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New AUHSD schedule hopes to broaden scope of student learning

By John T. Miller

2017-2018 School Day Schedule



Students at the Acalanes Union High School District will be greeted by a new bell schedule and a modified block schedule when they return to school on Monday, Aug 21.

The schedule is a result of work by a stakeholder task force that researched various schedules from other districts and made recommendations to the governing board.

The AUHSD governing board supported the change after many meetings over an eight-month period. According to the district's websight, teachers will have the opportunity for "professional development to support the instructional/curricular shift with the schedule and the longer instructional blocks, as well as to design the Academy period systems to optimize the potential of this change."

With a few small revisions, the schedule is basically the same as what the schools experimented with last spring for a two-week period.

AUHSD Associate Superintendent Amy McNamara said, "One of the driving forces behind block schedule is to go

deeper in the curriculum with more analysis and critical thinking, while at the same time slowing down the schedule and addressing student stress."

She added that, with the common core shift to more in-depth discussion, the block schedule allows the students and teachers to cover "more depth and less breadth."

The new Academy periods give teachers and students opportunities to talk and work together and allows flex time in the week for intervention and enrichment.

"We are very aware of teachers needing time to redesign," said McNamara, pointing out that there will be three days of in-service before school starts and opportunities for teachers to adjust to a "time of transition and change."

The new schedule features a full seven-period day of 50-minutes each beginning at 8:35 a.m. on Mondays. Tuesdays and Thursdays will begin at 8 a.m., with students attending first, second, third, and seventh periods of one-and-a-half hours each. On Wednesdays and Fridays the day begins for students at 8:35 a.m. with fourth, fifth, and sixth periods - on these days the teachers will have time for staff meetings and collaboration from 7:30-8:30 a.m., and there will also be an Academy period of 55 minutes between fourth and fifth period.

While the schedule may be confusing at first, more and more schools across the nation are going to some sort of modified block schedule to better meet the needs of today's students.

The district recommends that questions regarding the block schedule be directed toward the student's principal's office.

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