

To: Thomas Scarice, Superintendent of Schools
From: Stafford W. Thomas, Jr., JD, Principal
Re: Recommendation from SHS Scheduling Committee Regarding New Schedule
Date: January 27, 2025

Overview of Process

The Scheduling Committee, comprising 12 members, met regularly over the past two years to address evolving educational needs and challenges associated with our current schedule, which has been in place for six years. The committee included representatives from most departments, including teachers, coordinators, and assistant principals. The primary goal was to design a schedule better aligned with student learning, staff needs, and overall school operations.

The members of the committee were:

Pat Micinilio, Assistant Principal
Dave Willick, Social Studies Teacher
Enia Noonan, Italian Teacher
Bill Plunkett, Director of School Counseling
Jenn Giudice, Mathematics Teacher
John DeLuca, 6-12 Science Coordinator
Barbara Robbins, English Teacher
Sarah Levesh-Prior, Special Education Teacher
Dominick Messina, Science Teacher
Lauren Manosh, Special Education Teacher
Jim Farnen, Assistant Principal
Christine Wanner, K-12 Coordinator of Health and Physical Education

Stakeholder Involvement and Guiding Feedback

The committee conducted an extensive review of feedback gathered over the past six years, focusing on experiences during the pandemic and subsequent schedule adaptations.

Notable Feedback Sources

- Climate Survey Student Feedback: (lab lunches)
- Department Meetings
- Faculty Meeting
- PTA
- Student/Family Emails

Feedback Themes

- **Pandemic-Era Schedules:**
 - Lessons learned from an eight-period daily schedule and a 4x4 block schedule
 - eight-period daily schedule rejected due to workload concerns for students
 - 4x4 block schedule had positive feedback on “Flex” period opportunity but significant dissatisfaction with overall instructional model
 - E.g. concern with “mini periods”, classes meeting too infrequently, no open campus provision for students (all other schools DRG A with 4x4 have open campus)
- **Current Schedule Feedback:**
 - Feedback themes of current schedule included

- Ineffectiveness of “lab lunch” model
- cafeteria overcrowding
- homework demands
- impact of late start times on missed instructional time due to early dismissals for athletics and other events
- **Advisory Program (Connections):**
 - Teachers and students expressed concerns about the frequency of Connections meetings. Since its inception 6 years ago, the sentiment was too many meetings
 - Originally designed as a twice-weekly model, the number of sessions has already been reduced from 70 to 56 annually, but additional adjustments are necessary

Goals of the Proposed Schedule

The new schedule aims to address key concerns and enhance the overall school experience by:

1. Increasing the opportunity for in-depth learning and engagement through extended class periods
2. Streamlining the schedule to optimize teacher planning and student focus(longer classes/prep periods)
3. Reducing lab lunches and minimizing missed instructional time
4. Adjusting the frequency of Connections meetings to better meet stakeholder needs(based on feedback). The Connections advisory period meets more than any other school in the DRG

Key Differences and Features

The proposed schedule includes the following changes:

- **Daily Structure:**
 - 5 periods per day (reduced from 6)
- **Lunch Waves:**
 - 4 lunch waves (increased from 3) to reduce cafeteria overcrowding
- **Class Durations:**
 - 3 periods of 60 minutes each
 - 1 period of 80 minutes
 - 1 period of 90 minutes

(Current model includes 4 periods of 50 minutes and 2 periods of 65 minutes.)
- **Full Rotations:**
 - All 8 periods will rotate throughout the day, eliminating the current fixed morning and afternoon rotations
 - This ensures balanced learning opportunities and fewer disruptions due to absences
- **Connections:**
 - Reduced from ~56 annual meetings to ~43, maintaining advisory support while respecting instructional time
 - Extended Connections Blocks for SEL Curriculum (every 6/8 weeks)

Benefits and Tradeoffs

Benefits:

- **Extended and Focused Learning:**
 - Longer class periods allow for in-depth lessons, collaborative projects, and meaningful engagement
- **Reduced Disruptions:**

- Fewer class changes minimize interruptions and provide smoother transitions for both students and teachers
- **Optimized Planning:**
 - Teachers benefit from increased planning time (product of longer periods), resulting in enhanced lesson quality and reduced workload pressure
- **Improved Student Experience:**
 - A reduced daily subject load and fewer transitions support focus, reflection, and overall well-being
 - Overall daily preparation for classes and reduced homework load should reflect a 5 per day rather versus 6 per day decrease in nightly prep

Trade Offs:

- **Flex Period:**
 - The committee explored adding a “Flex” period but found it unfeasible without adopting a 4x4 model, which was not supported by stakeholders
- **Implementation Adjustments:**
 - Transitioning to a new schedule will require some professional development and adaptation time for both staff and students in extended block instructio.

Before and After Comparison

<u>Aspect</u>	<u>Current Schedule</u>	<u>Proposed Schedule</u>
Periods per Day	6	5
Lunch Waves	3	4
Class Durations	4 @ 50 mins; 2 @ 65 mins	3 @ 60 mins; 1 @ 80 mins; 1 @ 90 mins
Rotation	Fixed morning (1-4) and afternoon (5-8)	Full 8-period rotation
Connections Meetings	~56 annually	~43 annually

Conclusion

This proposal represents a thoughtful and collaborative effort to create a master schedule that addresses longstanding concerns, aligns with the school’s mission, and optimizes both teaching and learning experiences. By implementing these changes, Staples High School will maintain its reputation for excellence while meeting the evolving needs of its students and staff.

Attachments: Proposed Daily Schedule

Proposed Schedule

A (1 Up Day)	B (8 Down Day)	C (7 Up Day)	D (6 Down Day)	E (5 Up Day)	F (4 Down Day)	G (3 Up Day)	H (2 Down Day)
1 8:00-9:00	8 8:00-9:00	7 8:00-9:00	6 8:00-9:00	5 8:00-9:00	4 8:00-9:00	3 8:00-9:00	2 8:00-9:00
2 9:05-10:25	7 9:05-10:25	8 9:05-10:25	5 9:05-10:25	6 9:05-10:25	3 9:05-10:25	4 9:05-10:25	1 9:05-10:25
3 10:30-12:35 <small>L 1:10:30-11:05 L 2:11:00-11:35 L 3:11:30-12:05 L 4:12:00-12:35</small>	6 10:30-12:35 <small>L 1:10:30-11:05 L 2:11:00-11:35 L 3:11:30-12:05 L 4:12:00-12:35</small>	1 10:30-12:35 <small>L 1:10:30-11:05 L 2:11:00-11:35 L 3:11:30-12:05 L 4:12:00-12:35</small>	4 10:30-12:35 <small>L 1:10:30-11:05 L 2:11:00-11:35 L 3:11:30-12:05 L 4:12:00-12:35</small>	7 10:30-12:35 <small>L 1:10:30-11:05 L 2:11:00-11:35 L 3:11:30-12:05 L 4:12:00-12:35</small>	2 10:30-12:35 <small>L 1:10:30-11:05 L 2:11:00-11:35 L 3:11:30-12:05 L 4:12:00-12:35</small>	5 10:30-12:35 <small>L 1:10:30-11:05 L 2:11:00-11:35 L 3:11:30-12:05 L 4:12:00-12:35</small>	8 10:30-12:35 <small>L 1:10:30-11:05 L 2:11:00-11:35 L 3:11:30-12:05 L 4:12:00-12:35</small>
4 12:40-1:40	5 12:40-1:40	2 12:40-1:40	3 12:40-1:40	8 12:40-1:40	1 12:40-1:40	6 12:40-1:40	7 12:40-1:40
5 1:45-2:45	4 1:45-2:45	3 1:45-2:45	2 1:45-2:45	1 1:45-2:45	8 1:45-2:45	7 1:45-2:45	6 1:45-2:45
DROP 6, 7, 8	DROP 1, 2, 3	DROP 4, 5, 6	DROP 7, 8, 1	DROP 2, 3, 4	DROP 5, 6, 7	DROP 8, 1, 2	DROP 3, 4, 5

Wrecker Wednesday (Connections)

A (1 Up Day)	B (8 Down Day)	C (7 Up Day)	D (6 Down Day)	E (5 Up Day)	F (4 Down Day)	G (3 Up Day)	H (2 Down Day)
1 8:00-9:00	8 8:00-9:00	7 8:00-9:00	6 8:00-9:00	5 8:00-9:00	4 8:00-9:00	3 8:00-9:00	2 8:00-9:00
2 9:05-10:00	7 9:05-10:00	8 9:05-10:00	5 9:05-10:00	6 9:05-10:00	3 9:05-10:00	4 9:05-10:00	1 9:05-10:00
Connections 10:05-10:25	Connections 10:05-10:25	Connections 10:05-10:25	Connections 10:05-10:25	Connections 10:05-10:25	Connections 10:05-10:25	Connections 10:05-10:25	Connections 10:05-10:25
DROP 6, 7, 8	DROP 1, 2, 3	DROP 4, 5, 6	DROP 7, 8, 1	DROP 2, 3, 4	DROP 5, 6, 7	DROP 8, 1, 2	DROP 3, 4, 5