2024 13:32:49	[REDACTED]	<p>What are the things staff and the middle school committee should consider as they work through the logistics of the 7-period schedule option? The proposed block schedule days are just too long for many middle school students. Getting ready for HS block schedules is not a persuasive reason. They can be ready for that's schedule without 'practicing' it in MS</p> <p>The latest information about the proposed changes say students will have a higher chance of getting a preferred elective. How will that work? Won't sections of electives be eliminated as part of this plan?</p> <p>No specifics have been released about the proposed SEL program for the advisory block. Will there be professional development for advisory teachers?</p> <p>The possibility of SEL lessons by the school counselors over the internal TV network was mentioned by Dr. Galassi. That sounds like a terrible idea that will create classroom management challenges for advisory teachers</p> <p>In the 7-period schedule, there will be seven periods plus an advisory. Will the teachers continue to have their required two prep periods? (because advisory is another class, and teaching SEL requires preparation) if they plan to go down to 1 prep period, is someone else teaching the advisory? And if they have only one prep period, does that mean more subs will be found so that teachers can be guaranteed not to have to sub during their prep periods? Have the teachers agreed to this plan?</p> <p>Is it really better to teach SEL in isolation and mostly by video (twice a month, as described by the superintendent) rather than in context of coursework and electives?</p> <p>Some students have only been getting 1 elective thusfar. Many of those students would thrive with some control over their education. With eight periods, those students could get to pick two electives, and that would be a good thing.</p> <p>If overloading has been a problem, there could be policies about less homework for electives. And certainly a schedule could be created that didn't have different numbers of minutes for every class, whether it has 7 or 8 periods.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Increase elective options, not decrease them. Explore schedule formats, to allow the variety of electives of shorter duration. They should look into how to make electives more accessible than before No more time allocated to SEL than state requirement. SEL is a dialogue not a lecture by 3rd party stranger or video calls. Let students have access to the awesome teachers they have. Making them feel like they have no say is not good for their SEL anyways Establish 2-way communication between District and community, enable feedback to be incorporated in the schedule proposal. Students voice matters. Invite them to council, review meetings. Take survey from parents and students to contribute in their own education. No change be made without their input. <p>Who will create SEL lessons for the entire year? Will they be of high quality?</p> <p>IF lessons are not provided or not good enough quality, this should be considered another class for teachers and they should have 2 prep periods. More contacts, more to prepare, another class as another set of students = 2 preps as written in the contract.</p> <p>85 minute-classes are way too long to be effective. My older daughters experienced this at Crittenden and ended up loathing math because of it.</p> <p>Semester-long electives would allow students so many more choices and growth opportunities! Middle schoolers thrive on learning new things. If an elective turns out not to be a good fit, a year is too long to be stuck in a class that should be fun.</p>
4/1/2024 14:21:08	[REDACTED]	<p>How do the teachers feel about teaching middle schoolers for 85 minutes at a time?</p> <p>How about having 3 days of 8 periods and 2 days of 4 periods plus a SEL/Counselor unit?</p> <p>For example: Monday - 8 periods Tuesday - 4 periods, i.e. 1-4 plus SEL unit Wednesday - 4 periods, i.e. 5-8 plus Counselor unit Thursday - 8 periods Friday - 8 periods</p> <p>Overly narrow focus on core instruction reducing engagement & holistic development, to the detriment of our most vulnerable students; lack of clear plan for how extended blocks would be effectively used to drive inquiry-based learning that builds SEL and academic skills; risk of further devaluing non-tested subjects and reducing elective access; band-aid solution for deeper staffing and equity issues; lack of sufficient input from students and the broader community before it appears that the district has already decided to reduce the schedule</p> <p>It's annoyingly close but not quite the same as the LAHS bell schedule. I would prefer complete alignment with LAHS since I have kids at both schools and it's already difficult enough keeping track of different end times and different periods every single day.</p>
4/1/2024 15:02:09	[REDACTED]	
4/1/2024 15:20:36	[REDACTED]	
4/1/2024 16:28:57	[REDACTED]	
4/1/2024 17:06:18	[REDACTED]	
4/1/2024 17:14:49	[REDACTED]	
4/1/2024 17:25:12	[REDACTED]	

Timestamp	Email Address	What are the things staff and the middle school committee should consider as they work through the logistics of the 7-period schedule option? Will there be more "whee" options? Our child had two wheels in 6th grade and it was a great opportunity for her to try new things. Also, if she had a teacher she wasn't crazy about, it was only for one trimester. There is a way to keep 3 electives AND keep this schedule - make the advisory period a partial elective. Do the things you want, like that SEL zoom video - but honestly, while SEL is important, it's important through all classes and the culture of the school. The kids HATE more zoom videos, and if you do standalone SEL, they will treat it like a giant joke. Incorporate advisory into a 3rd elective, and make that the homeroom/study hall/advisory period. You are taking away electives in order to raise the educational time for the LOW PERFORMING STUDENTS, and are punishing those that already perform well just for the sake of getting other kids to the mean. I don't disagree with that as the basis for public school but in this case, why truly punish the kids who don't deserve this, when there are better options to actually provide everything? Or rotate the optional electives with PE. Or, allow kids who participate in sports to waive PE. Form an after school walk/run club for PE requirements, and let the kids choose once they hit state minimums. 1. I am concerned about the 85 minute classes. This is too long for middle school students to stay focused. Additionally it is too long for PE and could be dangerous for students. 2. I know you are adding SEL, but kids actually get huge mental health benefit from having 3 electives. It keeps them excited to go to school, and provides breaks from the stressful core subjects. kids socializing I would like to propose not moving to the 7-period schedule and instead looking into a Week A/Week B schedule. We can add SEL on to PE. I think we need to get creative without taking electives away. I have seen both of these options work effectively at other schools. Preference for variety and exposure to arts over instructional hours This decision is being rushed through. The entire process bypassed the Schoolsite Councils, which are explicitly in place to product coherent solutions to support instructional practices and increase opportunities for under-represented students. There was no engagement with students or with parents, and only minimum engagement with teachers, prior to the presentation of the three "solutions" to the problem at the Board meeting. Since that point, the student and parental response has been overwhelmingly negative. There are literally hundreds of signatures that have been gathered on petitions against this proposal. This is due to that lack of process and lack of engagement. This isn't the students and parents misunderstanding the proposal: it's an entirely reasonable response to the failure of the District to have effective and thoughtful change management. There is a complete lack of clarity around what an effective SEL class might be. The claims about the whole school watching on Zoom seems guaranteed to produce no gains whatsoever, conversely, if the teachers are expected to actually teach that section then they need time to prepare, which has also not been made clear. It also ignores the evidence that the very classes that are being cut - choir, music, foreign language, theater - are the places that students develop those very SEL skills in question. it may well be that the 7-period schedule is objectively better for teachers and students. But the entire process has had the effect of confirming the complete opposite. I hope the District reconsiders their current - and future - processes. Will increasing core class instructional minutes increase student engagement? Student choice is an important element of student learning and studies show when students have more choice, they are more committed to their education. Middle school is a great way to incorporate social emotional learning through electives like art and music and give students a chance explore their interests before High School where they typically only have 6 periods. Is maximizing core instructional minutes really going to engage our students in a positive way? Consistency is important to many children I expect there to be measurable benefits from schedule changes. I prefer 8 periods. I think the children benefit from more choices in their schedules That not everyone is happy about it, and students learn more about more subjects with the original schedule.
4/1/2024 17:49:45	[REDACTED]	
4/1/2024 17:50:09	[REDACTED]	
4/1/2024 18:12:52	[REDACTED]	
4/1/2024 18:26:05	[REDACTED]	
4/1/2024 18:27:09	[REDACTED]	
4/1/2024 18:33:14	[REDACTED]	
4/1/2024 18:34:11	[REDACTED]	
4/1/2024 18:38:26	[REDACTED]	
4/1/2024 18:53:10	[REDACTED]	
4/1/2024 19:00:20	[REDACTED]	

Timestamp	Email Address	What are the things staff and the middle school committee should consider as they work through the logistics of the 7-period schedule option?
4/1/2024 19:04:18	[REDACTED]	<p>Several items:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) the student mental retention of the subject matter decreases as the length of the period increases from 48 to an 85-minute periods; 2) the teachers would be more tired to spend 85 minutes instead of 48 minutes with each class period. 3) some students will unfairly lose their 2nd elective course; 4) the teachers would have to spend more time outside their teaching day at home prepping for the longer class periods and grading papers/homework etc. 5) Doesn't 85-minute periods cause the class size to increase? and if so, that would reduce the productivity of the teacher and the pupils. 6) The longer class period would increase teachers' stress level and burnout rate and hence more teachers would transfer/move out of our school/district- our pupils' loss of experienced teacher. <p>As a former faculty at Cal Berkeley, I have first-hand experience with all of the above and wish to make our school board of the problems it's going to cause for our school/pupils and teachers.</p> <p>Regards, Father of a 7th grader at Graham middle school</p> <p>Requesting more information about the proposed advisory session as this component is vaguely described in current documentation. Are these sessions focused on SEL- if so, what is the content/curriculum? Who is teaching these sessions? Is it a homebase/homeroom set up- if so, what is the professional development for teachers/staff to support the curriculum? Is this a graded session? How will its efficacy be measured/evaluated?</p> <p>Hoping there will be an opportunity in this process to include students. Given the emphasis on SEL, am surprised that no student input/feedback was solicited as part of proposal development. This approach seems to take away a sense of student agency and engagement in their learning (and in their development as empowered learners).</p>
4/1/2024 19:05:44	[REDACTED]	<p>Consider the communications plan for messaging changes. Not sure what the communication plan was for this proposal's roll out but the experience for families and students was poor, where we do not feel like partners with the district. If there are staff concerns about the current schedule and format, an opportunity to connect with families and students would seem to engender a stronger sense of community, one that works to solve problem together.</p> <p>Ask feedback from students and parents who are against this new suggested 7-period schedule. Why was there no initial discussion and vote for this new option? The district claims to be inclusive for everyone and yet you secretly made a decision without asking for opinions or input neither from the students, nor from parents, nor from the teachers. How is this fair and inclusive. The new schedule is more difficult (strenuous) for both kids and teachers as well as it now gives kids less electives. Please, create a poll among all parents and students with open results for everyone to be able to see how the community votes for this new suggested schedule.</p>
4/1/2024 19:07:50	[REDACTED]	<p>It would be a shame for our child to lose an elective. My kid enjoys the electives and we see no reason to lose an elective just to make it appear to be more conformant with high school. We are opposed to the idea of losing an elective.</p>
4/1/2024 19:11:38	[REDACTED]	<p>I don't know</p>
4/1/2024 19:32:14	[REDACTED]	<p>Kids will lose a valuable elective if this passes. For example, my daughter currently has choir, intermediate orchestra and instructional support. Should the new schedule go through, she would have to drop one of her music classes. These classes bring out the best in her and are the basis for her love of the arts. There is already no drama class and we understand why) but there will be less and less great options for the kids to choose from.</p>
4/1/2024 19:32:39	[REDACTED]	<p>On the side of the teachers, they would be losing valuable time that they could use to prepare for classes grade work and even have a little break. How has the teachers union responded to this?</p>
4/1/2024 19:33:29	[REDACTED]	<p>You have to realize that this is big when students are putting change.org petitions up and trying to get all the parents and other kids to be involved in this. Do some more research and find a better way to include SEL or whatever you need to include for next year. Do not make a decision right now for this?</p> <p>That they are robbing the kids of one third of their agency over their education. That they are sending the message that things like music, art, and foreign languages don't really matter. That they are taking away a prep period from teachers.</p>
4/1/2024 19:34:28	[REDACTED]	<p>I believe that the zoom class will not help students make a real connection in any positive way, nor will it enhance their SEL skills. You love to talk about how much learning was lost on Zoom during Covid, so the Zoom class will not help anyone. An eighth elective however will help students make that real positive connection and grow in a positive way as human beings. Keeping the eighth period is what the students both want and need.</p>
4/1/2024 19:59:48	[REDACTED]	<p>I think there should stay 8 periods but one of them should be for life skills like taxes, buying a house, and parenting.</p> <p>SEL does not need to be a priority for all kids. Will more work be done with extra instruction time or will same amount be done and just take longer? How can we judge effectiveness. Our kids are already saying this will be an easy day for them.</p>
4/1/2024 20:01:17	[REDACTED]	<p>Electives are a practical way to bring in collaboration, creativity, critical thinking, and communication. It is not very clear how the practical aspects of SEL will be brought into class for the students.</p>
4/1/2024 20:02:31	[REDACTED]	<p>One other suggestion to consider is the time slot in the minimum day to be used for SEL. This will allow SEL without any other changes in the current curriculum and/or time slots.</p>

Timestamp	Email Address	What are the things staff and the middle school committee should consider as they work through the logistics of the 7-period schedule option? It's great to have more instruction time. Is an 85 min block optimal for learning? Or the longer period of 85 minutes is equivalent to 60 minutes of instruction and 25 minutes of noise? Don't forget the students stability emotional. 1/Is the staff conducting SEL have the qualifications and training to do so? 2/Will the teachers in the advisory section be the regular teachers or someone else? 3/Will substitute teachers be qualified to fill in for the class they are covering? Currently, you have music teacher covering math and a day of instruction is lost 1) Students feedback (sadly missing). I watching the video with Suprd. it seems that he is not listening to the nervousness and concerns, rather just telling them it will be good for them - in other words we know better. We know that such approach never works - it will have adverse impact on social emotionally on kids. 2) Parents' feedback entirely lacking. 3) Be more creative - what else can you do apart from taking the things kids love so much -- the electives. 3) Get better quality teachers 4) SEL counselling should be optional - that time could be used for elective time. Kids - can voluntary walk-in the class and have a chat with counsellors - have a full class go through SEL is just a waste of time. 5) The schedule below with 85 minutes of class (I am assuming 15 mins "brain break" - realistically I foresee most kids taking a bio-break and taking a walk outside. So I see you adding 15 minutes of additional instruction. Such trauma for kids and parents for 15 minutes of additional instructions. All this becuz your scores went down a bit. 6) The objective of this change is increase in scores ... and your solution is study more. I believe the reduction of 1/3 of electives is a severe detriment to the middle school experience. My child already had many MORE electives she wanted to take than are available and with this proposed schedule she gets even fewer choices. The middle school years is a prime time to broaden their interests and we should be adding MORE opportunities for trying new things, not fewer. I do not believe the addition of 20 more minutes of instruction time per class per week outweighs the reduction of variety in non-academic subjects. The suggestion to move electives to trimesters or smaller periods of time to enable more choices is also not ideal because some subjects, like coding or marine biology, would not be able to get into deeper topics that would require a longer length of time. In that case, you'd be sacrificing depth for breadth of knowledge across non-academic subjects. Furthermore, 85 minutes is a long time to require focused concentration and attention from 11-14 year olds. 85 minute periods back-to-back is even harder to sit through, and then trying to do that two days in a row seems even more impossible. This schedule seems like an extreme change from what they are currently doing and I find it hard to believe that students will be able to focus for that length of time consistently throughout the year. Even college classes that have 90 min sessions generally do not schedule them on back to back days and do not pack them in back-to-back on the same day. When I first saw the topic "Middle School Schedule" on the board meeting agenda, I was eager to listen because I thought the discussion would be on simplifying what appears (to me) to be a complicated cascading schedule of dropped periods. I never thought it would be about dropping a full class completely. As a parent, when my children started middle school, I thought the current rotating schedule looked very complicated as an outsider. However, my children have adapted just fine and it's not complicated to them. I think the decision to remove a full period and reduce the variety of classes available to students is unacceptable. 1) Class sizes - Understand the explanation that larger classes may be ok for band/music, but not good for nearly everything - including science electives, Spanish. This is already a concern as the class/school/grade level numbers increase. 2) Elective options - Already few (and tenuous, from year to year) options. Particularly languages, options for which much smaller than many other schools at middle school level; the option to start learning foreign languages at this age (and learn music, arts) is important. If there are fewer electives per student, will fewer electives be available? If available, how will learning be compromised due to larger class sizes? 3) SEL - We have experience with our kids taking SEL before at other schools. How discussion of issues necessarily translates into emotional learning /EQ and putting topics into practice (i.e., how the curriculum is synthesized) very much depends on the teacher and how it is taught, and how topics are woven through other class or school settings. Just having the class will not necessarily help students unless there is incredibly thoughtful and expert teaching/ implementation/ support of an SEL curriculum. 4) Keeping kids' attention: Our older child was in middle school in the mid/late-2010s and remembers only having 1 elective (so even 2 is better), and recalls in advanced classes like math they were able to make significant progress which she attributes to double-math days. However, she also remembers double period meaning a lot of kids had trouble focusing throughout the longer class. 5) Is there a concern for test scores that is prompting this change back to 7 periods? And if so, how will these metrics be assessed and reported on after the change? Thank you, appreciate your time! The students are telling us loudly and clearly that they don't want to give up an elective, and they don't want to sit through long class periods. Please listen to them. Having periods that are age appropriate and not too long. Highly encourage if moving to a 7 period schedule, to have M, Tu, W, F have the same schedule with classes no longer than 50 minutes. For Thursdays, just a shorter class for each period. This still gives increased instructional time teachers are asking for, but avoids the extended 85 minute periods that may likely result in decreased student attention and more behavioral issues as it is not an age appropriate time span, especially for the younger grades. Students will adjust fine to the high school schedule and at an older age be better suited for that type of extended class. They do not need the practice in middle school starting in 6th grade. Thank you. I join all the other parents, students and stakeholders in opposing this motion to change 8 periods down to 7 periods. My child is more so impacted as she is IEP, and she has stated she does not want to lose more electives classes. I stand with other parents voices that students need more creativity outlet and less strictly didactic. I intend to pursue options available to my IEP child with my IEP attorney to halt this unilateral changes
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Timestamp	Email Address	Text
4/2/2024 14:53:17	[REDACTED]	<p>What are the things staff and the middle school committee should consider as they work through the logistics of the 7-period schedule option? Thank you for all that you do for our school. My daughter has been thriving in this district. We so enjoy living in mt view. Also, she really enjoys her electives and does not feel the new schedule is what the student body wants. As a parent, I am more concerned with a balanced life than over emphasis on academics.</p> <p>That being said, could a compromise be made and instead have 2 electives per semester (4per year)? That way students could experience other electives while adding this block schedule. Thank you for taking my input.</p> <p>Provide more elective wheels/elective rotations to give students the chances to explore their interests. These are more like a beginning level electives and in 6-weeks or per semester duration. For students who know their focus, then advanced level in a whole-year setting caters their need. I do like the block schedule which gives the students more time to digest their learning and the opportunity to work in depth on topics of interest.</p> <p>Rigorous academic standards and staying competitive with academic standards of other school districts around us. I am supportive of the 7-period schedule as I believe it will setup my child for success</p>
4/2/2024 15:45:06	[REDACTED]	Idk
4/2/2024 16:04:11	[REDACTED]	Proteger y enseñar bien a nuestros hijos
4/2/2024 16:54:49	[REDACTED]	85 minute periods are too long for the majority of middle school students, especially 6th graders. They do not have the attention span to be fully engaged with the school material for almost 1.5 hours without a break. Many high school students don't have the attention span either!
4/4/2024 10:56:09	[REDACTED]	I'm concerned if 7th grade students have a long enough attention span to work on same subject for 85 minutes.
4/4/2024 21:19:06	[REDACTED]	Block schedule does not work for young adults. It barely work for adults and taking away time from art and music is detrimental to a young adult's developing brain
4/5/2024 8:44:55	[REDACTED]	<p>This Q is too open-ended!</p> <p>I do think 8 periods is a lot for middle school. I like the new proposal. In addition to focusing on core subjects it might help bring a little calm/sanity back to our schools. It's certainly needed at Graham!</p> <p>I just wish you all hadn't blind-sided the parents with the development of this. Communication has been poor, and it almost seems like there additional unspoken reasons for the change.</p> <p>Even this survey form seems insincere. Just one wide-open question? Are there any objectives to conducting this survey other than making a perception of soliciting parents' opinions?</p> <p>You're gonna get a ridiculous range of replies, and I can't even imagine what you're going to do with them.</p> <p>Just keep things as they are and keep 3 electives. Students need choice.</p> <p>That's it's taking away the opportunities for the kids to explore more art, music, and language classes. Especially, those kids who have to give up an elective of they have an IEP or ELA course.</p>
4/5/2024 8:56:03	[REDACTED]	
4/5/2024 8:57:45	[REDACTED]	
4/5/2024 9:12:49	[REDACTED]	It's not really adding that much more instructional time to the core. They are in middle school, let them explore topics they are interested in. Kids need choice in their education. Already a mental health crisis among high schoolers with stress related to academic success. The arts and electives are extremely important in their educational journey.
4/5/2024 9:21:07	[REDACTED]	We have had the option of 2 vs 3 electives previously, it worked fine. It's important to have proper staffing for the electives so students are actually learning in the elective classes and it's not just for namesake. Block schedule works since this is what is followed in high school.
4/5/2024 9:31:18	[REDACTED]	KEEP 3 electives in the schedule and AVOID 85-min long period.
4/5/2024 10:56:42	[REDACTED]	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) awareness of this change among students and teachers 2) impact on the students because of less opportunity to take electives. It is an important exploration stage for middle school students. We should provide more access to such opportunities instead of cutting them 3) Did we conduct survey among students to get their feedback about this proposal? As far as I know, there is strong against to this proposal 4) Pls share more benefits of this proposal if exist.

Timestamp	Email Address	What are the things staff and the middle school committee should consider as they work through the logistics of the 7-period schedule option? Change it to a modified 8 period schedule. There was a very reasonable sounding parent proposal that increased instructional minutes to parity with the 7 period proposal, but still allowed for 3 electives by having Mondays be non-elective days. Adding 90 minute blocks, but then cutting them down to include "brain breaks" seems like conflicting goals being mashed together counterproductively. Electives can be real brain breaks. For a kid who likes band and art, they can no longer see if they like Spanish or Journalism or design. They have to pigeon hole themselves at 11 years old. Labs and Socratic forums sound really great and 3 and a half weeks of added instructional time sounds productive, but I fear the reality is that it'll actually be filled with more worksheets and kahoot. The sum total of added time sounds suspiciously like, "eating this caffeine pill instead of brewing a fresh pot will save 7 minutes a day on your morning routine. That adds up to more than 20 weeks over a lifetime. What could you do with 20 extra weeks of life?" That's not how time works Once a week, generalized SEL lessons from a random talking head will be ineffective. SEL will increase from a culture shift that permeates everything, from topics that draw on actual challenges seen on campus recently, and from trusted and respected figures. I'm not against having 7 periods as such, but I am concerned about less opportunities for electives. I think if some electives (such as art, STEM, robotics etc) were either per trimester or semester (ie fall/spring) so that students could get an opportunity to try more things, then I would like it better. My student wants to choose Spanish, coding and robotics, and manne biology, art and stem. I'm afraid he won't be able to try all the things, and am very worried that second languages and arts will be discarded more often than STEM subjects, and that would be a shame. An 85-minute class period is too lengthy for anyone, including adults. In professional settings, it's recognized that maintaining focus for such a duration can be challenging. Therefore, expecting children to effectively learn during such extended periods is not realistic. It's important to consider practicality rather than aiming to meet total minutes per period. Ask yourself, do you want to sit through a 85 minutes lesson? and if you are forced to do so, how would you feel? This is draining for both teachers and students alike. Considering the length of the class period, one might question how effective the teacher can truly be. This proposal does not benefit anyone involved. First, I think we need to be aware that this new schedule is hurting two of our most vulnerable groups of students - ELD and Special Ed students. And sometimes it's the only thing that gets other kids to school. Second, I think we can be more creative with our scheduling. An optional "zero" period? An A/B schedule to allow for extended blocks of instruction every other week? Adding SEL to extended PE period instead of adding it in as an additional class? There is a lot of evidence to suggest having more electives is better in every way for our children. A lot of evidence that suggests our kids attention spans cannot handle such long periods. What is the evidence we are basing this change on? Is it test scores? Which test scores? What is the correlation between increased instruction time and test scores? If you want to make this change, we need some facts, research, evidence... Recently our schools have been pushing teaching to the test with a heavy hand and frankly it's off-putting. I've been watching it for a couple years now, but I think for our family this will be the last straw. The best thing about MVWSD is the additional elective. Students coming into middle school are already wary of trying new subjects without having had prior experience. This will follow them into higher education because in high school they will be even further behind other students that had these opportunities. Furthermore, this is even more unfair to our most vulnerable populations. They will only have 1 elective option because 1 elective is already taken up by their special ed class. Our students will be measured against other college applicants that will already have a second language, art/music experience, along with an additional interest. We need to start the elective process early for our students to compete with their well-rounded peers. Our family is looking into private school options with rolling admissions in case this passes. Maybe you won't miss one high-scoring student, but I'm sure we won't be the only family who doesn't want less options for their child.
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Timestamp	Email Address	Text
		<p>What are the things staff and the middle school committee should consider as they work through the logistics of the 7-period schedule option?</p> <p>1) Recent data from Center for Education Policy Analysis, Research, and Evaluation (CEPARE) shows no strong evidence that longer class periods equate to better academic performance.</p> <p>"Block scheduling may offer teachers more time to build relationships with students, but there is not strong evidence that it increases student achievement on standardized tests."</p> <p>This may very well be the result of short attention spans and the inability to retain copious amounts of material.</p> <p>https://today.uconn.edu/2024/01/around-the-block-evaluating-school-schedules/#~:text=In%20sum%2C%20the%20few%20recent,some%20contexts%20and%20not%20others</p> <p>2) The 2018 Presentation in favor of 8 Periods uses almost the exact same justification that is now being proffered for seven periods. Were we wrong then, or are we wrong now? This flip-flopping (without strong evidence that there will be improvement) upends the lives of both teachers and students.</p> <p>3) Make the process transparent. Include ALL of the data and analysis (including internal voting results).</p> <p>4) Involve the parents and the students from the onset with regard to developing a proposed schedule.</p> <p>5) Identify milestones and provide regular update Ms with regard to how the school is tracking.</p> <p>6) Do not increase class sizes. If the new proposed schedule results in larger classes, more time will be spent on classroom management.</p> <p>7) Do not reduce teacher prep periods.</p> <p>8) Involve the greater community on the committees. Report regular updates on progress with planning and implementation to the Board.</p> <p>The amount of time a kid sit in a classroom. The proposed class time of 85 minutes is too long for a kid, even an adult will have an issue. Also, are the teachers going to teach the whole 85 minutes? Electives are important for kids to explore variety of interests. I think it is more beneficial to have more electives than longer class time.</p> <p>Providing electives to all students - cutting electives from 3 to 1 is not acceptable. Avoiding classes that are too long for middle schoolers, unless the activities require more time. Avoid classes too short to be useful. Doing what will really help language learners to improve, not what is convenient.</p> <p>Ensuring quality electives that fit into the new schedule and won't be at risk of being cancelled if not enough kids sign up. Clear communication to families and students about the transition, any new expectations and benefits they should be consciously looking for.</p> <p>What students might miss out on not having a 3rd elective. Will students be interested in and show a willingness to learn SEL.</p> <p>My son is an 8th grader with dyslexia, ADHD, and he has an IEP. He is very supportive of the 7-period day (although he will no longer be in middle school next year) because he is overwhelmed by the frequent class changes on Mondays and does better with longer class times.</p> <p>Teachers being provided the resources and support to properly plan longer block classes. Tuesday and Wednesday would be better days for block classes, as energy levels are lower at the beginning and end of the week.</p> <p>Effectiveness of substitute teachers (or lack thereof). Poor student morale. The "hidden agenda" that you call "advisory". If it teaches positive character traits in ways that are proven to lead to success as cited in books such as "Grit" or "Hidden Potential", then I'm for it. If it's a big, unproven kumbaya, I'm not. I remain a skeptic until more details are provided. History doesn't give me a lot of hope.</p> <p>Alternative approaches to achieving "effective" 225 minutes/week of core instruction such as removing early-release day or reducing number of teacher training days or lengthening school year. The latter could involve shortening winter break.</p> <p>My school when I was growing up was able to provide 225 minutes/week of core instruction with three electives and a school day that was 30 minutes shorter than Graham's. Core classes were 5x/week. Shortening lunch to 30 minutes and shortening morning break allows for eight 40-plus minute classes per day. I don't know why Graham can't be as effective and efficient as my schooling was in an impoverished rural district.</p>
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Timestamp	Email Address	What are the things staff and the middle school committee should consider as they work through the logistics of the 7-period schedule option?
4/18/2024 2:46:46	[REDACTED]	<p>(1) Electives can have a positive impact on performance in academic subjects, as described here: https://www.educationworld.com/teachers/evaluating-electives-why-they-matter-so-much#google_vignette.</p> <p>(2) There is no reason to go to 7-periods. For students who are below grade in ELA or Math, one of their elective-periods should be used to provide extra ELA or math. The rest of the student body should not be penalized and lose choice-electives. Based on the document called Middle School Schedule Board Report, it seems that this is what was done (at least for math) before Covid. It is also essentially a variation on "Option 2: Designated RTI for ALL Students (8 periods)" which is found on pp. 10-11 of the document called Middle_School_Advisory_Class_(Proposal)_From_Teaching_Staff_</p> <p>(3) The document called Middle_School_Schedule_Board_Report asserts that "there has been an increase in the number of middle school students below grade level since 2021-22." However, the data in the table is only for 2015, 2017, and 2023. Please provide annual numbers for the missing years (2016, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022). Please also indicate key changes for each year, including when the double-blocked math class was initiated, and to what you attribute the impressive improvement in math between 2015 and 2017.</p> <p>(3) It sounds like there will be more use of co-teaching vs. pull-out for students on IEPs and ELDs. Please explain exactly what is being considered for these students.</p> <p>(4) Please provide details on exactly which electives will be cut or consolidated.</p> <p>(5) Most adults have a hard time staying focused for 90 minutes. The only class where it seems that one might occasionally need a longer block is science. It seems like going to long blocks 2 days a week has a small positive and a big negative.</p> <p>(6) While we're talking schedules, if we absolutely have to have a minimum day once a week, why not make it on Fridays rather than Thursdays? Students are more likely to be tired on Friday, so ending early on Friday would be net positive for them.</p>
4/18/2024 10:24:02	[REDACTED]	<p>I want to express my reservations regarding the new 7-period schedule. Here's why:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Feels rushed: This decision seems rushed, lacking sufficient notice for parents and students. The district made this decision based on input from a few focus groups and select teachers, without communicating it to all parents. 2. Lack of data: I have yet to see any data on the benefits of this change. I don't understand what problem the district is trying to solve. At the last board meeting, it was mentioned that this decision was based on teacher feedback. 3. Lack of information on SEL: It's my understanding that SEL will be conducted over Zoom, which contradicts the essence of social-emotional learning. Electives offer students the chance to interact and learn from others. Reducing electives and having students watch SEL videos won't be effective. Additionally, there's no information on what will be taught during the mandatory SEL period. 4. Budget motivation: It seems the motivation for this schedule change is budget-related. By offering fewer electives, the district hopes to hire fewer teachers. However, this compromises our children's education and well-being. <p>I urge the board to reconsider this decision and involve more stakeholders in the process. Please don't disregard feedback from parents and students.</p>

