



## High School Bell Schedule Work Group 2026

**3:30-5 p.m., January 27, 2026**

**District Office Room 202**

### Notes

#### Present:

Katie Jones, Ari Feeney, Laurel Peak, Bethany Barrett, Sam Haley, Heather Steele, Ben Goodwin, Marty Adkins, Bennet Vis, Dana Smith, Sonia Cole, Mike Copland, Nick Hayes, Nicole Chang, Joe Wooding, Steve Settum, Laurel Peak, Dawn Oehlerich, Jason Bergman, Brett Latham, Liz Burrus, Ronni Weston, Aimee Bachmeier, Heather Steele, Matt Whitten, Kate Manthey

#### Opening:

Deputy Superintendent Mike Copland welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked them for the commitment to work on this. Mike and Executive Director of Teaching and Learning Marty Atkins are work group co-chairs. Mike wished to acknowledge that some members have been involved with this process since the beginning and some are joining the group for the first time tonight. Mike provided a recap of the ad hoc committee work from the fall/early winter and what the charge is for this work group.

The group members introduced themselves and their school/work site.

Mike shared access to the work group's OneNote to access information, and that the charter is on website on public facing committee page.

Mike addressed a few questions that had already surfaced:

- The committee will make a recommendation to the superintendent on the parameters for a 7-period high school schedule. Aspects of the recommendation requiring further association/district discussion via collective bargaining may emerge.
- Mike requested that representatives from the schools share transparently with colleagues both to gather feedback and to ensure there are no surprises as we work.
- A group member asked for what constraints may apply to the committee's work. Mike shared that the key known constraints at this time are:
  - Seat time compliance and state regulations – The current process BPS uses to comply with seat time requirements is 1080 instructional hours for high school.

Another model is available and is being explored for compliance, which is a districtwide average of 1027 hours per year across all levels.

- Legal advice regarding adding weekly early dismissals to help account for planning time adjustments. Mike will share this advice when we have it, likely the week of Feb. 2.
- Pay attention to the importance of instructional program for student learning and potential drawbacks of reducing required hours.

Each school shared out the feedback they had collected thus far from staff and students. A group member noted that it looked like each school voted for “what they know” – i.e., the schedule they were most familiar with before the 4x8.

### Sehome:

Sonia Cole shared highlights from Sehome’s discussions and data collection.

Staff:

- Most staff support 3 7’s two blocks CCABC
- Part time staff: many part time staff favored a “straight 7” schedule because it would be consistent for them.
- Hearing the request for maximize planning time – not putting advisory with straight 7 – not block days
- Wonder/concern: Does this limit part time teachers?

Students:

- like the two early dismissal option (CABABC).

### Options:

Bethany Barrett shared Options’ current discussions.

- Options will likely have a different schedule from the comprehensive schools.
- OHS’s discussions have focused on what shared staff, programs and students could look like if / when comprehensive HS schedule is different.

### Squalicum:

Laurel Peak shared highlights from Squalicum’s discussions and data collection.

Staff:

- Not as clear of consensus as SHS
- Choices appeared to be aligned somewhat by department. Departments like performing arts, Fine Arts, and CTE had similar needs.
- Majority of staff support some configuration of block schedule

Students:

- Shared concerns about straight 7 – so much homework, stuff to carry each class, stressful
- Those thinking of impacts on/for AP students liked block schedule

- Lots of questions about Running Start and how that would work.

## Bellingham High

Ben Goodwin shared highlights from Bellingham High's discussions and data collection.

### Staff

- Staff seemed to like / gravitate toward what the school was previously used to.
- The closest match was similar to pre-4x8 BHS schedule
- (CCABC) Two block days had gained momentum
- Lowest interest was in the straight 7 option.

### Students

- Students indicated they liked the length of block periods in the CXYZC schedule. Ben noted this could be good feedback for planning and/or integrating in advisory on block days to pay attention to the length of blocks.
- Around 100 students attended a "town hall" meeting about the schedule.

Mike also shared the summary of the community feedback form sent out with the announcement of the change to a seven-period schedule. Dana Smith shared the context that there were around 150 responses, and that generally what Communications finds is that community feedback represents strong feelings and less middle ground.

## Group conversation:

Mike invited the the group to reflect on what they heard or other feedback they brought with them to the meeting.

One group member shared how they long had concerns that there is little data to support schedule changes or to evaluate new schedules. They found some data that showed no schedule conclusively is "best" for student learning. Other factors in the study (from Croatia) showed that older students benefited from blocks while younger students benefited from seeing teachers/being in class every day. Thus, a hybrid block and "straight" schedule could be a happy medium.

The group looked at schedule options to see if there were any that there was consensus to remove from the consideration list, such as the "straight seven" which had received little support in the conversation thus far. Consensus was not reached to remove that from consideration and so it will be kept on the consideration list for the time being. Mike shared that Options High School has the option to do their own schedule, which brings another set of issues to address/work out. The straight seven schedule may have support from special education because the schedule is appealing for some students and meets their needs.

Mike again wondered if there might be consensus to take the two extremes – straight seven (CCCCC) and 4 blocks (CABAB)– off the table. A group member suggested that we focus in on the CCABC options, but keep the extremes on the "JV Team" for the time being. There was not

clear consensus to stop considering CCCCC and CABAB so they remained for discussion in future meetings.

The group shared other thoughts about schedules, including:

- What do we want more of? It's not 85 min. classes (referring to the current 4x8 schedule)
- If only two block days, there may be an instructional challenge with testing becoming focused on block days due to time. Another group member noted that sometimes departments have agreements to test on certain weeks and not others so tests are spread out for students to manage.
- Another group member noted that around 70 minutes feels like a good length for a class both for adults and students.

Squalicum shared that the 2 block (CCABC) option was their community's leading contender and this seemed consistent to the group.

Further discussion of CCABC schedule included:

- Suggestion to have advisory (e.g. Storm) on AB (block) days so there are only two bell schedules per week.
- A group member wondered if it is possible to attach advisory to lunch for efficiency of routine. Others noted this was known as a "power hour" in a different school district and it seemed to yield mixed results. It did not always support efficient use of advisory time.
- Support was expressed for less complexity in number of bell schedules per week.
- A group member wondered how a mixed block schedule may impact fine and performing arts? Some group members noted this is similar to Sehome's schedule prior to the 4x8 and described some ways they had seen fine and performing arts use the block days, and that there are pros to having rehearsal more often and for less time than current alternating model.
- One group member reflected that we need to retain the ability to share staff among schools including some teachers that teach at different levels.

Mike closed the meeting by recapping:

- We have not yet reached consensus on removing any schedules from consideration, although the group has a sense that the CCABC is the leading contender.
- We built a sense of some of the issues to check in on. Group members are asked to check in with departments around specific issues such as rehearsals for performing arts.
- Sharing staff with Options may be difficult.

The next meeting will continue with sharing feedback and gathering input on finalizing bell schedule, advisory and early dismissals.

Next meeting: 3:30-5 p.m., Thursday, Jan. 29 at the District Office, room 202.