



## **New High School Schedule Frequently Asked Questions**

### **1. Why is the Houston County School System moving to a seven-period high school schedule?**

- The restructure of the high school schedule into a seven-period day is to support the mission of the Houston County School System to produce high-achieving students.
- Beginning with the 2008-2009 freshman class, the State of Georgia increased the graduation criteria for all students to require that each student earn twenty-three credits to graduate. Under a six-period schedule, students only have the potential to earn twenty-four credits. With a seven-period day, students can earn up to seven units per year totaling 28 credits upon graduation.
- A seven-period day will increase opportunities and provide flexibility for students to earn graduation credits in the classes that they need and/or want during their high school career. The seven-period day will make a tremendous difference in opening up opportunities to explore additional courses in core subjects, fine arts, foreign languages, Career, Technical and Agricultural Education (CTAE) programs of study, and physical education and health while maintaining minimal costs to the school system. In addition, the seven-period day would allow for more support classes and more individualized attention for ESOL and special education students.
- The new graduation requirements include increased Mathematics credits for all students. Additionally, with the implementation of more rigorous Georgia Performance Mathematics Standards, some students require an additional Mathematics Support class. The seven-period day will provide the segments to meet the individual needs of these students.

### **2. Why will there be two different schedules during the week?**

- The students will be enrolled for seven classes during the school year. On Monday, Thursday, and Friday the school will operate on a schedule where students attend all seven classes. Each class will be 50 minutes in duration.
- On Tuesday students will attend four classes (periods <sup>1st</sup>, <sup>2nd</sup>, <sup>3rd</sup>, and <sup>4th</sup>) and on Wednesday students will attend three classes (periods <sup>5th</sup>, <sup>6th</sup>, and <sup>7th</sup>). The classes will be 85 minutes in duration. Longer classes will increase time for greater depth of teaching and learning within the content, time to conduct lab experiences, and opportunities for students to work collaboratively and independently while gaining immediate instructional feedback.

- The Tuesday and Wednesday schedule also provides targeted enrichment and remediation instructional support during the school day to meet the individual needs of each student. The Academic Opportunity time will afford students time during the school day for the following:
  - Receive additional instruction on specialized coursework such as Honors, Advanced Placement, and Support classes;
  - Additional support preparing for the Scholastic Assessment Test (SAT), American College Test (ACT), Advanced Placement (AP) exams, and the Georgia High School Graduation Tests (GHSGT);
  - Tutorial support for students experiencing difficulty with course content; and
  - Time during the school day to make up coursework and/or regain course credit during the school day resulting in students graduating with their class.

**3. Will there be training provided to assist teachers with planning effective instruction in an 85 minute block?**

Professional learning will be provided to teachers and administrators on strategies that have a positive impact on student achievement during an extended learning period. System professional learning days, Vertical team curriculum meetings, and department meetings will be used to increase knowledge of differentiated instructional practices, formative assessment, performance-based learning, and providing timely feedback to students.

**4. Will there be a difference in class instructional time during a six-period day versus a seven-period day?**

The seven-period day will result in fewer contact hours in the class over the course of the school year. However, the extended class time on Tuesday and Wednesday should increase the rigor and depth of teaching and learning occurring in the course content. Additionally, the Academic Opportunity time offered during the school day will allow students to have targeted instruction based on their individual needs. Research indicates that a restructured day utilizing standards-based, bell-to-bell instruction should result in overall increased student achievement.

**5. What are some of the drawbacks in moving to a seven-period day?**

- Students and teachers will have an additional class for which to prepare. However, students will have an extra preparation time with the alternate day schedule on Tuesday and Wednesday. Additionally, the Academic Opportunity time will provide instructional support during the day to meet the individual needs of all students.
- There will be more class changes on Monday, Thursday, and Friday.