

# 2015-16 MSHS Bell Schedule Final Proposal

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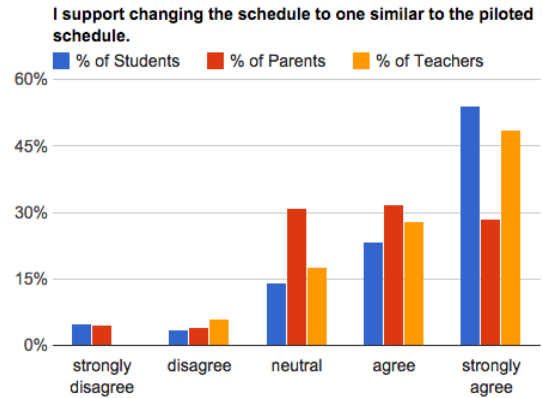
# Executive Summary

The Scheduling PLC has pursued schedule change at ASFM throughout the 2014-15 school year, focusing on the needs of the school and piloting a schedule which aims to facilitate project-based learning through longer periods and give students time to work in school through Access time.

Feedback from Pilot Week was overwhelmingly positive. The post-pilot surveys also gave us a wealth of data which we will discuss, including the:

- length of double periods
- frequency and length of Access time
- length of breaks and impact on the school day
- Friday bell schedule.

This proposal presents three options for consideration by MSHS Administration, along with an analysis of how these stack up against the Pilot Week feedback. The options are:



**A. Period 6 moved to Tuesday.** This is our preferred option as it keeps the great aspects of the pilot week schedule and improves the consistency of high school lunch and break times:

OPTION A MS	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
8:10 - 9:05	1	6	3	6	3
9:10 - 10:05	2	7	3	6	4
15 min + 5	Break				
10:25 - 11:20	3	1	4	7	5
11:25 - 12:20	4	1	4	7	6
25 min + 5	Lunch				
12:50 - 1:15	Advisory	Access	Advisory	Access	Access
1:20 - 2:15	5	2	5	1	7
2:20 - 3:15	Access as req.	2	5	2	

OPTION A HS	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
8:10 - 9:05	1	6	3	6	3
9:10 - 10:05	2	7	3	6	4
10:10 - 10:35	Access				
15 min + 5	Break				
10:25 - 11:20	3	1	4	7	5
10:55 - 11:50	3	1	4	7	6
11:55 - 12:50	4	1	4	7	6
25 min + 5	Lunch				
1:20 - 2:15	5	2	5	1	7
2:20 - 3:15	Access as req.	2	5	2	

**B. Shorter long periods.** This option responds to data on the length of the longer period, making short periods 65 minutes and long periods 95 minutes long. However, the high school schedule varies considerably from day-to-day, without consistent break times.

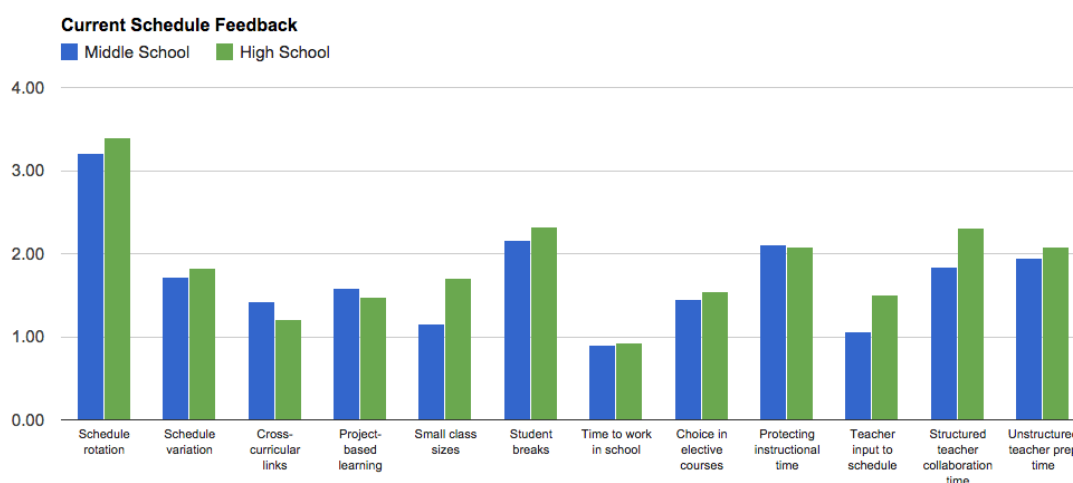
**C. As piloted.** The pilot schedule, revised only to have a 5-minute longer break time, is our third option.

Finally, we make two related recommendations: that MSHS adopts a schedule for weeks consisting of four school days and changes the teacher supervision schedule.

## Project Background

The Scheduling PLC started in September 2014 with the simple goal of improving the bell schedule in Middle and High School at ASFM. With the support and participation of teachers, students, parents and administration we are very close to achieving that goal.

We started on a two-prong course, both collecting information from our own teachers about their perception of the current schedule and pedagogical needs that a schedule should meet, and at the same time researching alternate schedule models in place at other schools in order to find a feasible model that could address the immediate needs of ASFM.



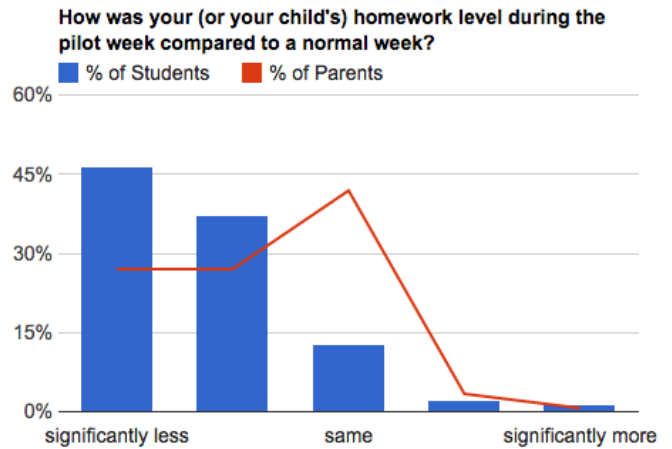
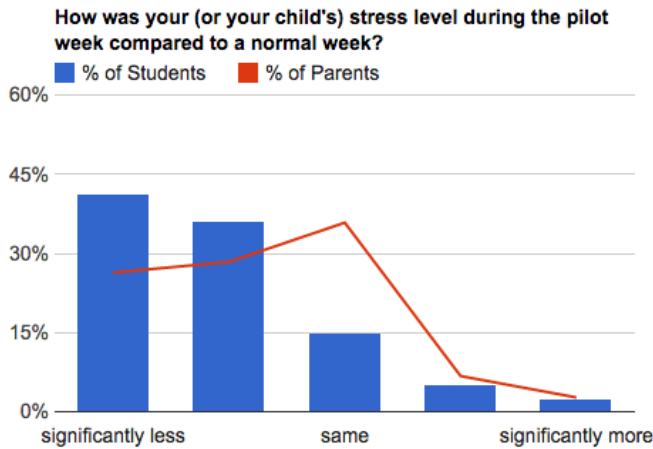
The chart above shows teacher feedback on our current (2014-15) schedule in the twelve identified areas of need. We chose two areas to improve based on their low scores from teacher feedback and the feasibility of achieving short-term change: **project-based learning** and **student time to work in school**. Based on school visits, we felt that addressing these issues may also reduce student stress and allow for more innovating teaching overall.

We piloted our draft proposal on April 20-24, 2015. Feedback from teachers on the organization of the pilot was positive, with one teacher writing “You had us all so prepared for this week.” We followed up the pilot week with comprehensive surveys of teachers, parents and students to determine whether to pursue schedule change along the lines of the pilot, and how to tweak the schedule to further improve it. The remainder of this report outlines our proposals for the 2015-16 bell schedule taking into account the pilot week feedback.

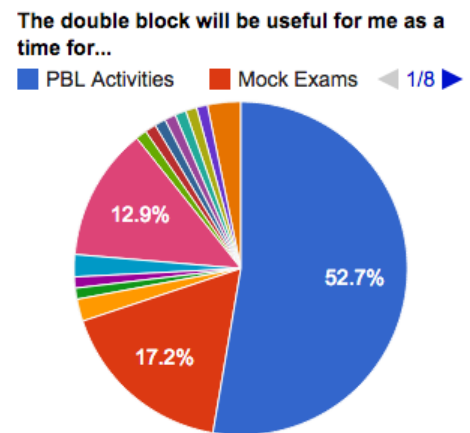
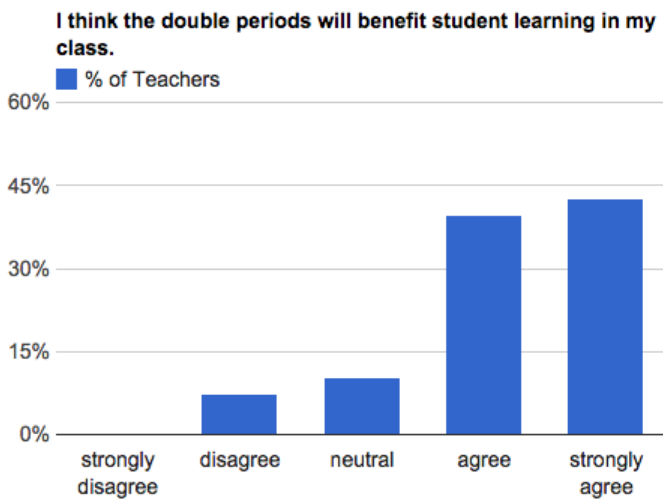
Full information on the Pilot Week schedule, including the bell schedule diagrams, is available at [asfm.schedule.mx](http://asfm.schedule.mx). For full Pilot Week survey data, view [asfm.schedule.mx/surveys](http://asfm.schedule.mx/surveys).

## Pilot Week Feedback

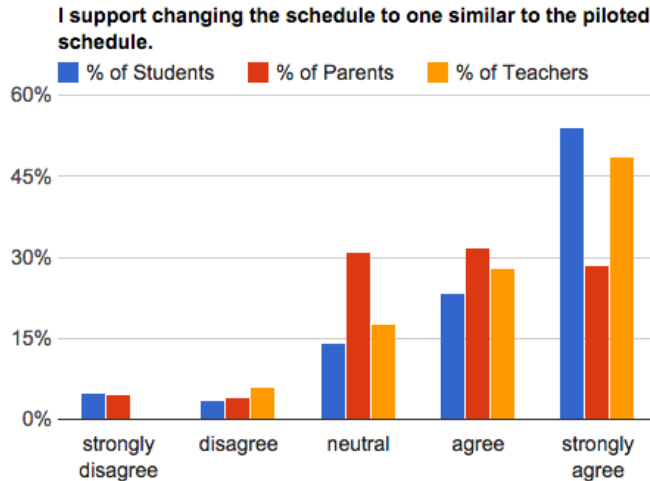
The immediate conclusion of the survey data is that ASFM should implement change in the direction of the pilot schedule for next year. This support can be seen first in student and parent feedback regarding the students' stress and homework levels, both of which were seen to have fallen during pilot week:



It can also be seen in teacher feedback about the usefulness of the double periods:



Finally, the ASFM community is supportive of change, from teachers to parents to students. More than 70% of respondents (including 60% of parents) agree with the change, and fewer than 10% of any group are opposed to the change.

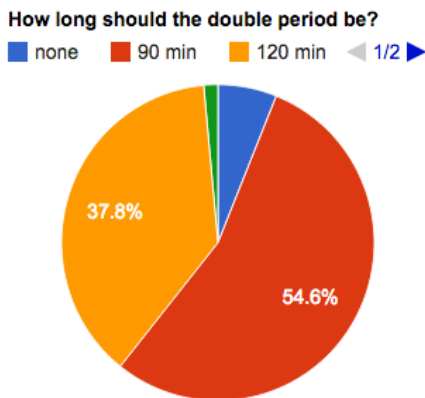


The pilot week surveys also gave us more nuanced information on the strengths and shortcomings of the pilot schedule as well, which we will discuss in this section. We were able to incorporate some of this feedback into the schedule options in the next section.

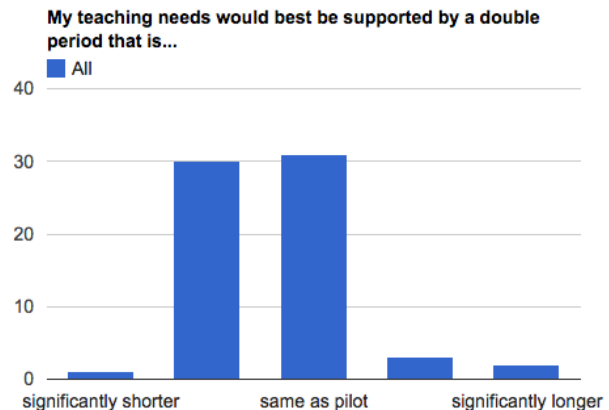
## Double period length

In response to pre-pilot concerns about the length of the double periods (115 min), we surveyed students and teachers about the length of the double period. As seen by the student responses and teacher responses below, there is support for both double periods as piloted and a longer period of 90 - 100 min.

*Student responses:*

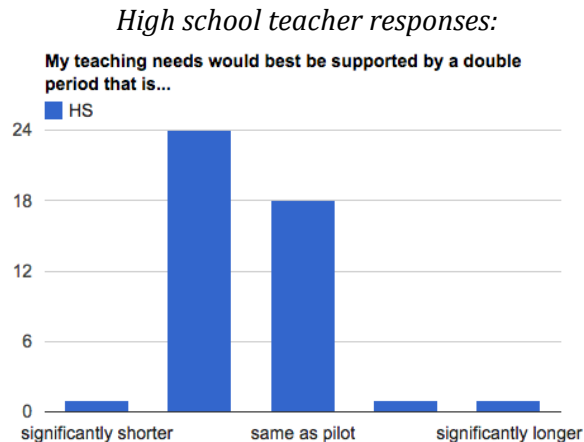
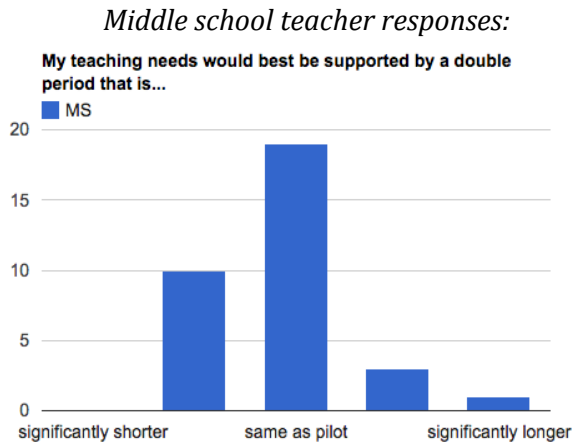


*Teacher responses:*



Some of our written feedback was similar to this teacher’s quote: “After speaking with students, it seems a 90 minute block would be a bit better. Many students said the last 15-20 minutes in class were difficult to stay focused and many teacher ran out of things to do.” However, we also had feedback similar to this, from a grade 9 student: “All classes should be double period. [The] double period class time was perfect, maybe 5 more minutes of class.”

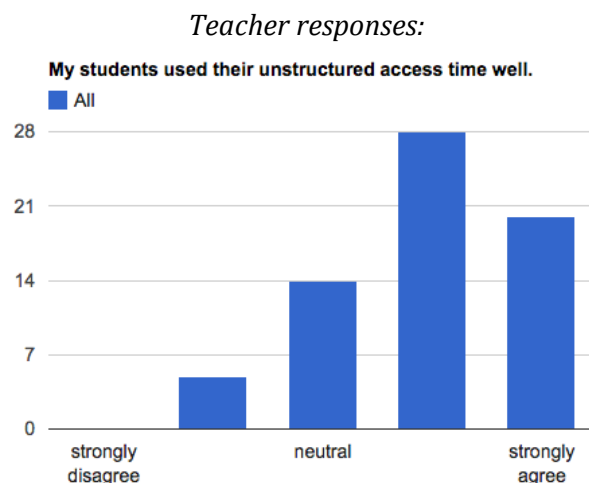
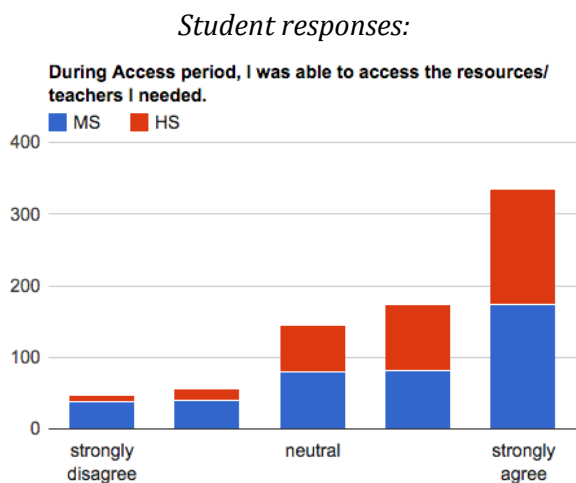
Interestingly, when teachers are broken down by middle/high school, MS teachers support a longer double period than HS teachers.. This challenges the assumption that since middle school students have a lower attention span they should have shorter periods.



In order to respond to this feedback, we have incorporated 95-minute long periods into Option B below.

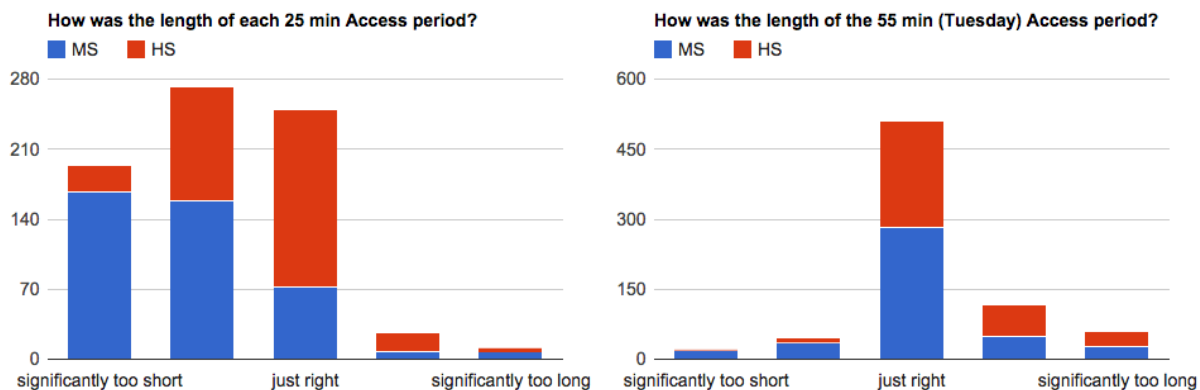
## Access time

Overall, Access time was very successful: students felt that they could access the resources they needed, and teachers felt that students used the time well. While there was some variation in these responses by grade level which should be examined more closely when we build a school-wide implementation of Access time, the inclusion of Access time was a success.

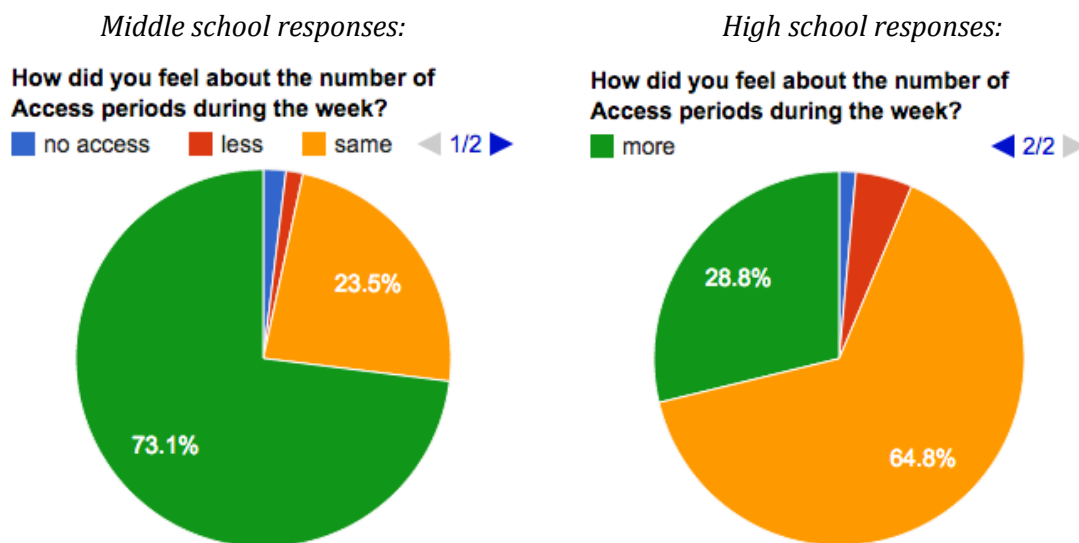


The question of Access time length and frequency was also raised in the surveys, with mixed results. In student surveys, both middle and high school students found the 55 minute Access period was enough time; high school students also largely approved of the shorter times as well while middle school

students found it too short. In the words of one Grade 8 student, “The first [longer] access I really enjoyed because it was a good amount of time but the 25 min one was too little to do something. I felt rushed so I think access should be more than 45 min.”



The number of Access times per week was also surveyed. A large majority of middle school students, who received two access periods over pilot week, wanted more access. On the other hand, a majority of high school students, who received four access periods over the same time, felt that they had been given enough access time.



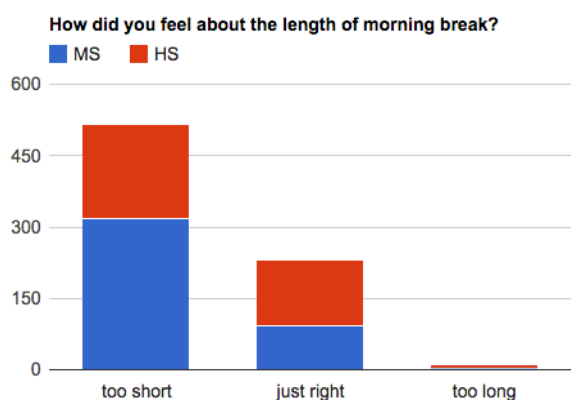
The conclusion is that the amount of high school access time is sufficient while the amount of middle school access time should be increased. It is difficult to know whether satisfying only one of the two MS demands (more frequency and more length) would be satisfactory; however, that may be all that is possible, as it is very difficult to increase access time without either increasing the school day (discussed next) or reducing instructional time.

Since fewer than 30% of teachers supported reducing class time in order to increase break or lunch times, and 70% of teachers would like the overall amount of access time to remain the same, we had limited options to increase the amount of Access time in middle school. In Option A, we were able to increase the number of Access periods at the cost of the long period, and in Option B we divided the Access time more evenly in two 35-minute periods.

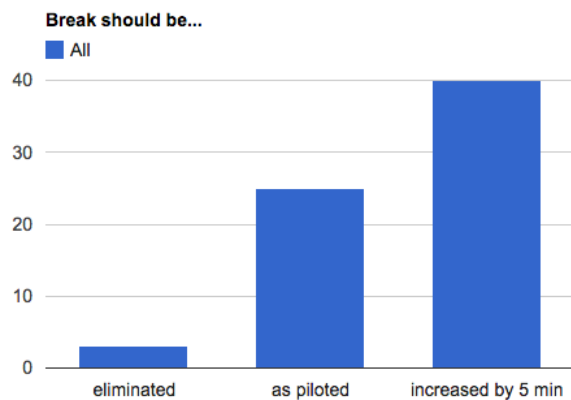
## Length of break and lunch and length of school day

One change to the current schedule that took many by surprise in Pilot Week was the reduced length of break (down by 4 min to 10 min plus passing time) and lunch (down by 8 min to 25 min plus passing time). We asked all groups whether they wanted break or lunch increased:

*Student responses:*

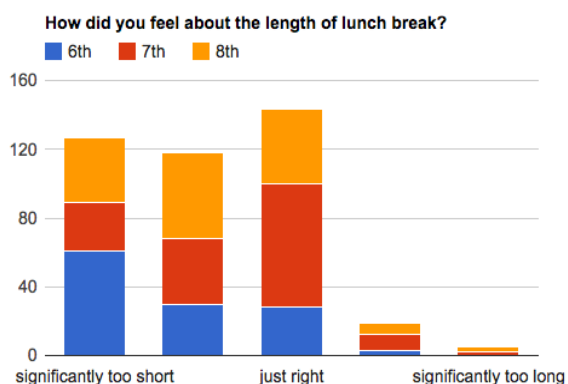


*Teacher responses:*

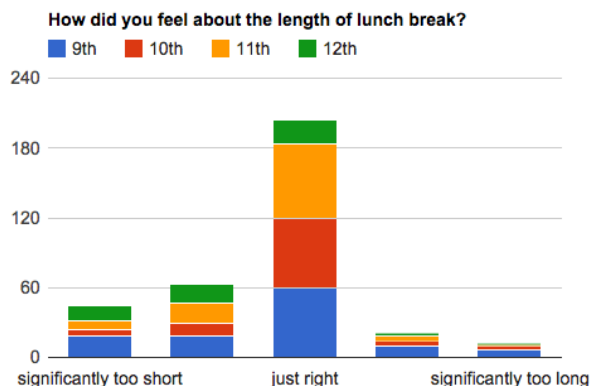


As you can see, both students and teachers want break increased, probably by 5 minutes to return it to its original length. Comments included one from a Grade 6 student who noted that breaks “were a little too short, and then we could barely eat and socialize with our friends.” The length of lunch was more contentious, with high school and middle school students split again over the length. Most middle school students felt that a 25 minute lunch was too short, while most high schoolers were content with that length. Teachers showed some support for increasing the length of lunch.

*Middle school student responses:*

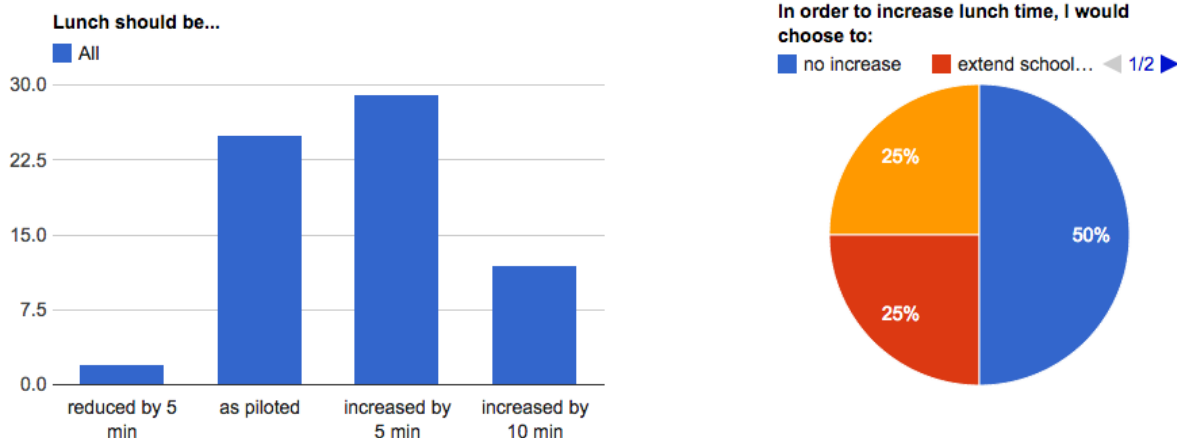


*High school student responses:*





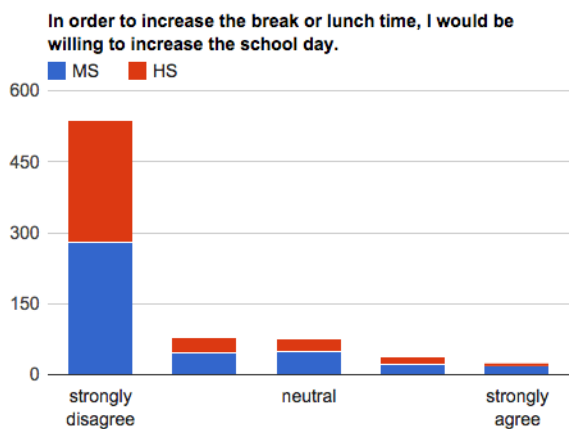
*Teacher responses:*



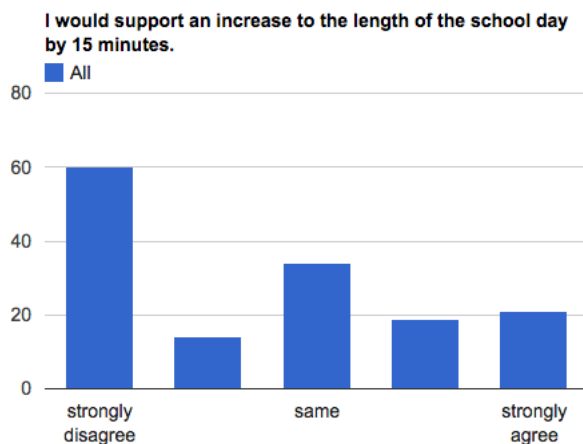
The intuitive response – increase the length of break and lunch, especially in middle school – is slightly complicated by the options available to do so. Reducing class time, shown in gold above right at 25% teacher support, is probably not feasible since we have already gone down by 7 minutes per class per week from the 2014-15 schedule. Since Access time is used to stagger breaks and lunches, it must be increased if the lunch time is increased. This leaves increasing the length of the school day.

This is also difficult, as any significant increase to the school day is opposed vigorously by students and not popular with parents as shown below. This issue received a high volume of comments from students, such as “I think you should DEFINITELY not make school longer; we are already the school that ends the latest in all of Monterrey,” from a Grade 9 student.

*Student responses:*



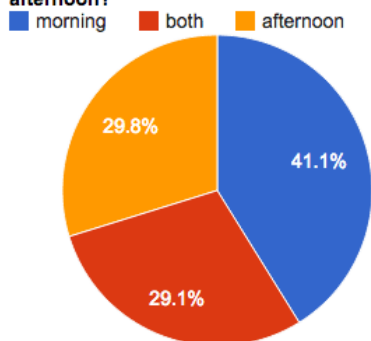
*Parent responses:*



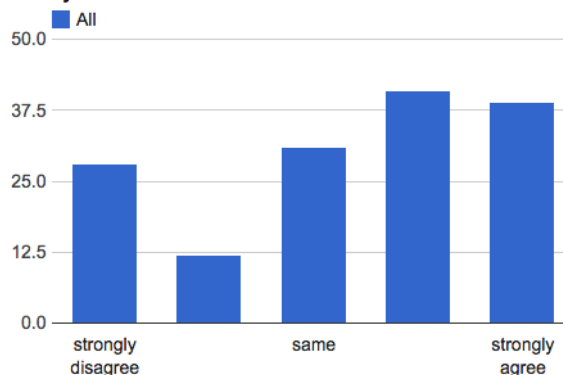
A shorter increase of 5 minutes is possible and received mixed but positive feedback from parents. If five minutes is to be added to the schedule, both parents and students agree that it should be added to the morning.

*Parent feedback:*

**If we do extend the school day, should the time be added to the morning or the afternoon?**



**I would support an increase in the length of the school day by 5 minutes.**

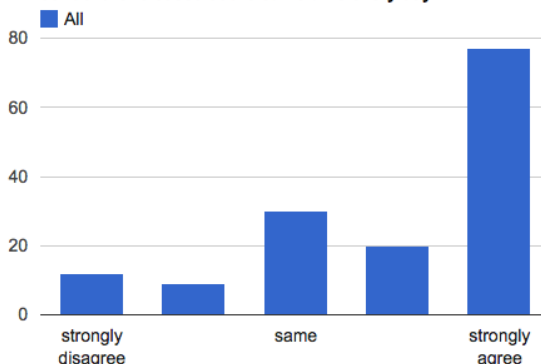


Accordingly, we have decided in all our options to increase the length of break by 5 minutes, which in Options A and C moves the start time to 8:10am rather than 8:15, and in Option B is achieved through a more substantial redesign and slightly less instructional time in some periods. We did not make lunch longer in Options A and C due to lack of support for a more significant increase in the school day.

### Start and end times

As noted above, students overwhelmingly oppose any increase to the length of the school day; more importantly, however, parents feel that the start and end times of elementary, middle and high school should all match in order to avoid having two pickup times for children of different age (see right). Many parents noted that the difference in MSHS and Elementary end times on Tuesday and Wednesday during Pilot Week was a problem for them, including this parent who has children in elementary and 7th grade: “The only problem I have with the schedule is the dismissal hours on Tuesday and Wednesday. It creates problems with the pickup of our children for those of us that have kids in both Elementary and MSHS.”

**It is important to my family that middle school and high school are released at the same time every day.**



Our options all start at 8:10 or 8:15am and usually end at 3:15pm, with one early dismissal (2:45pm) for teacher PD and a short Friday (between 1:45 and 2:15pm). We hope that MSHS and Elementary Administration will work together to harmonize start and end times in a way that works for both campuses and prioritizes student needs.

### Schedule Rotation

The Pilot Week schedule had the side effect of moving Period 3 into the first morning timeslot twice within one week, as well as moving Period 2 into the last afternoon slot twice. When we first surveyed

teachers on their reaction to the pilot schedule (before Pilot Week), schedule rotation was the only criteria on which the new schedule scored worse than the current MSHS schedule.

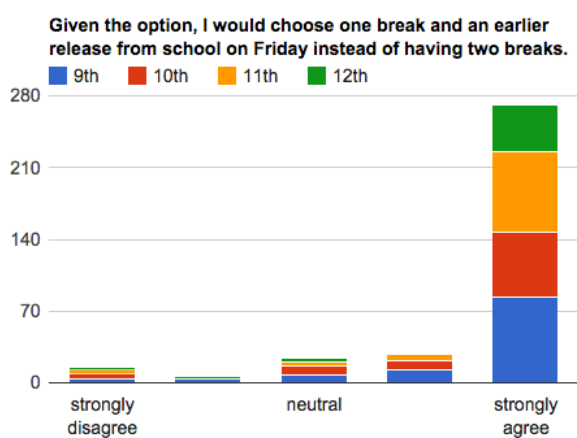
After the pilot week, we got a small amount of similar feedback. As one high school teacher wrote: “Please do not place any one period in the morning arrival slot twice. With five days and seven periods there has got to be another way to do it to avoid this double hit in the morning (and afternoon).” The issue seemed to be that students arriving late to school would be late to one class twice, thus disrupting that class more than others. Anecdotally, this seemed to be a bigger problem with older students.

We have considered ways to avoid this problem while not changing the structure of the schedule, including switching certain classes or even flipping whole days to vary the order of classes. However, we are not convinced that the problem is substantial enough to warrant increasing the complexity of the schedule and undercutting the basic rotational structure. For example, while such a change might benefit adaptable Grade 12 students, Grade 6 students who are still getting used to the idea of moving classes in the first place may not benefit from complicating the schedule. Our options below do not take into account this issue; however, it may be a good area of investigation and refining next year.

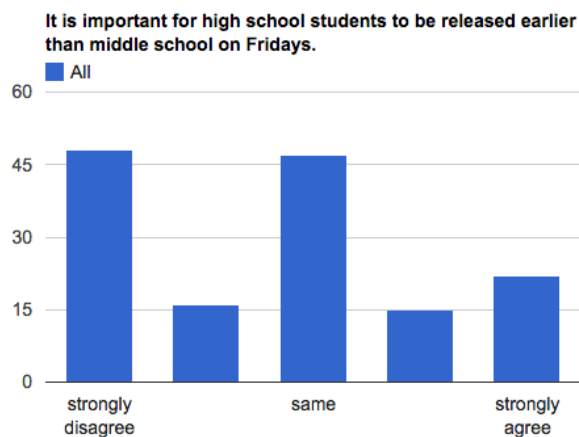
### Friday bell schedule

Another large high school student concern regarding the Pilot Week schedule was the Friday schedule. The data below shows this preference; however it also shows that parents do not have the same preference. In fact, more parents disagree that HS should be released earlier on Fridays, probably since as noted above it is easier to coordinate sibling pickup/return if the schools are released at the same time.

*Student responses:*



*Parent responses:*



However, we are led into a conundrum since increasing the length of the high school Friday schedule to a 2:15pm release would increase the length of the school day – unpopular with students, parents and teachers as noted above – while reducing the middle school schedule to a 1:45pm release would no longer line up middle school with elementary, forcing MS students to wait for busses on Friday. Our three options deal with this in different ways.

## Schedule Options

Based on the feedback from pilot week summarized above, we have prepared three options for the bell schedule to discuss and choose from. They are ordered by our preference.

### **Option A - Switch P6 to Tuesday morning**

Our preferred option for next year's schedule is very similar to the piloted schedule, with a switch of Period 6 from Monday afternoon to Tuesday morning. This achieves the following:

- The first and second meetings of Period 6 are no longer separated by two days. The two day gap may have been a challenge to student retention of material, especially in MS.
- High school break and lunch times are more even across the week. According to our survey many felt this was important for student nutritional and energy balance.
- Access times are evenly distributed across the week in both MS and HS.

Changing the schedule in this way does eliminate the popular long Access period; however.

In this option, MS, HS and ELEM release at the same time Monday through Thursday. On Friday, high school ends about half an hour earlier than the other two schools, so that the amount of Access time is increased in middle school. However, middle school could easily be matched to high school on Friday by removing its Access time.

We have also started the school day five minutes earlier to increase break to 15 min plus passing time.

### **Option A middle school bells**

OPTION A MS	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
8:10 - 9:05	1	6	3	6	3
9:10 - 10:05	2	7			4
15 min + 5	Break				
10:25 - 11:20	3	1	4	7	5
11:25 - 12:20	4				6
25 min + 5	Lunch				
12:50 - 1:15	Advisory	Access	Advisory	Access	Access
1:20 - 2:15	5	2	5	1	7
2:20 - 3:15	Access as req.			2	

## Option A high school bells

OPTION A HS	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
8:10 - 9:05	1	6	3	6	3
9:10 - 10:05	2	7			Break
10:10 - 10:35	Access				5 10:25 - 11:20
15 min + 5	Break				
10:55 - 11:50	3	1	4	7	Lunch
11:55 - 12:50	4				6 11:50 - 12:45
25 min + 5	Lunch				7 12:50 - 1:45
1:20 - 2:15	5	2	5	1	
2:20 - 3:15	Access as req.				

We have included a 25-min “Access as required” segment in both Middle and High School, which was not piloted but was a popular idea with teachers before the pilot. This would allow students who need more support to receive it while those who do not are rewarded with an earlier release.

Option A is our preference since it is very close to the popular Pilot Week Schedule, fixes concerns that were brought up by teachers before the pilot and issues raised by the survey data.

## Option B - Make the long periods shorter

As mentioned above, feedback around the length of long periods indicated that reducing the length from 115 min to around 90 minutes may allow teachers to pursue most of the project-based, in-depth activities of the true double periods while helping students, who may lose focus at the end of a two-hour class. We have thus drawn up an option with 95-minute long and 65-minute short periods.

In addition to shorter long periods, this has several features which are favourable to even Option A:

- lunch and break periods that have not been reduced from the current MSHS schedule,
- 35-minute Access periods in middle and high school, and
- an 8:15am start.

However, since long periods are no longer twice the length of short periods, it is much more difficult to keep break times consistent across the week. Option B uses Access periods to do this in MS, but thus loses the ability to stagger MS and HS break and lunch using Access. This means the high school schedule has variable break and lunch times, and is missing a break on Monday and lunch on Friday.

Also, in order to match with Elementary release times on Friday, the last three periods (P5, P6 and P7) in both middle school and high school are shortened to 60 minutes, thus taking 5 minutes per week off the instructional time for those periods. Middle school has two breaks on Friday, each of 15 minutes plus passing time.

### Option B middle school bells

OPTION B MS	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
8:15 - 9:20	1	6	3	6	3
9:25 - 9:50	2	7	Advisory	Access	4
9:55 - 10:30					
15 min + 5	Break				
10:50 - 11:55	3	1	4	7	5 10:50 - 11:50
12:00 - 12:25	Advisory	2	5	1	6 11:55 - 12:55
30 min + 5	Lunch				
1:00 - 1:35	4	Access	5	1	Break 2 (15 m + 5)
1:40 - 2:05	5	2			7 1:15 - 2:15
2:10 - 2:35			2		
2:40 - 3:15					

### Option B high school bells

OPTION B HS	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
8:15 - 9:20	1	6	3 8:15 - 9:50	6 8:15 - 9:50	3
9:25 - 10:30	2	7	Break (15 min + 5)		4
10:35 - 11:10	3	Access	4 10:10 - 11:45	7 10:10 - 11:45	5 10:35 - 11:35
11:15 - 11:40		Break			Break (15 m + 5)
11:45 - 12:15	Lunch (35 min + 5)	1 11:30 - 1:05	Lunch (30 min + 5)		6 11:55 - 12:55
12:20 - 12:55	Access	2	Access	Access	7 1:00 - 2:00
1:00 - 1:35	4		Lunch	1	
1:40 - 2:05	5	2	5	2	
2:10 - 2:35					
2:40 - 3:15					

In our estimation, Option B presents an impressive middle school schedule but at the cost of regularity in the high school schedule. However, if we want shorter long periods, this could be the schedule to choose.

## Option C - As piloted

We also keep as an option the pilot week schedule, with one change: adding 5 minutes to break by starting the school day 5 minutes earlier. This version has a 55-minute “Access as required” period for high school only and early dismissal on Tuesdays. While the pilot week was a success, this version of the schedule does not respond to concerns brought up; for example, high school breaks are not aligned across the week, and MSHS releases 30 minutes earlier than Elementary on Fridays.

## Option C middle school bells

OPTION C MS	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
8:10 - 9:05	1	7	3	6	3
9:10 - 10:05	2	Access			4
15 min + 5	Break				
10:25 - 11:20	3	1	4	7	5
11:25 - 12:20	4				6
30 min	Lunch				
12:50 - 1:15	Advisory	2 (12:50-2:45)	5	Access	7 (12:50 - 1:45)
1:20 - 2:15	5			1	
2:20 - 3:15	6			2	

## Option C high school bells

OPTION C HS	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
8:10 - 9:05	1	7	3	6	3
9:10 - 10:05	2	Break			4
10:10 - 10:35	Access	1 9:25 - 10:20	Access	Access	5
15 min + 5	Break				Break
10:55 - 11:50	3	Lunch	4	7	Lunch
11:55 - 12:50	4	2 11:50 - 1:45			Lunch
30 min	Lunch		Lunch	Lunch	7 12:50 - 1:45
1:20 - 2:15	5		Access as req'd 1:50 - 2:45	5	1
2:20 - 3:15	6	2			

## Weighing the options: pros and cons

We believe that the decision among these choices should be made on two factors: (1) how well does the schedule meet students' needs, and (2) how well does it agree with the Pilot Week feedback.

As all options have the same basic structure, the main difference among the options that will affect how well the schedule meets students' needs will be the length of the longer periods. The evidence and feedback is not clear on this: while some teachers and students appreciated a two-hour period as a chance to dig deeply into material, others thought the last half-hour was too much. It is thus a matter of debate as to whether 2-hour or 1.5-hour periods would be preferable, which is why we have produced an option with shorter periods.

Evaluating the schedule options in terms of the survey feedback is a bit easier, and we have made a start with the table below. In this table, differences between the three options are highlighted in each row, with positive differences (with respect to the survey data) in green and negative differences in red.

	<b>Option A: P6 switch</b>	<b>Option B: 65/95</b>	<b>Option C: as piloted</b>
<b>Access time</b>	- more MS access	- less MS access	- same MS access
	- no long access	- 2 x 35 min access	- 1 x 55-min access
<b>Break and Lunch</b>	- weekly 15 min break	- no Monday HS break	- weekly 15 min break
	- 25 min lunch	- 30 min lunch	- 25 min lunch
	- good HS lunch time	- early HS lunch	- Tue. HS lunch early
<b>Schedule regularity</b>	- Both MS and HS very consistent	- HS schedule very inconsistent	- HS somewhat inconsistent
<b>Start time</b>	- starts 8:10am	- starts 8:15am	- starts 8:10am
<b>Class spacing</b>	- No period with two-day gaps	- No period with two-day gaps	- P6 has two-day gap

As you can see, our preference of Option A fares the best under this evaluation. In particular, the regularity of the schedule across the week may have benefits for eating habits, and simplicity will help students and teachers have a better sense of the schedule.

The Scheduling PLC understands that ASFM is an ecosystem of three schools on one campus, our parent feedback made it very clear that school start and end times must be aligned across elementary, middle and high schools. Since our Options each have a different day with an early student release, we understand that the choice of options may be limited by external factors. However, it would be a shame if the decision was based on logistics alone or if teacher preferences outweighed student needs.



## Related Proposals

We are proposing two scheduling-related changes in addition to the main bell schedule change for 2015-16: the **four-day week schedule** and the **teacher break and lunch supervision schedule**.

### **Four-day week schedule**

A common item of feedback from teachers we have received throughout the year is frustration with losing some periods but not others when there is a holiday or half-day. It can indeed be difficult to try to teach two or three periods of the same class when you do not have the same amount of class time for each period. This problem may be exacerbated if any double periods are lost.

We therefore propose a special “four-day week” schedule which would be in effect whenever MSHS misses a day for a holiday. It would also go into effect on half-days, where the grade level teams would be responsible for planning the morning events. (This may help half-days to be seen as opportunities for enriching activities rather than incursions into class time.)

The four-day week schedule we have drawn up is best used with Option A above, as it adopts its basic structure but reduces the double periods to single periods. Notice that the first and last day of the short week will be early releases for students, so teachers will not lose any Professional Development by missing a holiday Monday. As well, since many short weeks occur due to Mexican holidays, we have incorporated 25-minute chunks for assemblies directly into the schedule instead of relying on Access time.

### **Four-day week middle school bells**

	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4
8:10 - 9:05	1	6	5	3
9:10 - 10:05	2	7	6	4
15 min + 5	Break			
10:25 - 11:20	3	1	7	5
11:25 - 12:20	4	2	Assembly	6
			Advisory	
25 min + 5	Lunch			
12:50 - 1:15	Advisory	Access	Access	7 (12:50 - 1:45)
1:20 - 2:15	5	3	1	
2:20 - 3:15	Access if req.	4	2	

## Four-day week high school bells

	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4
8:10 - 9:05	1	6	5	3
9:10 - 10:05	2	7	6	Break 4 9:25 - 10:20
10:10 - 10:35	Access			5 10:25 - 11:20
15 min + 5	Break			
10:55 - 11:50	3	1	7	Lunch
11:55 - 12:50	4	2	9-10 Assembly 11-12 Assembly	6 11:50 - 12:45
25 min + 5	Lunch			7 12:50 - 1:45
1:20 - 2:15	5	3	1	
2:20 - 3:15	Access if req.	4	2	

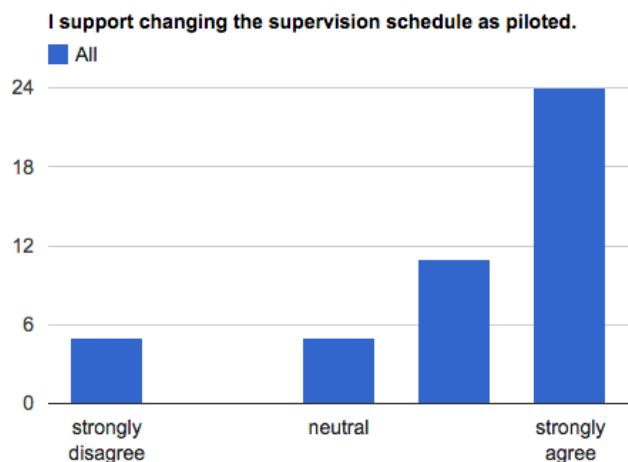
If we do not proceed with Option A, then we may need to revise the four-day week schedule to make sense with the chosen full-week schedule.

## Teacher break and lunch supervision schedule

During Pilot Week we also piloted a new supervision schedule where teachers were assigned two duties (one break and one lunch) per week. We reasoned that this would be a better fit where a teacher's teaching load may vary more widely from day to day, such as in a schedule with double periods.

Teacher support after Pilot Week was very positive as seen to the right, so we therefore recommend changing the current week-by-week rotation system to a daily assignment each week.

When creating the duty roster, teachers should be given duty assignments on the days in which they have more prep and fewer classes. If possible, a duty assignment should be only given out when a teacher has a prep period after that break or lunch.



## Other Scheduling Notes

We also would like to note several items for further action or consideration.

### **Implementation of access time**

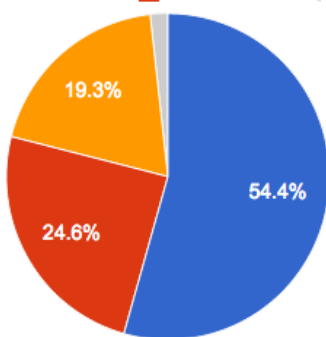
Of course, the creation of Access time means that we must define how it is to be implemented. While we encouraged grade-level teams to pilot different Access systems throughout pilot week, our expectation has been to create a school wide implementation, or perhaps separate middle school and high school implementations, that will be standard for the 2015-16 year.

The decision on how to implement access time properly does not have to be taken when choosing the schedule as all options have Access time, and so it is beyond the scope of this proposal. However, we will note that the Pilot Week survey data, broken down by grade level team may be useful in analyzing the effectiveness of different Access time solutions.

### **Teacher arrival and departure time**

Given the addition of access time, teachers should be required to be at school...

15 min befo... 20-25 min... 1/2



There has been some discussion among teachers about the effect that Access time will have on students seeking help before and after school, and the effect this should have on the teacher contract. Assuming the length of the teacher day will stay constant, we asked teachers when they should be required to be at school: for 15 min before and 30 min after school (shown in blue to left), for 20-25 min both before and after (in red), or for 30 min before and 15 min after (in gold). Since the majority support the status quo, we are not recommending a change in this policy.

If we do choose a schedule with an 8:10 am start time, it may be valuable to move the teacher start time forward by 5 minutes as well.

### **Master scheduling**

Since these schedules do not fundamentally change the seven-period structure of the MSHS schedule, they do not greatly affect the master schedule. However, they do have three significant impacts:

1. **Middle school / high school overlap teachers:** there are presently several teachers who primarily belong to MS but teach HS, or vice versa. In all Options presented above, Periods 5 and 6 are the primary overlap periods; that is, a MS teacher who also teaches a HS class in Period 5, 6 or both will not have any conflicts in his/her schedule, and the same is true for a HS teacher teaching MS in Periods 5 or 6. There are a few other circumstances where preps align and a teacher could cross over. These should be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.
2. **Middle school / high school overlap classes:** similar to above, any classes with both middle and high school students would need (at least one section) to be placed in Period 5 or 6. Currently only Math 9 Honors has this distinction.
3. **Teacher overload days:** With fewer, longer periods per day there is more a chance that teacher prep periods will not be distributed evenly across a teacher's week. In particular, in all of our options if a teacher does not have one of Periods 3, 4, or 5 as a prep period they will be teaching for three straight long classes on Wednesdays. Conversely, if a teacher does not have one of Periods 1, 2, 6, or 7 as a prep period they will have a difficult Tuesday and Thursday. We strongly encourage the master schedule to be created taking into account the balance of preps in a teacher's schedule.

We are glad to see that the MSHS Administration is working to take these concerns into account for the 2015-16 master schedule.

## Conclusion

Whatever we decide regarding the details of next year's schedule, we have to conclude from the evidence we have collected that the overall proposed change is beneficial for the school and popular with school stakeholders.

Most comments, even from parents who experienced the process second-hand, reflected this positive energy around change. As one parent put it: "My kids were happy, had more time to sleep (especially the 10th grader), with 2 hr sessions they had more understanding of the subject, and I think that eventually with this new schedule they would have more time to enroll in more activities to become more well rounded students."

Another parent was similarly encouraging: "I think this will be beneficial for students as long as this reduces homework time. I think students are having excessive homework and less sleep time. Access time and longer periods will allow students to dedicate more time to study at school and thus less homework, allowing them to spend more time with the family, in sports and having enough sleep. Go for it!"

We agree. We believe that the schedule change will result in improvements in both academic achievement and the quality of life of our students. The proposed schedule allows teachers to more effectively utilize problem and project based learning, improves student access to teachers, and reduces student stress, leading to an all around improvement at our school. We are enthusiastic in our recommendation and optimistic in our outlook for the 2015-2016 school year.