



ESASD's Journey to a Six-Period Day Community Questions - Transparent Answers

The questions below were submitted by community members via our district online form.
Have a question? Scan the QR code or click [here](#) to submit yours.

ACADEMIC RATIONALE, WORKLOAD & ELECTIVES QUESTIONS

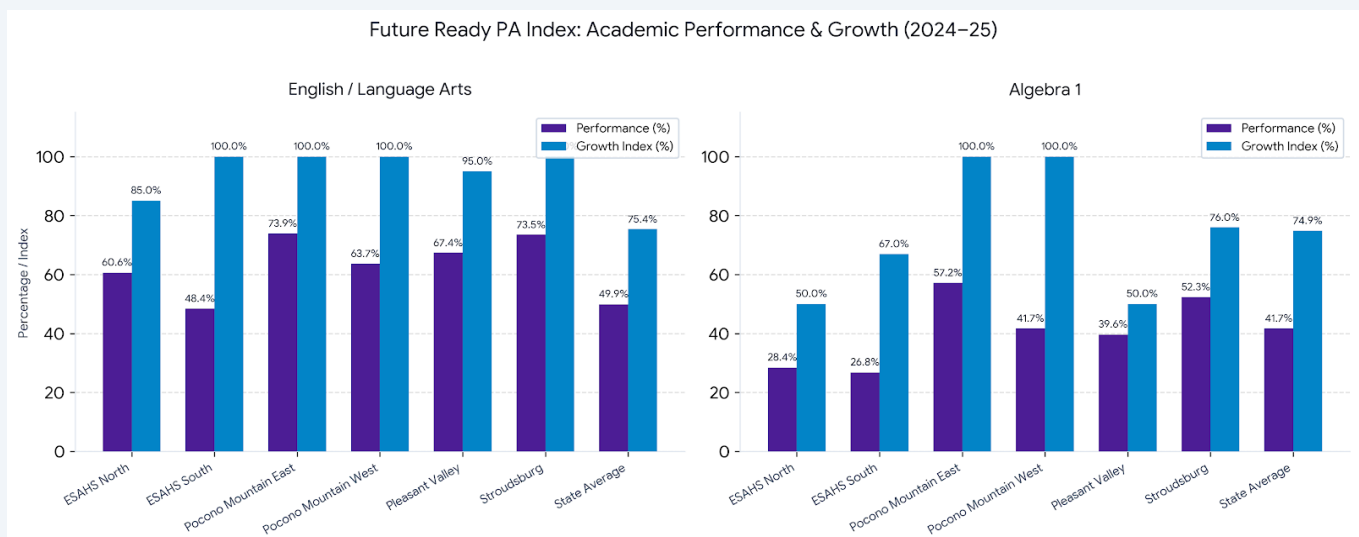
Q: *"How does the district justify prioritizing scheduling convenience over the student experience?"*

A: This transition is rooted in our commitment to elevating the daily student experience. Maintaining our current structure would represent the simplest administrative path; however, we are investing the extensive effort required to redesign our master schedule because we prioritize a premier academic environment. This reconfiguration optimizes the school day by:

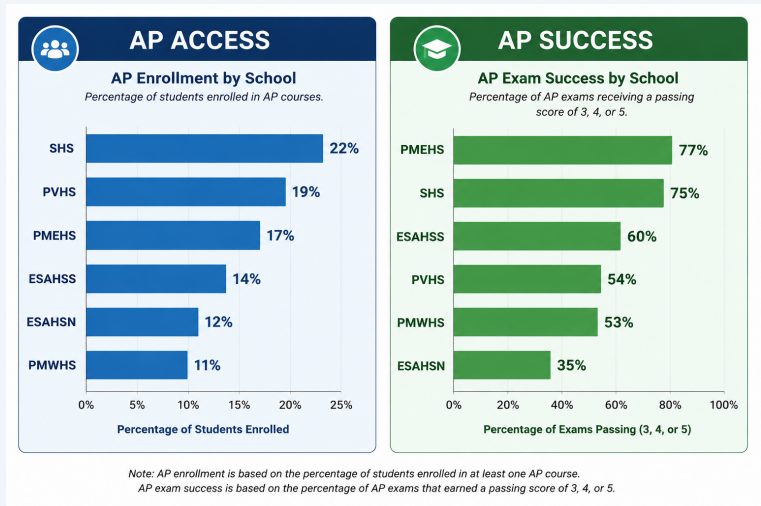
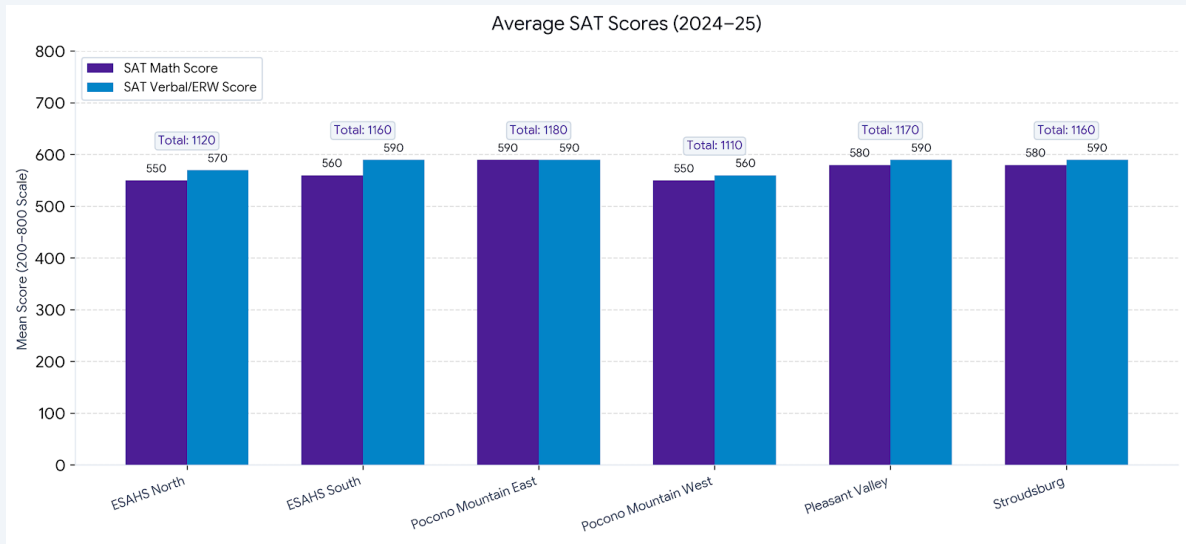
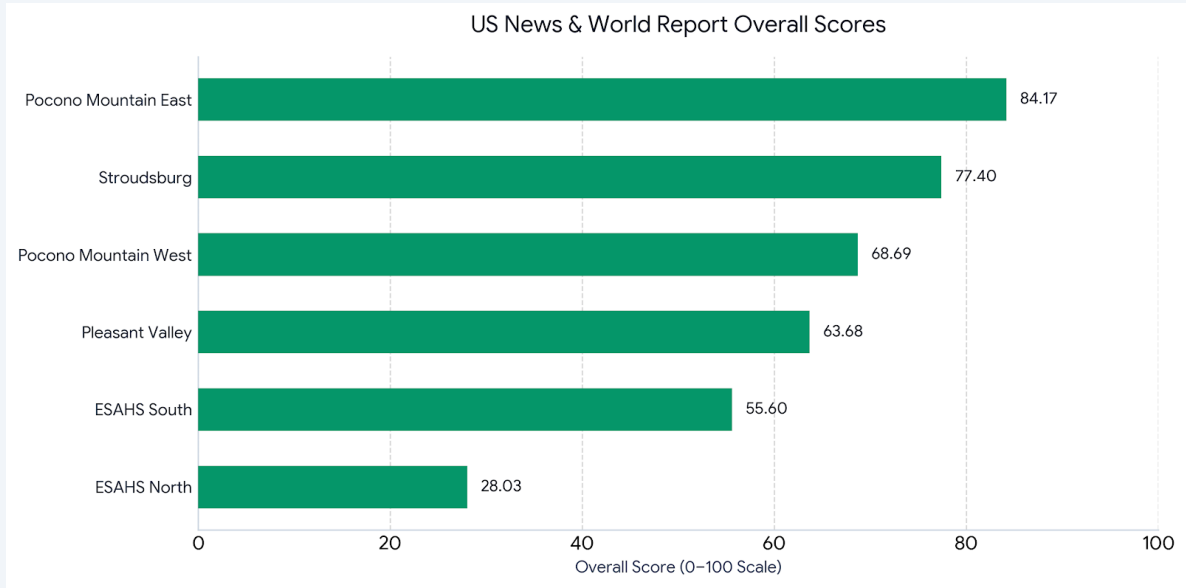
- **Sustaining Instructional Momentum** by reducing interruptions in learning that can occur in semester-based models.
- **Organizing the Academic Day:** Limiting the schedule to 6 periods simplifies the daily routine and reduces transitions compared to the current setup—where some students manage up to 8 classes per day—fostering a more balanced and predictable environment.
- **Upholding Personal Academic Pathways:** Students maintain the opportunity to select up to 18 classes over four years, protecting their ability to explore the arts, personal passions, and specialized career tracks alongside their core studies. This can be done through ½-credit electives throughout their four years.

Q: *"What data is the district referencing in their presentations when they talk about students' scores?"*

A: Future Ready PA Index: Academic Performance & Growth / US News & World Report / SAT scores / AP Scores. Data is provided below:



Academic Data Continued



Note: Although standardized benchmarks and state indices do not define our core mission, they serve as vital diagnostic tools. Assessing these performance metrics enables us to execute the structural improvements required to ensure uninterrupted instruction and foster a strong academic environment in which every student can achieve their full potential.

Q: *“What is the long-term impact of this schedule change on students’ overall education, rather than just the logistics of implementation?”*

A: Our goal is not simply to change the schedule; it is to create a structure that better supports the education we want our students to receive. A 6-period day provides students with more consistent daily contact with teachers and a greater continuity across the curriculum. Embarking on this exploration allows our educators to rethink how students progress through courses from 6-12 and strengthen curriculum alignment. Our goal is to create a more intentional pathway toward the skills identified in our Portrait of a Learner (a project occurring in all 10 buildings this Fall). The long-term impact is not, “How do we fit our current program into a new schedule?” but rather, “What schedule best supports the educational experience we want every student to have?”

Q: *“How does a shorter, 6-period schedule improve the actual quality of education or better prepare students for college, trade school, or employment?”*

A: As mentioned above, it is important to recognize that changing the schedule alone will not improve student achievement or preparation. The schedule is the structure that creates opportunities for stronger instructional practices to take place. Over the past two years, our administrators and teachers have been increasingly focused on student engagement and learning experiences that require students to think deeply, communicate effectively, solve problems, collaborate, persevere, and manage their time. The proposed schedule is an opportunity to build on that work. It allows us to look at the whole educational experience—not simply the number of periods in a day—and examine how curriculum, instruction, assessment, intervention, enrichment, and student choice work together. Ultimately, our goal is to graduate students who are prepared not just to earn a diploma, but to think independently, adapt to new situations, communicate and collaborate with others, solve problems, and navigate the demands of college, career, technical education, and the workforce. The schedule is one part of a much larger, 360-degree examination of how we prepare students for life after high school.

The shift from our current model to a 6-period schedule does not “shorten” the instructional day or reduce the amount of time students spend learning. In fact, the proposed 6-period schedule significantly increases the amount of instructional time students have with their teachers each day. It also removes learning gaps that are created naturally by block scheduling and curriculum continuity.

Q: *“Will the 6-period schedule still allow room for Music, Art, WIN, Gym, and Tech Ed?”*

A: Beyond fulfilling core academic requirements, electives are an important part of personal growth and post-secondary preparation. Our proposed model provides an opportunity to rethink how students experience their elective options. With 9 potential elective credits—up to 18 half-credit courses or a combination of half- and full-credit courses—students can explore interests while also developing depth in areas that align with their goals. It is also important to recognize that our students have choice within their core subject areas. For example, students are required to take General Science and Biology, but they can choose their field of study for their third science credit. We are also challenging departments during our professional learning days to examine their course offerings and “rethink” what a student’s journey could entail.

***WIN period (What I Need) is not currently part of our high school model. However, we already have systems in place to provide academic support, intervention, and enrichment. As part of this schedule exploration, we will examine how these supports can be structured within the school day while maintaining opportunities for exploration, pathways, and enrichment.

Overall, our goal is not to provide more course options, but to rethink how students experience the options we already offer—creating a more intentional balance of exploration, mastery, career awareness, and post-secondary preparation.

Q: “How will managing up to 6 classes daily impact student stress, workload, and mental health?”

A: Our students’ well-being is at the heart of this planning process. Supporting our students’ personal and emotional growth is a core commitment of our district’s Comprehensive Plan, which includes ongoing professional development in Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) to foster resilient, well-supported learners. A major part of well-being is managing daily stress.

Under our current hybrid model—which mixes 90- and 45-minute periods—students can juggle up to 7 classes a day at South and 8 at North. Moving to a consistent 6-period model streamlines their daily routine, reduces academic overload, and creates a much more manageable, balanced school day.

Q: “Has the district accounted for workload on AP/Honors students in a single day?”

A: Students must make intentional choices about their course load under any scheduling model to align with their personal and career goals. It is our responsibility to partner with families and caregivers to guide students in making those decisions, balancing academic rigor with after-school commitments. Transitioning to a 6-period schedule offers 3 key advantages for advanced coursework:

***Continuous Learning for AP Exams:** Steady, unbroken instruction directly leading into spring AP testing season.

***Sustained Knowledge Retention:** Shorter daily periods avoid 90-min dense overload, letting students process concepts in increments over time.

***Minimized Calendar Disruptions:** Protects momentum against mid-year semester shifts, winter Keystone windows, and admin transitions.

OPERATIONS, GOVERNANCE & COMMUNITY DIALOGUE QUESTIONS

Q: “How will the district address concerns that this shift could harm music and arts programs?”

A: Music and the arts remain among the top priorities for our district.

We are committed to ongoing, direct collaboration with our arts and music department chairs to protect the high quality of these programs. In fact, they have been actively helping shape our proposed scheduling models and offering creative solutions.

While scheduling trade-offs exist in any system—including our current block model—we are working directly with department leaders to minimize conflicts so students can continue to pursue both core academics and the arts.

Q: “Why is Driver’s Education scheduled for 11th grade in posted plans?”

A: Our sample schedules were simply mock-ups, not fixed tracks. The proposed 6-period model offers the flexibility students need to take age-appropriate courses—such as Driver’s Ed and behind-the-wheel training—at the right time for them. This flexibility applies to all academic and elective areas, including math, social studies, health/PE, and personal finance. Ultimately, we are creating a dynamic framework that empowers students to design a personalized pathway toward their post-secondary goals.

**** Side Note:** Over the next two years, we will develop a comprehensive Program of Studies designed to guide students through this transition. This resource will ensure both students and their families are fully informed and supported as they make thoughtful course selections for their individual pathways.

Q: “*Has the district consulted current advanced students and alumni?*”

A: Listening to students across all academic paths is a top priority for our district. To ensure their perspectives guide this process, each high school building utilizes its Student Advisory Committee—a leadership team that gives students a direct platform to share daily experiences, raise concerns, and inform district decisions. As we evaluate schedule options over the next two years, we will continue working hand-in-hand with these committees, while gathering ongoing feedback from families.

Additionally, our student board representatives from North, South, and MCTI will collaborate directly with school board members and district administration to ensure student voices remain central to every phase of this journey.

*We have not directly consulted alumni but welcome any insight they will provide

Q: “*What public forums will address concerns and how are board conflicts of interest handled?*”

A: Public engagement and transparent governance are structured as follows:

- **Upcoming Public Forums:** Addressing topics at Education Committee (EPR) meetings, regular Board meetings, and dedicated Informational Sharing sessions.
- **District Website:** Check our district website to see all communication that has been presented or published from the district

Board Governance and Compliance: Board members adhere to strict ethics laws, governance policies, and legal standards requiring public disclosure and official abstention from relevant votes.

Q: “*Why continue moving forward if significant community feedback opposes it?*”

A: It is important to recognize that we are still in the exploration phase, and all of the details regarding a potential schedule change have not yet been finalized. As a result, some opposition may be based on limited information or misinformation being shared through social media rather than a complete understanding of what is being considered. As we move forward, we will continue to provide additional context, information, and opportunities for questions so that our community has the information needed to form an informed opinion. We recognize that there are valid questions and concerns. Our goal is to ensure those conversations are grounded in accurate, complete information as the exploration continues.

Q: “*What is the direct effect of this transition on staff, teaching positions, and employment?*”

A: Transitioning to this 6 period model is **not** an initiative for reduced staffing.

Within our established operational framework, the administration performs yearly assessments of staffing requirements (FTEs). This ensures our buildings remain properly resourced to support fluctuating enrollment and instructional demands—a standard practice that occurs independently of our scheduling configuration.

District leadership and the Board of Education maintain a steadfast commitment to our learners and specialized programming. We remain focused on safeguarding diverse course options and academic pathways, choosing to address fiscal requirements through strategic administrative efficiencies rather than compromising student experiences.

Q: “*Why is there an increasing reliance on test scores, technology, and AI in the classroom?*”

A: The district balances technology and data-driven instruction through three (3) key commitments:

- **Data Evaluation:** Standardized metrics ensure graduates remain competitive against county/state benchmarks.
- **Real-World Readiness:** Prepares students for AI and technology reshaping higher ed, the military, or the workplace
- **Proactive and Ethical Use:** Teaches digital citizenship while ensuring technology enhances—not replaces—foundational instruction, hands-on learning, and direct teacher engagement.

Q: *“What would the start and end times of the school day be under a six-period schedule, and how long would each class period be?”*

A: Same; no changes will be made

Q: *Would senior release continue to be available under a six-period schedule? If not, why is the district considering a different approach for seniors who have completed their graduation requirements?*

A: Senior Release is not part of the determination to move to a six-period day. Senior release could occur under either schedule if the district moves in that direction.

Q: *How would the proposed schedule provide students with opportunities to pursue employment, college preparation, internships, or other experiences during their senior year?*

A: Template