

Innovative Scheduling

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Objective: Consider These Questions

1. What **organizational structure** (team, grade level) exists in a middle school that fosters a robust offering for students?
2. How is **time allocated** to provide these offerings?
3. How is **staff allocated** to provide these offerings?
4. Are there **cost considerations** to this robust scheduling?
5. Is there an implication to the **physical space** of a building?
6. How can we provide students more time to explore interests (critical for adolescent development period)
7. How do other top schools manage their music program
8. What are some proven strategies from other high performing school districts that help students explore interests (and include cost impacts if possible)

Methodology

Initial Assessment

Meet with sponsors to understand:

- Work performed to date
- Priorities and questions

Determine direction of project

Benchmarking and Research

Local schools benchmark
(Indian Hill, Mariemont,
Sycamore, Wyoming)

Other schools benchmark
(Rocky River, Solon, Westlake)

Teacher survey of ideas and attitudes

Focus areas: Technology

Analysis and Summary

Summarize research:

- Benchmarking
- Teacher survey

Respond to key questions

Sycamore Scheduling

	Greene	Junior High
How many classes/day?	4 Core bells, 2 Specials per day, a 25 minute Flex bell at end of day	4 Core bells, 3 Specials per day, an Aviator bell in the middle of the day.
Start/End of school day?	8:15 am to 2:52 pm	8.00 am to 3:07 pm
What works?	Each team determines the order and length of the 4 core subjects. 8:25-12:45 (5th grade) and 9:59-2:19(6th grade)	Year round Music elective promotes learning and performance. Plenty of electives for those with ability to take them.
Known challenges?	Limited special choices, therefore some very large classes (in Specials); lunch/recess always interrupts a Core bell	Students taking music cannot take any other electives. Different levels of Music creates scheduling challenge. Lunch room too small.

Local Benchmarking Schools Analysis

School	What's Different	
Indian Hill	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● 4 hour flex block for Core Courses, 45 min for specials● 7 hour 45 min school day	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Core teachers also teach learning lab● No Homeroom● Teachers have 90 mins to plan
Mariemont	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● 7th grade has quarter long intro to Spanish, Latin and Mandarin, Modern Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Friday afternoons have career explorations - 28 Fridays (7 Expeditions of 4 sessions each)● Homeroom 40 mins
Milford	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● 7th grade has language explorations. 8th grade offer Spanish, French, and Chinese	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● 6 Bells of 60 mins each● No Transition time between classes

Cleveland Benchmark Schools

School District	Size (students)	Schools	% on free/reduced price lunches	% Minority
Sycamore	5229		18	33
Rocky River	2752	1 primary (K-2) 1 Intermediate (3-5) 1 1 middle (6-8)	7	10
Solon	4720	4 elementary (K-4) 1 orchard (5-6) 1 solon (7-8)	9	38
Westlake	3769	4 elementary (K-4) 1 intermediate (5-6) 1 middle (7-8)	19	16

Cleveland Benchmarking Summary

Smaller schools have more flexibility All 3 Cleveland schools

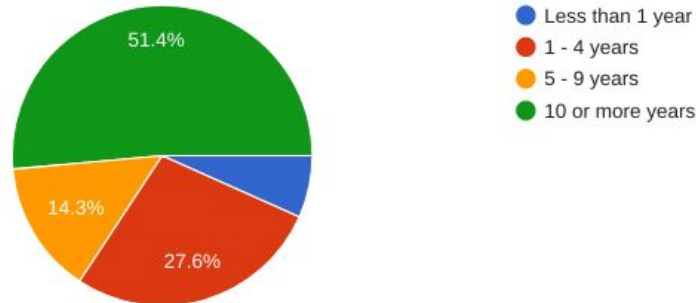
- Have a longer school day (~20 min more than Greene)
- Longer time for core classes + Less time/class = 7-8 blocks/day vs Greene's 6 blocks
- Expect some students to walk to school.
- Use rotation of electives to allow students to have > (flexibility + electives)

Survey of teachers: Participant Background

- Surveyed staff at JHS and EH Greene
 - 17 questions with responses accepted over 2 week span
 - 105 responses (92% responses from teachers)

How long have you work in your building?

105 responses

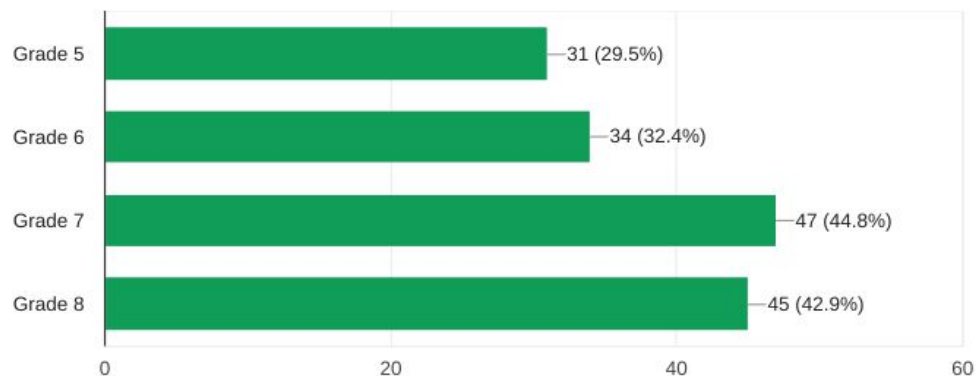


Survey of teachers: Participant Background

- Surveyed staff at JHS and EH Greene
 - 105 responses (92% responses from teachers)

What grade(s) do you work with?

105 responses



Overview of Ideas - General Schedule

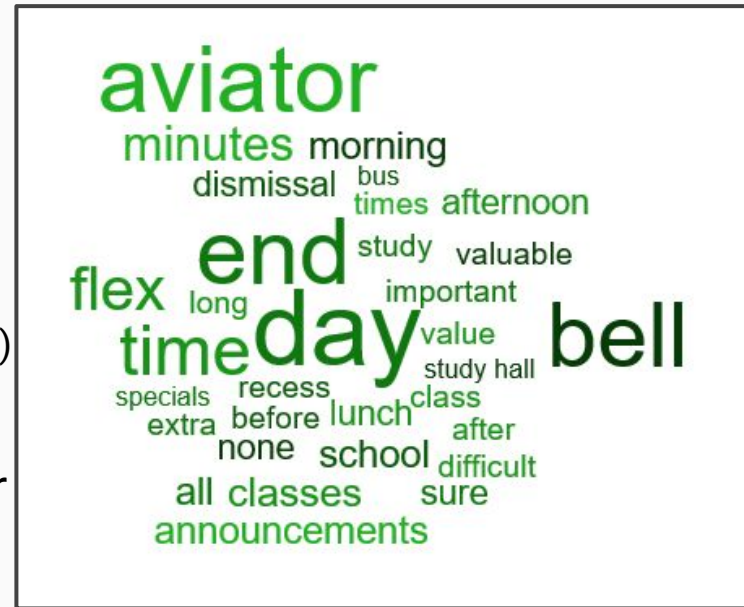
Idea	School(s)	Details	Pros	Cons
Super Friday	Mariemont	Friday PM is activity defined by teachers and students	Cost neutral if have community help. Students can explore	Reduced time for Core classes.
Modular Schedule	Rocky River	19 mods of 20 minutes each (classes are 40-60 min each)	Students can take 7-8 classes	Classes are actually 36 or 56 min with transitions. Potential staffing costs.
Activity first period	Solon	8:00-8:40AM is activity period or study hall	Dedicated time for activities in AM	

Synnovation Lab Opens Up Schedules

Goals	Planning Process	Physical Space	Staff allocation
<ul style="list-style-type: none">- To provide flexible learning strategies for students using adaptable curriculum and twenty first century tools	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Gathering academic research about alternative learning strategies- Communication with community stakeholders (parent, student and teacher focus groups advisory groups)- Visits of other schools (experts in Columbus, California)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- large open spaces and semi-permanent walls allows for easier changes to the space.- The goal is to design a multi-use space	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Sycamore teachers have contracts that are more flexible with time allocation which allows for changes- Teachers designed curriculum- No new staff was added

Survey of teachers: School Day

- Over 77% of participants feel the length of the school day is JUST RIGHT.
- When asked about the least valuable part of the school day, the most popular responses were:
 - FLEX Time/Aviator Bell: 35 responses (39% of responses)
 - End of the Day: 26 responses (29% of responses)
- Should the start of the school day be shifted later by 30-60 minutes?
 - >60% of participants felt this was less than a good idea.



Survey of teachers: Verbatims

“Our bells are just very long and it is difficult for the students in our lab to work for a whole 48 minutes on content-related material. We have to break our classes with motor and sensory breaks.”

“Aviator bell- If the time is going to stay the same I would rather spend those minutes in a class.”

“The need for intervention courses yet also having the opportunity to take an elective [is the biggest scheduling constraint for students]”

Overview of Ideas - Electives

Idea	School(s)	Details	Pros	Cons
Rotating electives	Rocky River, Solon, Westlake, Mariemont	Rotate quarterly or trimesterly or semesterly	Students can be exposed to more subjects	Mastery for students may be less. May have \$ implications.
No homeroom / 'Aviator Bell'	Rocky River Westlake	Announcements and attendance embedded in 1st class of day	More time for other classes and one less transition	No defined time for grade wide activities
Foreign language	Other Middle schools	Require 1 year in JHS? Offer elective in Greene? Do not require for IEP?	Flexibility for student. Offer at younger ages.	Not all students get exposure to foreign language. Teacher in Greene.

Overview of Ideas - Music

Idea	School(s)	Details	Pros	Cons
Music before school	Westlake	Music rehearsals before school if needed (e.g. all clarinets Tuesday AM)	Students get music and flexibility for other electives	Inconvenience to people involved
Band and Choir share same bell during week	Rocky River and Westlake	Flex schedule - can be all band or all choir classes for week if needed (R.R.)	Students get music and flexibility for other electives	Quality of overall music program may be weaker
Rotational music (not full year) in Intermediate School	Solon	Mandatory performing arts in 7th grade while students have music as rotating elective in 5th/6th grade	More time in grades 5-6 for exploration. All students do PA in a grade	Quality of overall music program may be weaker

Survey of teachers: Verbatims Likes

(Bold is presentation emphasis and not part of original statement)

“There are so many **options!**”

“Teachers are **passionate** about them.”

“I like that we still have them! The teachers do a **great job** and it is very **beneficial** for the children.”

“Electives that last **1 semester**”

“Students can take **band and choir**”

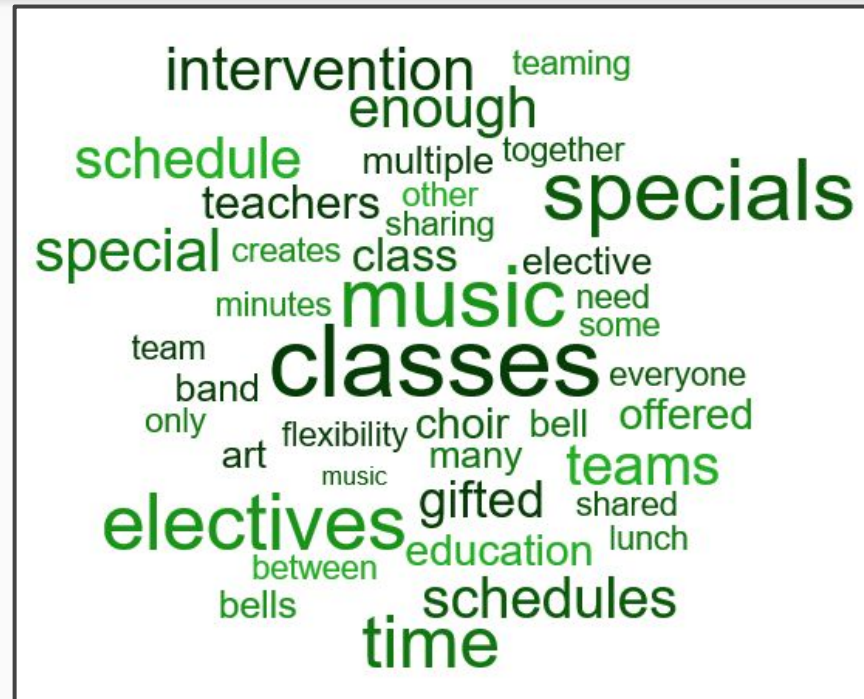
“seemingly wide **variety** compared to other schools with these grade levels.”

“They teach **real world** skills.”

Survey of teachers: Electives

What is the biggest constraint for student schedules?

- Electives: 50 responses
 - Not enough time in schedule for electives
 - Elective schedule takes priority over core classes
- Team based core classes: 13 responses
 - Sharing faculty (gifted education, special education, intervention)



Survey of teachers: Verbatims Dislikes

(Bold is presentation emphasis and not part of original statement)

“While we do offer choice and that is a good, I think that there is a limit to how much that should affect the overall schedule. Maybe let them choose 3 options and they get one of those.”

“There are way too many variations of the same course (choir, band, art). It restricts the schedule too much.”

“Too much weight on **music**” (multiple)

“The **year long** time commitment limits student exploration” (multiple)

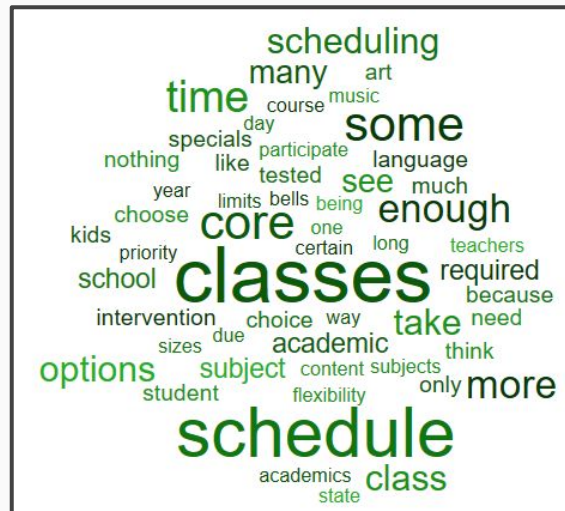
“**Electives take priority** over core classes”

“The electives drive the schedule and restrict flexibility”

“They [electives] run the schedule!”

“Not offering a **foreign language**” (Greene)

“The classroom **sizes are too big** for effective learning.” (multiple)



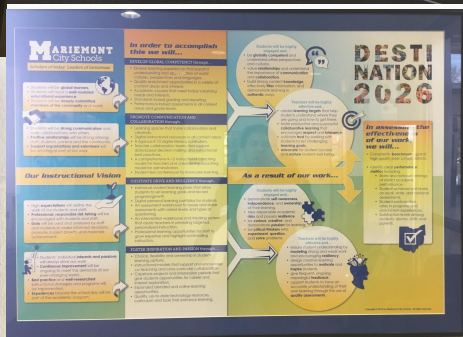
Overview of Ideas - Building

Idea	School(s)	Details	Pros	Cons
Build single campus for 5-8 vs 2 locations	Smaller schools do have 5-8th	Build a campus vs 2 separate buildings if replace Greene and JHS	May be cheaper b/c shared utilities/staff. Simplifies busing!	May be less personal given mega school. May not have space.
Build a 6-7-8 Middle School. Expand Elementary Schools	Rocky River (6-7-8) Mason (4-5-6)	Add grade 5 to elementary schools.	May or may not be cheaper. One less transition	Very different from today. May not have space
Larger cafeteria	-	Larger cafeteria to manage lunch schedule options	Fewer lunch slots closer to lunch time	Cost
Multiple gyms	-	Have at least 2 gyms	Allow gym class year round	Cost of space and staff

Overview of Ideas - Other

Idea	School(s)	Details	Pros	Cons
Optimize bus schedule	Wyoming, Rocky River, Westlake	Evaluate constraints and schedule to find time for classes	More time for Greene.	May be higher cost. Not all students may have bus. Liability.
Use technology to extend class day	Sycamore HS	Students watch videos or audio after school to prep for next day	Use technology students already have. Students have reference files after.	Less break and more screen time for students. 4% don't have WIFI at home.
Space considerations for collaboration	Mariemont Synnovation Lab	Modular furniture	Make classroom flexible for PBL or activities	Higher cost. Sacrificed Auditorium

Space - Furniture and Space



Survey of teachers: School Schedule

- Almost 70% of participants believe student internet access at home helps to positively extend the classroom and learning opportunities.
- 75% of respondents believe a combined campus for grades 5-8 would positively impact students - including their schedule and elective offerings.

Where is Sycamore strong in middle age scheduling?

- **Teachers** - dedicated, knowledgeable, best-in-class (think survey response rate)
- **Breadth of electives** - many options available to students
- **Team structure (Greene)** - provides flexibility and support to students
- **Track options** - multiple levels to accommodate student's ability and performance
- **School day** - keep the length of day at about 7 hours (consider balancing Greene/JHS bus dropoff/pickup times)
- **Innovation (district)** - one-to-one program, aviation station, synnovation lab,

What are some proven strategies from other high performing school districts that help students explore their interests?

- **Remove homeroom and aviator bells** - group to a new bell or extend existing bell
- Consider **rotation of electives** by semester or maybe quarters during specials
- Consider a **'Friday' elective option** with help from teachers and community
- **Adjust music program** by decoupling classes or using 'as needed' morning period
- Further **integrate technology** (e.g. extend class day, electives, IEP, replace HR/FT/AB)
- Use mods vs bells to give greater flexibility during the day for scheduling
- Loosen foreign language (e.g. 1 year required in JHS)

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