

BENCHMARKING HIGH SCHOOL SCHEDULING MODELS

Prepared for Lake Washington School District

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In the following report, Hanover Research describes the findings from in-depth interviews with various school districts about scheduling practices, the effectiveness of their scheduling model in ensuring on-time graduation, and how the district supported teachers while making changes to the schedule of the school day.



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AND KEY FINDINGS

INTRODUCTION

Lake Washington School District (LWSD) is exploring ways to modify its high school class schedule in order to ensure that all students are able to meet state-mandated graduation requirements. In 2014, the Washington State Board of Education increased the number of credits that students must complete to earn a high school diploma. Beginning with the class of 2019, students will be required to complete 24 credits to graduate, while earlier cohorts had to complete only 20 credits.¹

To understand how other districts structure class schedules to accommodate high credit requirements, Hanover Research conducted interviews with administrators at eight high schools in three states: South Carolina, New Mexico, and Missouri. Like their counterparts in LWSD, students at these schools must complete at least 24 credits to graduate. Hanover asked administrators to describe their scheduling model, the reasons why they chose to implement that particular scheduling model, and what training (if any) the district offered to teachers when transitioning to a new schedule. The interviewed school administrators described eight different scheduling models in operation at their schools. Those scheduling models are listed in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Profiled Schools and Scheduling Models

SCHOOL	DISTRICT	SCHEDULING MODEL
North Charleston H.S.	Charleston County School District (SC)	5-period block schedule
R.B. Stall H.S.	Charleston County School District (SC)	Modified 4-period block schedule
West Ashley H.S.	Charleston County School District (SC)	4-period block schedule
Rio Grande H.S.	Albuquerque Public Schools (NM)	7-period A/B/C schedule
Sandia H.S.	Albuquerque Public Schools (NM)	Modified 7-period schedule
Clayton H.S.	Clayton School District (MO)	Traditional 7-period schedule
Eureka H.S.	Rockwood School District (MO)	Modified 7-period A/B/C schedule
Festus H.S.	Festus School District (MO)	Modified 7-period traditional schedule

This report is divided into three sections:

- Section I: Charleston County School District
- Section II: Albuquerque Public Schools
- Section III: Missouri Districts (featuring three school districts)

¹ “Graduation Requirements.” Washington State Board of Education. <http://www.sbe.wa.gov/graduation.php#.VbYv47NVhZ4>

KEY FINDINGS

- **Districts with high credit requirements for graduation create schedules that offer struggling students additional instructional time in core subjects.** All of the districts profiled allow students to complete more credits than required for graduation. Students can use extra class periods for electives, or to take a remedial course. For example, North Charleston High School offers underperforming students remedial courses in reading and math, so that students who fail the traditional courses in those subjects have the opportunity to take them again.
- **Many schools use block scheduling as a way to increase “time on learning.”** Six of the eight schools profiled in this report use some form of block scheduling, with class periods last longer than one hour. Administrators report that the extended time is especially valuable for time-intensive subjects, such as science labs, as well as activities that allow students to be active and engaged. Some districts use alternating schedules, such as the A/B model, to allow students to take more classes while preserving the extended instructional time period.
- **Interviewed administrators report that their class schedules have not impacted scheduling of extracurricular activities.** Many school schedules include a “zero hour” that is used for activities or academic classes. For example, the principal at R.B. High School observed that many students were unable to participate in activities and clubs after school due to transportation constraints, so he structured the schedule at his school to include time for non-academic activities during the school day.
- **District administrators report that teachers require training when transitioning to a new schedule.** Two interviewed administrators described how teachers need support in lesson planning for different instructional period lengths. One interviewed administrator in Albuquerque Public Schools reports that her teachers require support with class pacing and planning, especially since her district’s forthcoming transition to a new schedule coincides with the introduction of the Common Core.
- **The schedules at three profiled schools include dedicated time for staff planning.** Under the new schedule to be implemented in all traditional high schools in Albuquerque Public Schools in 2015-16, students finish school early one day a week to provide time for staff planning. At Festus High School in Missouri, school starts one hour later on Wednesday mornings to allow teachers to work in Professional Learning Communities (PLCs).

SECTION I: CHARLESTON COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT

This section summarizes the scheduling practices at three high schools in Charleston County School District (CCSD) in South Carolina. CCSD enrolls approximately 44,000 students, more than half of whom are eligible for free or reduced price lunch.² CCSD includes 13 neighborhood and magnet high schools, as well as three charter high schools. The three schools profiled below, North Charleston High School, R.B. Stall High School, and West Ashley High School, are all neighborhood schools.³ The start times and class schedules at CCSD high schools vary from school to school.⁴

The South Carolina State Board of Education requires that students earn 24 credits to graduate from high school. In order to earn one unit of credit for an academic standards-based course, a student must receive 120 hours of instruction.⁵ Administrators at the CCSD high schools profiled below developed class schedules that both accommodate the 24-credit requirement as well as the specific academic needs of their student populations.

NORTH CHARLESTON HIGH SCHOOL

At North Charleston High School (NCHS), the school day begins at 8:20 AM and ends at 3:30 PM. Classes are organized in a block schedule, with each class lasting 77 minutes. Students take five classes per semester and can earn five credits toward graduation during each term.⁶ Figure 1.1 summarizes the NCHS class schedule.

Figure 1.1: North Charleston High School Schedule

School Day	8:20 AM to 3:30 PM
Model	5-period block schedule
Schedule	5 classes per day / 77 minutes per class
Credits Earned	5 credits per semester / 10 per year

Source: Robert Grimm

Robert Grimm, principal of NCHS, describes his school as a “high-risk school.”⁷ When students come to NCHS in Grade 9, Grimm says, many are significantly behind their peers in reading and math. He says that as a result, many of his students struggle to earn the necessary number of credits: “they [would] fail Algebra I and immediately be behind and

² “Local Education Agency (School District) Universe Survey.” National Center for Education Statistics, 2012-13. <https://nces.ed.gov/ccd/elsi/tableGenerator.aspx>

³ Ibid.

⁴ “CCSD’s Options with High School Grade Levels.” Charleston County School District. <http://www.ccsdschools.com/Schools/High.php>

⁵ “Regulation No. R43-234: Defined Program, Grades 9-12 and Graduation Requirements.” South Carolina State Board of Education, effective June 28, 2013. pp. 1-2. <https://ed.sc.gov/agency/programs-services/124/documents/2013version43-234.pdf>

⁶ Grimm, Robert. Principal, North Charleston High School. Telephone interview. July 9, 2015.

⁷ Ibid.

never able to catch up and graduate on time.” Before Grimm became principal in 2011, graduation rates at North Charleston High School were below 30 percent.⁸

To support incoming Grade 9 students, NCHS changed its schedule to offer freshman students more support in key reading and math classes. In order to implement this new five-period schedule, NCHS requested and received permission from the state to reduce in-seat instruction hours per credit to 110 hours; students make up the remaining 10 hours by completing an out-of-school project. Grade 9 students are required to take full-year classes in English I and Algebra I, in addition to semester-long classes in world history and physical science.⁹

A key feature of the NCHS schedule are the additional periods available for enrichment or, if necessary, for a student to retake a class. With the current five period block model, a student can take advantage of the two enrichment courses offered at NCHS: Reading Strategy and Math Computation. Students who fail Algebra I are required to repeat the course as a year-long class, and they have the time in their schedule to do so. Meanwhile, students who pass the course have room in their schedule to take elective courses that truly interest them.¹⁰ The schedule does not impact extracurricular activities before or after school.¹¹

Grimm reports that his school’s current schedule has been very successful. During his four years as principal, the graduation rate increased steadily: from 42 percent in 2012, to 47 percent in 2013, to 54 percent in 2014. In the spring of 2015, 68.9 percent of students graduated. Grimm notes that while graduation rates are improving and students are happy with the opportunity to more complete electives, he is always looking for better scheduling models.¹²

R.B. STALL HIGH SCHOOL

The schedule at R.B. Stall High School (RBSHS) features longer class periods through a block schedule of four 90-minute classes per day. RBSHS begins the school day at 8:25 AM and ends at 3:25 PM. Notably, the student schedule includes a 30-minute period in the middle of the day that is used to supplement academic classes and for extracurricular activities.¹³ Students can earn four credits per semester. Figure 1.2 on the following page summarizes the class schedule at RBSHS.

⁸ [1] Ibid.

[2] Bowers, P. “Robert Grimm enters the Cougars’ Den at North Charleston High School.” Charleston City Paper, August 29, 2011. <http://www.charlestoncitypaper.com/charleston/robert-grimm-dives-in-at-north-charleston-high-school/Content?oid=3576458>

⁹ Grimm, Op. cit.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Wilson, Kim. Principal, R. B. Stall High School. Telephone Interview, July 9, 2015.

Figure 1.2: R.B. Stall High School Schedule

School Day	8:25 AM to 3:25 PM
Model	Modified block schedule
Schedule	4 classes per day / 90 minutes per class + one 30-minute class period
Credits Earned	4 credits per semester / 8 per year

Source: Kim Wilson¹⁴

In addition, students have the opportunity to earn up to two additional credits per year through two virtual education programs, E2020 and Apex.¹⁵

At RBSHS, all students are eligible for free or reduced price lunch. When he started at R.B. Stall High School in 2010, principal Kim Wilson observed that transportation barriers prevented most students from participating in after-school extracurricular activities. Wilson decided to introduce the block schedule that had been used at a school where he has previously served as assistant principal, which provides time during the school day for clubs or activities.¹⁶

A unique feature of the RBSHS schedule is an alternating 30-minute period after the second block. Previously, that extra time was used for an additional year-long class, for which students would receive 0.5 credits per semester. Currently, that 30-minute period is used to add time to other classes and provide students with opportunities to participate in clubs or advisory periods. This period is called “Warrior Time.”¹⁷ The 30 minutes are applied in the following manner:

- Monday:** Return to 1st Block
- Tuesday:** Return to 2nd Block
- Wednesday:** Return to 3rd Block
- Thursday:** Return to 4th Block
- Friday:** (alternating) Advisory and Clubs¹⁸

Wilson reports that the block schedule aligns well with RBSHS goals to improve graduation rates and student achievement. In the six years that Wilson has served as principal at RBSHS, graduation rates have increased from 47 percent to 64 percent. However, Wilson notes that many challenges remain, including severe underperformance in reading.¹⁹

¹⁴ Wilson, K., Op. cit.

¹⁵ [1] Ibid.

[2] “Welcome.” Edgenuity. <https://learn.education2020.com/>

[3] “Apex Learning.” Apex Learning. <https://www.apexvs.com/ApexUI/default.aspx>

¹⁶ [1] Casey, D. “Stall High School Principal Kim Wilson named South Carolina high school Principal of the Year.” *Post and Courier*, December 12, 2013.

<http://www.postandcourier.com/article/20131212/PC16/131219823/1005/stall-high-school-principal-kim-wilson-named-south-carolina-high-school-principal-of-the-year>

[2] Wilson, K., Op. cit.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ibid.

WEST ASHLEY HIGH SCHOOL

At West Ashley High School (WAHS), the school schedule follows the traditional four-period block model. The WAHS school day begins at 7:15 AM and ends at 2:15 PM. Students take four 90-minute classes per day, and can earn between eight and 10 credits per year.²⁰

Figure 1.3: West Ashley High School Schedule

School Day	7:15 AM to 2:15 PM
Model	4-period block schedule
Schedule	4 classes per day / 90 minutes per class
Credits Earned	4 credits per semester / 8 per year

Source: William Runyon and CCSD²¹

Figure 1.4 below outlines the regular schedule for students at West Ashley High School.

Figure 1.4: Regular Bell Schedule, West Ashley High School

PERIOD	TIME
1 st Period	7:15-8:45am
2 nd Period	8:50-10:25am
3 rd Period	10:30-12:40pm
▪ 1 st Lunch	▪ 10:25-10:55am
▪ 2 nd Lunch	▪ 11:00-11:30am
▪ 3 rd Lunch	▪ 11:35-12:05pm
▪ 4 th Lunch	▪ 12:10-12:40pm
4 th Period	12:45-2:15pm

Source: West Ashley High School²²

William Runyon, WAHS’s principal, says that the block schedule allows teachers and students to engage in more intensive learning. He compares block scheduling to another scheduling model commonly used in high schools, the alternating A/B model. Under the A/B model, students follow a different class schedule on alternating (A and B) days. In fact, WAHS previously followed an A/B schedule before switching to block scheduling. Runyon, who has experience teaching at a school with A/B scheduling, notes he prefers block scheduling, explaining that:

A/B scheduling does not allow for long-term retention by the student population. If you teach A/B, what you teach on Friday you [will] teach again on Tuesday when

²⁰ Runyon, William. Principal, West Ashley high School. Telephone interview, July 13, 2015.

²¹ [1] Ibid.

[2] West Ashley High School’s Bell Schedule.” West Ashley High School (Charleston County School District). [https://westashleyhigh.ccsdschools.com/UserFiles/Servers/Server_2879766/Image/Staff/Donnie%20Newton/Policies/Bell%20Schedules%20\(2013-2014\).pdf](https://westashleyhigh.ccsdschools.com/UserFiles/Servers/Server_2879766/Image/Staff/Donnie%20Newton/Policies/Bell%20Schedules%20(2013-2014).pdf)

²² “Bell Schedule.” West Ashley High School. [https://westashleyhigh.ccsdschools.com/UserFiles/Servers/Server_2879766/Image/Staff/Donnie%20Newton/Policies/Bell%20Schedules%20\(2013-2014\).pdf](https://westashleyhigh.ccsdschools.com/UserFiles/Servers/Server_2879766/Image/Staff/Donnie%20Newton/Policies/Bell%20Schedules%20(2013-2014).pdf)

you see them again because there [is] no retention. [A/B scheduling] does not allow people to delve into deeper subject matter with labs.²³

Runyon notes that at WAHS, a small number of courses are taught using an A/B schedule. He stresses that these A/B courses complement each other, such as U.S. History and American Literature, and their curricula are scoped and sequenced together.²⁴

Runyon reports that the block schedule has changed how teachers teach and assess their students. While he hesitates to link a specific scheduling model with the school's graduation rates, the percentage of WAHS students finishing the required 24 credits has increased in recent years.²⁵

²³ Runyon, W. Op. cit.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Ibid.

SECTION II: ALBUQUERQUE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

This section summarizes scheduling practices in two Albuquerque Public Schools (APS) high schools. APS enrolls more than 94,000 students, 63 percent of whom are eligible for free or reduced price lunch.²⁶ APS requires that high school students complete 25 credits in order to earn a New Mexico high school diploma.²⁷

Administrators at APS high schools are currently transitioning to a new district-mandated schedule. Currently, APS high schools design their own class schedule. The two schools profiled below, Rio Grande High School and Sandia High School, use an alternating A/B/C schedule and a modified seven-period day, respectively.

In March 2015, APS announced changes to the schedule at all traditional high schools in the district. The new schedule is a modified-block format, where students take seven classes and study in 50- or 90-minute periods, depending on the day.²⁸ Figure 2.1 outlines the APS high school schedule beginning in the 2015-16 school year.

Figure 2.1: New APS High School Schedule

School Day	7:25 AM to 2:25 PM
Model	Modified block
Schedule	<p><i>Monday-Tuesday-Friday:</i> Seven 50-minute classes</p> <p><i>Wednesday:</i> Four 90-minute classes</p> <p><i>Thursday:</i> Three 90-minute classes; early dismissal at 12:55</p>
Credits Earned	7 credits per year

Source: APS and Albuquerque Journal²⁹

APS students will be dismissed early on Thursdays to provide teachers time to collaborate and plan lessons. Todd Resch, the APS associate superintendent for high schools, reports that the district chose this schedule because it means students will have core classes scheduled more frequently – they will attend reading and math four times a week – while still offering longer periods for time-intensive classes like science labs. APS officials also indicate that the new schedule will save the district money, as teachers will now be required to teach six classes instead of five.³⁰

²⁶ "Local Education Agency (School District) Universe Survey." National Center for Education Statistics, 2012-13. <https://nces.ed.gov/ccd/elsi/tableGenerator.aspx>

²⁷ "Graduation Requirements." Albuquerque Public Schools. <http://www.aps.edu/schools/graduation-requirements>

²⁸ [1] "APS Bell Schedule." Albuquerque Public Schools. <http://www.aps.edu/schools/high-school-bell-schedule>

[2] Swedien, J. "APS announces high school schedule change." *Albuquerque Journal*, March 20, 2015. <http://www.abqjournal.com/558136/news/aps-announces-high-school-schedule-change.html>

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Ibid.

RIO GRANDE HIGH SCHOOL

CURRENT SCHEDULE

Currently, Rio Grande High School (RGHS) operates on an alternating A/B schedule. The school day begins at 7:25 AM and ends at 2:25 PM. Students take four 90-minute classes, which alternate on A and B days. On Friday, RGHS operates on a C schedule, where students attend all of their core classes.³¹

Figure 2.2: Current Rio Grande High School Schedule

School Day	7:25 AM to 2:25 PM
Model	A/B/C schedule
Schedule	<p><i>Monday-Thursday:</i> Four 90-minute classes, alternating on A/B days.</p> <p><i>Friday:</i> Seven 48-minute periods</p>
Credits Earned	7 credits per year

Source: Amanda DeBell and APS³²

RGHS principal Amanda DeBell recalls that when the district increased the number of required credits for graduation to 25, the school had to hire additional personnel to ensure that all students could meet the new requirements.³³

On the following page, Figure 2.3 presents the weekly schedule for a student with “A lunch” in the upcoming 2015-16 academic year. The complimentary schedule for “B lunch” students is available at the district’s website. As noted above, school begins at the same time each day, but ends early on Thursdays.

³¹ DeBell, A. Principal, Rio Grande High School. Telephone interview, July 10, 2015.

³² [1] DeBell, A., Op. cit.

[2] “RGHS Bell Schedules.” Rio Grande High School (Albuquerque Public Schools). <https://rghs-aps-nm.schoolloop.com/bellSchedule>

³³ Ibid.

Figure 2.3: Weekly Schedule, “A Lunch” Student

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
7:25-8:15: 1 st period	7:25-8:15: 1 st period	7:25-8:55: 1 st period	7:25-8:55: 2 nd period	7:25-8:12: 1 st period
8:21-9:13: 2 nd period	8:21-9:13: 2 nd period			8:18-9:03: 2 nd period
9:19-10:09: 3 rd period	9:19-10:09: 3 rd period	9:01-10:37: 3 rd period	9:01-10:37: 4 th period	9:09-9:39: 10 th period
10:15-11:05: 4 th period	10:15-11:05: 4 th period			9:45-10:30: 3 rd period
11:11-11:41: Lunch	11:11-11:41: Lunch	10:43-11:13: Lunch	10:43-11:13: Lunch	10:36-11:21: 4 th period
11:45-12:35: 5 th period	11:45-12:35: 5 th period	11:19-12:49: 5 th period	11:19-12:49: 6 th period	11:27-11:57: Lunch
12:39-1:29: 6 th period	12:39-1:29: 6 th period	12:55-2:25: 7 th period	12:49: Dismissal	12:01-12:46: 5 th period
1:35-2:25: 7 th period	1:35-2:25: 7 th period			12:50-1:35: 6 th period
				1:41-2:25: 7 th period

Source: Rio Grande High School³⁴

NEW SCHEDULE

RGHS will implement the new APS modified block schedule beginning in Fall 2015. The schedule change coincides with the school’s adoption of Common Core, and both changes will require professional development. DeBell anticipates that for teachers, the transition from a 90-minute period to a shorter 50-minute period will be difficult. She says her teachers will need support with pacing and planning, especially since it coincides with the district’s curricular transition to Common Core.³⁵

DeBell highlights an additional challenge brought about by a change in district regulations. APS recently allowed students to earn dual credit for one course per term taken at a local community college or university. Beginning with the graduating class of 2013, APS students have been required to complete a dual credit, honors, Advanced Placement, or online class.³⁶ DeBell says the dual-credit option presents an added staffing and scheduling challenge at her school.³⁷

SANDIA HIGH SCHOOL

CURRENT SCHEDULE

Like RGHS, the class schedule at SHS alternates between 50-minute and 90-minute periods, depending on the day. However, SHS emphasizes the shorter, more frequent classes using a

³⁴ “Bell Schedule: 2015-2016.” Rio Grande High School. <https://rghs-aps-nm.schoolloop.com/bellSchedule>

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ “Dual Credit Fast Facts.” Albuquerque Public Schools. <http://www.aps.edu/aps-cnm/dual-credit-fast-facts>

³⁷ DeBell, A. Op. cit.

modified seven-period schedule. The SHS schedule features shorter 50-minute periods three days per week, and alternating 90-minute blocks on the remaining two days.³⁸ Figure 2.4 summarizes the current SHS schedule.

Figure 2.4: Current Sandia High School Schedule

School Day	7:25 AM to 2:25 PM
Model	Modified seven-period schedule
Schedule	<p><i>Monday-Tuesday-Friday:</i> 7 periods per day / 50 minutes per period</p> <p><i>Wednesday-Thursday:</i> Four 90-minute periods, alternating each day Early release on Thursday for PLC</p>
Credits Earned	7 credits per year

Source: Scott Elder and APS³⁹

SHS principal Scott Elder reports that in the 2014-15 school year, the school operated on a 4x4 block schedule, with four 96-minute classes per day. Under this schedule, the students were required to complete 27 credits to graduate.

NEW SCHEDULE

Figure 2.5 outlines the bell schedule for Sandia High School, which closely resembles that of Rio Grande High School.

Figure 2.5: Sandia High School Bell Schedule

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
7:25-8:15: 1 st Period	7:25-8:15: 1 st Period	7:25-8:55: 1 st Period	7:25-8:55: 2 st Period	7:25-8:15: 1 st Period
8:21-9:13: 2 nd Period	8:21-9:13: 2 nd Period	9:01-10:37: 3 rd Period	9:01-10:37: 4 rd Period	8:21-9:13: 2 nd Period
9:19-10:09: 3 rd Period	9:19-10:09: 3 rd Period	10:43-12:13: 5 th Period	10:43-12:13: 6 th Period	9:19-10:09: 3 rd Period
10:15-11:05: 4 th Period	10:15-11:05: 4 th Period	12:19-12:49: Lunch	12:19-12:49: Lunch	10:15-11:05: 4 th Period
11:11-12:01: 5 th Period	11:11-12:01: 5 th Period	12:55-2:25: 7 th Period	12:55-2:25: PLCs meet, students released early	11:11-12:01: 5 th Period
12:05-12:35: Lunch	12:05-12:35: Lunch			12:05-12:35: Lunch
12:39-1:29: 6 th Period	12:39-1:29: 6 th Period			12:39-1:29: 6 th Period
1:35-2:25: 7 th Period	1:35-2:25: 7 th Period			1:35-2:25: 7 th Period

Source: Sandia High School⁴⁰

³⁸ [1] Elder, S. Principal, Sandia High School. Telephone Interview, July 14, 2015.

[2] "Bell Schedules." Sandia High School (Albuquerque Public Schools). <https://shs-aps-nm.schoolloop.com/bell-schedules>

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

Having experienced multiple schedule transitions, Elder expects teachers will need training as they transition to the new APS schedule. Elder recalls that teachers needed assistance with instructional planning when the school moved from a six-period schedule to the 4x4 block several years ago:

A lot of teachers wanted to do two daily lessons in a period. It was a disaster. They had to learn to think about their 96 minute block differently: not two 45 minute classes stretched together with a break in between. They had to reconfigure the way they were teaching.⁴¹

With the new APS schedule, teachers will be teaching both shorter (50-minute) and longer (90-minute) classes. Elder indicates that a key challenge will be balancing lecture time with activities in the classroom. Realistically, he says, students will not be able to sit still for a full 90-minute period. Instead, teachers will need to plan multiple activities that involve students physically moving around to ensure they are engaged.

Elder prefers a 4x4 block schedule to the forthcoming modified block schedule. He notes that graduation rates improved when the 4x4 block schedule was in place. However, he does not attribute the improvement to the schedule. Instead, he says, SHS was focusing more on instructional practice.⁴²

Elder also notes that having a standardized schedule across APS schools helps both the district and its students. Until this new district-wide schedule, APS schools operated on different schedules. This lack of consistency among APS high school schedules caused difficulties for students transferring between APS high schools.⁴³

The new APS schedule will not impact extracurricular activities at Sandia High School. The school has a Zero Hour beginning at 6:30 AM, and traditional activities and practices are held during this time.⁴⁴

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

SECTION III: MISSOURI DISTRICTS

This section presents the scheduling practices in three Missouri school districts:

- Clayton High School, in Clayton School District
- Eureka High School, in Rockwood School District, and
- Festus High School, in Festus R-VI District

In 2006, the Missouri Board of Education increased the number of credits a student must complete to receive a high school diploma, beginning with the graduating class of 2010. Today, students in Missouri must complete 24 credits to graduate.⁴⁵

CLAYTON HIGH SCHOOL

Clayton High School (CHS) is the only high school in Clayton School District, located in a suburb of St. Louis.⁴⁶ The district enrolls approximately 2,500 students, 5 percent of whom are eligible for free or reduced price lunch.⁴⁷

The school day at CHS begins at 8:10 AM and ends at 3:05 PM. CHS operates on a traditional 7-period schedule, meaning that students take seven year-long classes per day. However, the schedule includes an extended period every other day for science lab activities. Students also have the option of taking an eighth course during the zero hour, which begins at 7:23 AM.⁴⁸ Figure 3.1 summarizes the class schedule at CHS.

Figure 3.1: Clayton High School Schedule

School Day	8:10 AM to 3:05 PM
Model	Traditional 7-period schedule
Schedule	7 classes per day / 47 minutes per class
Credits Earned	7 credits per year

Source: CSD and Gutchewsky⁴⁹

CHS principal Dan Gutchewsky argues that the seven-period schedule offers considerable flexibility to struggling students, since it allows students to complete 28 credits, compared to the state graduation requirement of 24 credits.⁵⁰

Figure 3.2 on the following page outlines the regular bell schedule at Clayton High School.

⁴⁵ "Graduation Requirements for Students in Missouri Public Schools." Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, March 2015. p. 3. <https://dese.mo.gov/sites/default/files/GraduationHandbook.pdf>

⁴⁶ Gutchewsky, Dan. Principal, Clayton High School. Telephone Interview, July 13, 2015.

⁴⁷ "Local Education Agency (School District) Universe Survey." National Center for Education Statistics, 2012-13. <https://nces.ed.gov/ccd/elsi/tableGenerator.aspx>

⁴⁸ "Bell Schedules." Clayton County School District. <http://www.clayton.k12.mo.us/Page/1361>

⁴⁹ [1] "Bell Schedules," Op. cit.

[2] Gutchewsky, D., Op. cit.

⁵⁰ Gutchewsky, D., Op. cit.

Figure 3.2: Bell Schedule, Clayton High School

PERIOD	TIME
Period 0	7:23-8:10
1 st Bell	8:10
Period 1	8:15-9:02
Period 2	9:06-9:53
Period 3	9:57-10:50
Period 4	10:54-11:41
Period 5	11:45-12:32
Period 6	12:36-1:23
Period 7	1:27-2:14
Period 8	2:18-3:05

Source: Clayton High School⁵¹

Gutchewsky reports that the seven-period model has been very successful. In fact, the schedule has been in place at CHS for several decades. During that time, CHS has consistently ranked as one of the best performing high schools in Missouri. However, Gutchewsky does not attribute the school’s success to the class schedule.

Gutchewsky notes that some stakeholder groups in his district are interested in incorporating an advisory period into the schedule a few times per month. Such a change would require reducing class time or extending the school day. Furthermore, Gutchewsky reports that some teachers would prefer a block schedule with 90-minute classes, including humanities teachers. The CHS scheduling committee has examined all of these possibilities, but continues to maintain the seven-period schedule without any changes.⁵²

EUREKA HIGH SCHOOL

Eureka High School (EHS) is one of four high schools in Rockwood School District, located in suburban St. Louis.⁵³ The district enrolls approximately 22,500 students, of whom 7 percent are eligible for free or reduced price lunch.⁵⁴

EHS has a particularly complicated scheduling model. At EHS, the school day begins at 8:16 AM and ends at 3:05 PM. The school day includes seven periods, with some – but not all – classes alternating on an A/B/C schedule. Some classes are offered in a standard 49-minute format, while others are offered in 98-minute blocks.⁵⁵

⁵¹ “Bell Schedules.” Clayton High School. <http://www.claytonschools.net/Page/1361>

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ “Rockwood School District.” Rockwood School District. <http://www.rockwood.k12.mo.us/Pages/default.aspx>

⁵⁴ “Local Education Agency (School District) Universe Survey.” National Center for Education Statistics, 2012-13. <https://nces.ed.gov/ccd/elsi/tableGenerator.aspx>

⁵⁵ Strauser, Jennifer. Associate Principal, Eureka High School. E-mail interview.

Figure 3.3: Eureka High School Schedule

School Day	8:16 AM to 3:05 PM
Model	Modified A/B/C block schedule
Schedule	7 period per day / 49 minutes per period
Credits Earned	7 credits per year

Source: Jennifer Strauser and EHS⁵⁶

Below, Figure 3.4 presents the regular day schedule for A, B, and C full days. It should be noted that the Zero hour is not offered on Monday morning, but is available the rest of the week.

Figure 3.4: A, B, and C Full Day Schedule, Eureka High School

PERIOD	TIME
Zero Hour	7:08-8:10
1 st Period	8:16-9:04
2 nd Period	9:11-10:00
3 rd Period	10:06-10:55
4 th Period	11:01-12:20
Lunch	
Lunch A	10:55-11:26
Lunch B	11:26-11:56
Lunch C	11:56-12:26
5 th Period	12:26 - 1:15
6 th Period	1:21 - 2:10
7 th Period	2:16 - 3:05

Source: Jennifer Strauser⁵⁷

Jennifer Strauser, EHS’s associate principal, reports that the EHS moved to the modified block schedule following the Missouri State Board of Education’s decision to increase the number of required credits for graduation. The new schedule included a move from six-period days to the current seven-period schedule.

Strauser highlights two challenges that EHS faced when transitioning to the new schedule. First, teachers needed training on how to plan lessons for block scheduling. Second, the new schedule, with its mix of 49-minute and 98-minute periods, produces so many class configurations, which made it difficult for administrators to create a master schedule.⁵⁸

⁵⁶ [1] Strauser, J., Op. cit.

[2] “Bell Schedule.” Eureka High School (Rockwood School District).
<http://www.rockwood.k12.mo.us/eurekaHS/Pages/BellSchedule.aspx>

⁵⁷ Strauser, J. Op. cit.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

FESTUS HIGH SCHOOL

Festus High School (FHS) is the sole high school in Festus R-VI School District, located south of St. Louis. The district enrolls approximately 3,000 students, 37 percent of whom are eligible for free or reduced price lunch.⁵⁹

At Festus High School, the school day begins at 7:40 AM and ends at 2:37 PM. The school follows a traditional eight-period schedule, with 47 minutes per period. Students take seven classes per year. The fifth period is a 25-minute advisory period.⁶⁰

Figure 3.5: Festus High School Schedule

School Day	7:40 AM to 2:37 PM
Model	Modified traditional schedule
Schedule	<p><i>Monday-Tuesday-Thursday-Friday:</i> 8 periods per day / 47 minutes per period 5th period is 25-minute advisory</p> <p><i>Wednesday:</i> 42-minute periods, students start 1 hr. later, extra time used for staff PLCs,</p>
Credits Earned	7 credits per year

Source: Joel Roth⁶¹

A unique feature of the FHS schedule is a dedicated hour on Wednesday mornings for teachers to meet and plan in professional learning communities (PLCs). On that day, the start time for students is one hour later. Joel Roth, FHS's associate principal, notes that the school decided to implement PLCs about 12 year ago.⁶²

Roth recalls that when the state of Missouri increased the number of credits required for graduation, the school did not have to change its schedule. He notes one negative impact of the credit requirement increase: FHS has not been able to offer as many elective choices to students. He reports that the model has been successful and has had no negative impacts on extracurricular activities or other aspects of FHS operations.⁶³

⁵⁹ "Local Education Agency (School District) Universe Survey." National Center for Education Statistics, 2012-13. <https://nces.ed.gov/ccd/elsi/tableGenerator.aspx>

⁶⁰ Roth, Joel. Associate Principal, Festus High School. Email interview, July 22, 2015.

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Ibid.

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