

BOARD BRIEF

Date: June 11, 2021

BOARD INFORMATION: X

MEETING PREPARATION: _____

FROM: Terri H. Mozingo, Ed.D., Chief of Teaching, Learning, and Leadership
Jesse Mazur, Ed.D., Principal, George Washington Middle School
Pierrette Peters, Principal, Francis C. Hammond Middle School

THROUGH: Gregory C. Hutchings, Jr., Ed.D., Superintendent of Schools

TO: The Honorable Meagan Alderton, Chair, and
Members of the Alexandria City School Board

TOPIC: Francis C. Hammond and George Washington Middle School Bell Schedules for SY
2021-2022

ACPS 2025 STRATEGIC PLAN GOAL

Goal 2: Instructional Excellence

SY 2020-2021 FOCUS AREA

Focus Area 3: Strategic Plan Implementation

Focus Area 5: Academic Disparities

FY 2021 BUDGET PRIORITY

MTSS Implementation with Restorative Practices and PBIS

Outreach to Hispanic Families to Improve Attendance and Graduation

Outreach to Underserved Communities to Increase Engagement

SUMMARY

The purpose of this brief is to specifically highlight the enhancements of the middle school daily bell schedule for the 2021-2022 school year, as well as how it will benefit our students. The structure of the bell schedule will offer students increased instructional time and SEAL support on an alternating day schedule.

BACKGROUND

The bell schedule for SY 2021-2022, was first introduced through *Enhanced Continuity Of Learning Plan 4.0*. After extensive feedback from school and community stakeholders along with feedback from Francis C. Hammond and George Washington Middle School staff, middle school students implemented the block schedule during the 2020-2021 school year. This block schedule featured extended class time on an alternating day schedule, SEAL support, and opportunities for remediation and extended learning on asynchronous and synchronous days. Professional learning has been provided for staff on explicit instruction and small group instruction to support the implementation of block instruction.

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Moving into the 2021-2022 school year, students will transition to a five-day per week schedule. In the *Enhanced Continuity Of Learning 4.0* bell schedule, students were afforded an hour for lunch and teacher office hours. *In addition, Block 8 was used for SEAL support, intervention, and MTSS support.* Minutes from teacher office hours and Block 8 were equally dispersed among the instructional days in the 2021-2022 bell schedule now that we are returning to five days of instruction. The block schedule affords students continuity in a schedule currently being implemented, additional instructional time which will maximize instructional opportunities for our students and align schedules between both middle school comprehensive campuses and the high school. The alignment of schedules across both middle school campuses further promotes opportunities for student collaboration and staff professional learning.

STUDENT BENEFITS AND OPPORTUNITIES

The primary rationale for adopting a block schedule and increasing instructional time.

- **Increased instructional time for students**
 - A five-day per week schedule beginning in the 2021-2022 school year, will increase the instructional time from 70 minutes to 90 minutes/54 minutes (daily embedded period) per class.
 - Ongoing Professional learning on the implementation of block instruction will be provided for staff.
 - Increased class time supports student learning and provides the necessary time to explore and deepen content knowledge.
 - Additional class time allows teachers to maintain and deepen an inquiry-focused approach to student learning. This approach is highlighted by the student's ability to apply the skills, concepts, and knowledge they have learned to real-world problems; and
 - Cooperative learning and the intentional use of effective and engaging instructional practices, including Socratic Seminars, Concentric Circles, and group work where roles and tasks are assigned to students can more effectively be implemented with increased instructional time.
- **Consistent, Embedded Advisory and SEAL Time** - PRIDE Time will be used to support daily school-wide instruction, advisory lessons, SEAL supports, and Specialized Services.

STAFF BENEFITS AND OPPORTUNITIES

This schedule will produce a number of benefits for middle school learners. Some of these benefits include:

- **Vertical block schedule alignment with the high school.**
- **Increased Planning Time For Elective Teachers** - Although elective teachers would still teach six classes, their planning time would increase by 38 minutes.

PLANNING AND PREPARATION

- The school leadership team recognizes the need for professional learning. Although we have been operating according to a block schedule since the onset of the pandemic; equipping staff with the tools, skills, and resources is necessary for maximizing the benefits of a block schedule.

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- Ongoing professional learning in best practices for teaching in a block schedule will assist teachers and students in transitioning to the new model of instruction while developing strategies to support their learning.

SY 2021-2022 BELL SCHEDULE OVERVIEW

- Our schedule will be an alternating day schedule.
 - **Blue Day:** Periods 1, 3, 5, and 7
 - **Gray/Gold Day:** Periods 2, 4, 5, and 6
- Classes will be yearlong with semester classes offered through electives.
- All students and staff will have a 30-minute Prexie/Admiral Advisory and 30-minute lunchtime during the day. Prexie/Admiral Advisory time will be used for SEAL instruction to meet the students' social-emotional and academic needs.

RECOMMENDATION

The Superintendent recommends that the School Board review the information within this brief.

IMPACT

The bell schedule for SY 2021-2022 is a continuance of the block schedule currently being implemented with increased instructional time. The bell schedule incorporates feedback from staff, students, and parents from our *Enhanced Continuity Of Learning 4.0 Admiral/Prexie Virtual PLUS+* schedule. The staff-developed bell schedule will result in greater instructional opportunities for middle school students. This alignment will allow for maximum flexibility for students to explore educational opportunities between both campuses, fulfilling a commitment of the Superintendent and School Board as reflected in the *ACPS 2025 Strategic Plan: Equity for All*.

CONTACTS

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