

THE PROMISE OF FLEXIBLE SCHEDULING FOR SCHOOLS

A TEACHER-POWERED REPORT & PLAYBOOK

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Introduction

It is hard to find hope amidst a global pandemic that took the lives of millions around the world and has caused so much trauma, grief, loneliness and hardship. Yet amidst this tragedy, and in our lack of togetherness, there is a real reckoning with how we spend our time and whether it aligns with the lives we want to lead. While so many essential workers continued to work in person (and continue to until this day) many other professionals experienced a seismic shift in the way work itself was conducted.

By turning to virtual and hybrid approaches, people began to experience what it would be like not to *separate* work from life, but to achieve *harmony* between work and life. People were no longer willing to settle for jobs that didn't sufficiently value them not just as workers, but as human beings. They demanded not only adequate pay, but more time off, better benefits, and perhaps above all - flexibility.

It's been called "The Great Resignation," but it was really the start of the "Great Transformation" of work in America - something still underway today. But how can our schools, which have long required students (and staff) to be in school five days a week for very specific hours, adapt?

Let's explore.

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“ We are living in unprecedented times. And the demands upon each of our lives is strong, real, and taxing. The world is unfolding to meet these demands and the field of education should catch up. Within our schools we are feeling the effects of the pandemic across the board. Students have suffered immensely and so have educators. Yet, somehow, the mental and emotional toll the pandemic has had on educators gets lost and the demands increase...

Greater scheduling flexibility would definitely keep me in the field longer.

DC TEACHER ”

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"All students would benefit from happier, healthier, less stressed-out teachers. And students need a break. Field trips, outdoor activities, Science/STEM days would be very valuable!"

-Ward 4 DC Teacher ”

As the world turned virtual, educators, many of whom had never had the opportunity before, experienced the freedom to get up and go to the bathroom when they needed to, go to that doctor's appointment before their physical health worsened and it became an emergency. Educators were able to do the laundry or cook a meal during the day instead of pushing it to the night when they had to juggle all the household chores with their family time. Nearly universally, educators missed being in the building- the camaraderie with colleagues, seeing their students' faces, and seeing those light bulb moments. But they also got a taste of what it might be like to work a different kind of job - a job that actually allows them to take care of themselves. A job that would allow them to be well. And once they experienced it, it became nearly impossible for many educators to push the thought out of their heads. They loved teaching...but is the job of teaching and the way we do it in this country just too much to be worth it? Why not take the job in curriculum writing, in non-profit project management, or a thousand other jobs educators have the skill set to excel in, and earn at least as much money, while giving themselves far better work-life harmony? **All of this set in motion the inevitable "Great Resignation" - the teacher exodus.**

Every teacher has that student (or many students) who says or demonstrates that school is not for them. But largely what they mean is- *schooling* is not for them. A schooling model based on rotating from classroom to classroom and receiving instruction from bell to bell in strictly confined indoor spaces. Our education system has tragically failed to make the innovations and adaptations necessary to not only make schooling work for these children, but to learn from these young people how we could actually make schooling better for everyone.

Even as positive trends have taken hold to reinvent schooling - from project-based and experiential learning to personalized learning plans to outdoor learning - we are constantly trying to fit these smart approaches into the same old box...into a school schedule that simply doesn't support it.

Meanwhile, the country continues to experience unacceptably high teacher turnover, including midyear turnover, which is one of the greatest threats to schools sustaining progress. According to a 2022 Gallup poll, American educators report being more burned out than workers in any other industry.

Over the past decade, here in Washington, D.C., between 20 and 30 % of educators leave their schools each year- forcing the schools to not only replace them, but to re-invest in all of the training that educators received over the years. The churn is emotionally damaging to young people as they lose critical adult role models. It is academically damaging to young people as teachers who leave are often replaced with novice teachers with less pedagogical expertise. It is damaging to the teachers who stay who have to pick up the slack and whose burnout worsens when they are asked to do more and more – especially when teachers leave mid-year, as has become all too common.

While all of this paints a picture of a profession on the edge, with this crisis comes the opportunity to transform both teaching and learning in a way that can make a profound difference for educators and students alike.

Schooling has evolved a great deal over the years, but in many ways it has stayed the same, neatly controlled by rigid hours and a traditional a bell schedule sending students scrambling from class to class approximately once an hour. If we break up the traditional school schedule, we have a tremendous opportunity to give educators the work-life harmony and well-being they deserve. Educators will be able to grow professionally and show up more effectively for students by planning more and providing targeted support and enrichment. This results in the well-rounded education that parents and families are demanding and that our students deserve.

Enter Flexible Scheduling...

Executive Summary

This report and playbook outlines how flexible scheduling for schools holds the promise to address both educator burnout and student opportunities simultaneously.

Our report focuses on Washington, DC, a city with the highest teacher turnover rate in the country with 20-30 % of educators departing their school annually. A 2021 survey of DC teachers jointly conducted by EmpowerEd and the Washington Teachers Union during the peak of the COVID-19 pandemic found that while 83 % of educators felt their morale had worsened from previous years and as many as half were considering departing the classroom, educators rated “flexible scheduling” as the most impactful thing that would keep them in their roles. Since then, we have embarked on research, surveying and conducted educator focus groups to define exactly what types of flexibility would make the biggest difference for educators and what potential benefits these models would have for students and families. In this report we play out the most promising potential models and what sample schedules might look like.

You’ll see options like the “Enrichment Day” model that keep the schedule largely as-is, four days a week while transforming one day a week into an opportunity for student enrichment, individualized instruction and project-based learning while educators have the opportunity to focus on planning, student feedback or professional development. You’ll see options like the “rotating drop” schedule that clears time at the end of each day to make space for deeper student learning and additional teacher planning, and options like a later start time for high school that would be more developmentally appropriate for teenage sleep cycles, potentially address concerns about students needing more structured activity later in the day while also providing educators additional planning and collaboration time. You’ll also see models focused on targeted flexibility, like providing additional flexibility in the time, place and amount of work for new teachers, educators with young children, or veteran educators who may take on new leadership roles with a lighter class schedule. We also highlight many smaller scheduling shifts suggested by educators that could positively impact their well-being. Each option has pros and cons and should be carefully considered and adapted by school communities to meet their unique needs. But all of them have the potential, given the right planning and execution, to ease educator burnout and enrich the student experience.

We also outline the results of our recent DC educator survey. We received thousands of comments emphasizing how impactful job flexibility could be, especially for educators with children and Black women, who rated this as a top intervention to keep them in the profession, improve their well-being and help them bring balance and harmony between their passion for teaching and the needs of their own children and families at home. We also surveyed DC principals and found that school leaders who already implement flexible scheduling approaches find them to be incredibly rewarding and beneficial for staff and students alike - though not without logistical challenges.

Based on two years of conversations with school leaders, educators, district leaders, and education partners about these approaches, we make the following recommendations to help guide implementation.

We believe district leaders must:

1. Make sufficient investments to support school design and implementation
2. Collaborate with teachers' unions.
3. Tackle regulations and requirements together - like seat hours and attendance policies.
4. Make needed reforms to human resources structures to allow for part-time work and ease the on-boarding process.
5. Ensure a holistic approach to educator well-being like guaranteeing mental health days for staff.
6. Guarantee a right to before and after-care for all students who need it.

We believe schools must:

1. Build consensus with all stakeholders at the outset.
2. Build and sustain strong partnerships with community partners.
3. Hire staff to coordinate new programs- rather than putting the responsibility on existing staff.

We also recommend guideposts and appropriate cautions that will ensure successful implementation. Finally, we leave you with the story of one educator whose description of the daily challenges at work and at home serves as a perfect illustration of the need for this transformative shift.

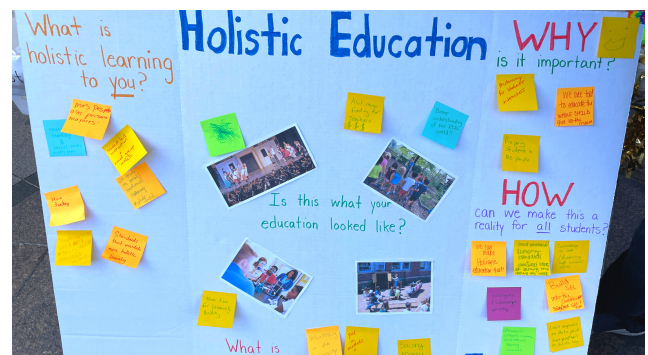
What is Flexible Scheduling?

Flexible Scheduling (for schools): a modified daily, weekly, or yearly school schedule or staffing plan designed with the intention of providing additional time and places of flexibility for staff and students while enhancing staff and student well-being, educator planning, collaboration time, and enriching and modernizing the student experience.

For the purposes of the report, we will use this definition to describe the vast array of flexible scheduling models. The definition sets a minimum standard:

- 1) Flexible Scheduling should prioritize educator well-being and retention
- 2) Flexible Scheduling should prioritize modernizing the way students receive instruction, enhancing their social and emotional learning, mental health, and ensuring all students receive a well-rounded education.

We believe that all of the models we propose in this report have the potential to do both of those things exceedingly well with the proper planning and district-wide support in place.



**Flexible schedules
prioritize the mental
health, well-being, and
experience of students
and staff alike.**

PERSPECTIVES: Would Flexible Scheduling Help Retain You?

It is the single thing that makes or breaks my teaching career. I am considering leaving school -- a place that I LOVE and feel valued -- because my job is too many hours, and I don't think I can realistically have a family and also continue doing the job I'm doing. I desperately want to stay, but I NEED one or multiple of these [flexible models in your survey] to happen in order to be able to.

-Ward 5 Charter School Teacher

Personally, having a flexible schedule will allow me to have a work life balance and prioritize my mental and physical health. It will allow me the opportunity to eat a more balanced breakfast, workout, and be more intentional with my work because I have more space and time to dedicate towards it. Having a flexible schedule, would encourage me to stay in the profession longer.

Ward 8 DCPS Teacher

I have perpetual guilt about passing my stress onto my students. No matter how hard we try to shield them, it is inevitable that they pick up on it. All students would benefit from happier, healthier, less stressed out teachers. And students need a break. Field trips, outdoor activities, Science/STEM days would be very valuable."

Ward 4 Teacher

I believe any kind of step towards flexible scheduling and the District showing teachers they value our time and ourselves as people, not just bodies... could keep me in this profession.

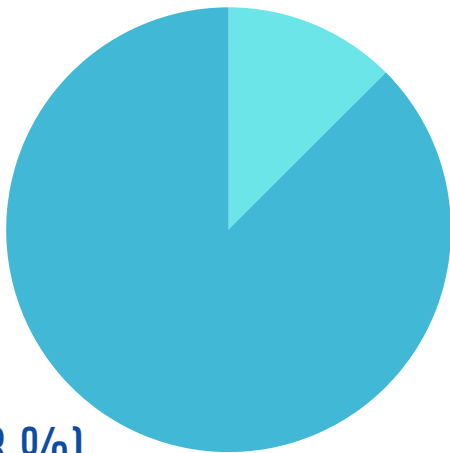
Ward 7 Teacher

THE SURVEY: WHAT DO DC TEACHERS THINK ABOUT FLEXIBLE SCHEDULING?

This school year (22-23) EmpowerEd surveyed a diverse cross-section of DC educators with 1,100 respondents representing more than 150 of DC's 249 public and public charter schools. We asked teachers about specific models of flexible scheduling and how these ideas might contribute to their well-being, retention, and the success of their students.

Does your school currently provide any degree of scheduling flexibility for staff?

Yes (12.6 %)



No (87.3 %)

Respondents

1,107

TOTAL DC
TEACHERS WHO
RESPONDED

155+

REPRESENTING
OVER 150 DC
SCHOOL
COMMUNITIES

**A note on respondents: while our survey is largely representative of the DC teaching workforce, the responses over-represented more experienced teachers (10+ year) and DCPS teachers.*

“

I never have time to get anything done in my personal life. I always have to take time off to fit in doctor's appointments because there is never evening availability. By the time I get done with work, I am exhausted and burnt out. I face a lot of burnout for a second-year teacher and I have already contemplated leaving the profession numerous times now. I can see why the turnover is so high, it makes complete sense. I think flexible scheduling would help with burnout significantly as long as it does not change my pay - as it is, I can barely afford to live in the same city I teach in.

”

“

"[Flexible scheduling] would change everything. At this point, I am in my 10th year of teaching and I am DONE. I adore teaching, it is my passion, but the workload and added stress...has an adverse effect on my mental health."

”

Q: WHICH OF THESE MODELS OF FLEXIBILITY ARE MOST APPEALING TO YOU PERSONALLY?

RANKINGS

1

Setting aside one day a week as an "enrichment day" where educators have time to collaborate, plan and work remotely while students engage in enrichment through partner organizations, elective classes, etc...

2

Ending each day earlier and having dedicated teacher planning time or remote work time while student have enrichment activities or elective courses

3

Allowing educators to choose a schedule - EX: you either work 7 am to 2 pm, 9 am to 4 pm or 12 pm to 7 pm

4

Half day of in-person classes one or two days a week (may include an early release for older students, extended after-care for younger, asynchronous instruction etc...)

5

Reduced teaching loads/increased flexibility for veteran teachers (more than 5 years)

6

Allowing educators returning from FMLA (have a new baby or caring for a family member) to work a reduced schedule/ reduced course load for a period of 1-2 years

7

Allowing any educator to work a reduced class schedule for reduced pay (ex- educators could choose to work 75 % time for 75 % pay- but would keep all benefits)

DC TEACHER SURVEY: How impactful would the following solutions be in keeping you in your current role?

THE TOP TEN RANKINGS

TIER 1: "very high" potential impact scores

1

Higher Pay

2

Guaranteed
Mental Health Days

3

Flexible
Scheduling

4

More Planning Time

5

Healthier School
Buildings

TIER 2: similarly " high" potential impact scores

6

Guaranteed Permanent
Subs for All Schools

7

More Mental Health/ Wrap
Around Supports for
Students

8

Overhauling the Teacher
Evaluation System

9

Guaranteed (Paid) Time
Off for Professional
Learning

10

Less Focus/ Time Spent
on Standardized Testing

11. A sabbatical to pursue other
professional interests

12. More mental health and
wrap-around supports for educators

13. Home-buying or rental assistance

14. Student loan repayment
assistance

15. More Teacher & Staff
leadership opportunities

16. Mentorship programs

Black women
(particularly those over
30) rated "flexible
scheduling"
significantly higher
than other groups

Potential Models

Over the past year EmpowerEd has researched existing models of flexible scheduling both in the U.S. and around the globe, interviewed students, teachers, and principals, and asked DC educators to design models they think most appropriate for their own schools. In this report, we will highlight potential models for ECE, Elementary, Middle School, and High School* with an overview of potential school models and then sample schedules.

**Adult schools may also benefit from high school models*

Enrichment Day/Camp Day

- The most popular model in our survey would **change the school schedule one day a week**, allowing teachers additional time to plan, collaborate, and work from home while students engage in enrichment activities which can include targeted instruction, tutoring, vocational education, internships, project-based learning, outdoor learning, field-based learning and much more depending on the grade level and the size of the school. This model requires each school to form partnerships with partner organizations and to hire additional staff who run programming on the enrichment day. We will discuss staffing solutions later in this report.

Addressing Equity

- One teacher suggested this day as a "camp day" where you would host a lot of activities parents want for their kids, but have a hard time getting or fitting into the week- swimming lessons, music lessons, sports, etc... The teacher said "And families would benefit--no soccer at 8:00 pm or guitar at 3:45 because it was the only spot available."

Half Day Schedule

Another popular model would be similar to the enrichment day approach but instead, make one day (often a Wednesday or a Friday) a half day for students. This is an opportunity to build in extended time for teacher/ staff professional development and to allow staff the ability to take care of personal needs that require daytime appointments.

Many schools already have a half day one day every week and require educators to stay for the second half of the day just once per month as an extended PD block. This means educators have 3 half days "off" each month and that schools could potentially eliminate separate PD days, which are often a hardship for parents. For older students, students may simply be released early, while younger students would stay in school but receive targeted enrichment programming similar to the Enrichment Day model.

MANY TEACHERS ALSO SUGGESTED USING THIS TIME FOR ADDITIONAL MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT- INDIVIDUAL THERAPY, GROUP THERAPY, SEL, SOCIAL SKILL CLASSES, ETC...

Potential Models Continued...

Ending Each Day Earlier/ Rotating Drop Schedule

- The formal academic classes would end earlier each day and give extended time at the end of each school day for student enrichment- targeted instruction or tutoring, elective courses, experiential learning through school partners, or vocational and internship opportunities for high school students. The last period of the day would be teacher collaboration time, which can be a combination of in-person, virtual, or asynchronous planning to allow educators to make daytime doctor's appointments, pick up their school-aged children or take care of their personal wellness needs.
- A variation of this is the "rotating drop" schedule where one course drops off each day of the week so most classes still meet on most days.

“Opening up opportunities for our students to actively implement skills they are learning in class with real world situations would help show them the value of their education.

Ward 7 Teacher

”

Allow Educators to Choose Between Schedules

- The school or the Local Education Agency (LEA) would provide educators or staff with two or three possible schedules to choose from and allow them to choose the hours that best fit their life needs. Once all educators have made this selection, the master schedule can be determined with this input. This is made relatively easy by modern school scheduling software that can design schedules with limited inputs. This model would potentially allow students to be served even *more* hours of the day while educators actually get a reduced or more flexible schedule.
- For example, educators could choose between working 7 am to 2 pm, 9 am to 4 pm or 11 am to 6 pm. Staff wouldn't be required to work in the building beyond their selected hours, but schools could actually staff student programming from 7 am to 6 pm, potentially addressing before and after school hour staffing needs.
- Like all models, this likely requires at least a few additional staff people per school, a small price to pay for the advantages to staff and students alike.

Potential Models Continued...

Targeted Flexibility: New Parents, New Educators, Veteran Educators, etc...

- DC loses a disproportionate number of educators as they become parents. The job of teaching can become unsustainable with a drop-off and pick-up schedule for your own children, the demands on teachers to meet a multitude of deadlines and plan and grade on nights and weekends, and the stress of missing additional days when your own children are home sick. For this reason, we think targeting flexible schedules for new parents has the potential for a huge impact. **Under one proposal, all new parents would be guaranteed to teach one fewer class for at least the first two years of their child's life and still receive the same full pay.** New parents could also be offered the option to teach a half teaching load for 75 % pay and full benefits.
- Flexibility could also be given as a support for new teachers in their first two to three years or as an additional incentive for teachers as they become more experienced, allowing veteran educators to teach fewer classes potentially as they take some additional time for mentoring new teachers or other leadership roles.

“

My children constantly express that they are jealous of my students because they (rightfully) feel that I spend so much energy on my students to make their learning experience special that I have little to no energy left for my own children when I return home.

-DCPS Educator

”

Job Sharing

- Many teachers commented that they would be interested in a "job-sharing" arrangement that allowed them to share a role with a "co-teacher" and rotate responsibilities throughout the week. They would both work for the same class, perhaps one person would teach three days one week and the other two days and the next week would switch, or they would both work two days and overlap the 5th day. Teachers could also teach half a day each day and overlap for planning time together.

“

To have a mother or father return to a full work load after just weeks or even within a few months of adding a baby to a family is insensitive, to put it nicely. It would have been helpful to have had this option when I had my first baby in 2016.

”

Potential Models Continued...

The "Four Day Week" and Other Teacher-Proposed Models

We asked DC teachers what other models they might propose. Highlights Include:

- Four days In-person and one day virtual for High School students (currently being implemented at Paul PCS in DC)
- Allow educators to choose to teach one fewer class during the day if they do before-care, after-care, coach a sport, or run a club
- A four-day week but year-round with normal holidays and breaks
- A four-day week with longer hours Monday - Thursday
- Educators with children should have additional sick days allotted for days when they aren't sick but have to stay home with their children
- Splitting the week with another teacher; EX: teacher 1 works M/T/W, teacher 2 works Th/F. (For elementary level/special ed self-contained where we lead one class all day.) This is a popular option in the UK (where I'm from) to split weeks like this as it enables continuity for students and teachers.
- Allowing teachers comp time for extra duty work time/activities. EX: be able to come in late or leave early without being docked time.
- Increasing the time in "specials" classes; gives students a more joyful, well-rounded education and teachers additional planning time.
- Allowing teachers who have taught a certain number of years (EX: 7 years) to take a one-year sabbatical to prevent burnout.
- An ideal model would grant admin/office staff and aides days off when schools are closed for teachers and students without having to use our leave.
- Inner Core teachers (art, dance, music, PE, theater, etc.) specify which grade levels they wish to work with. Instead of having one Inner Core teacher being stretched between so many grades, we should be able to break up the level within the elementary grade bands. EX: ECE Art (PK3 & PK4), Primary Art (K, 1, 2), Intermediate Art (3, 4, 5)
- Teacher exchanges; EX: working at another school for a year to get new ideas
- Allow school librarians the option to flex their schedule; EX: one day a week, arrive later, and stay later to keep the library open during aftercare.
- Each classroom should be co-taught with each teacher sharing a load of planning and grading equally. I think this is a good idea because oftentimes teachers are asked to do the work of several people
- There is a district that does a once-a-month mental health type day which is a virtual day of asynchronous learning for students but allows teachers to be able to schedule doctors appointments or do errands that are hard to do as a teacher during the work day.

Small Things Add Up...

Flexibility can come in many forms, and many schools already provide meaningful flexibility that doesn't overhaul the weekly schedule. Here are some ideas we heard from teachers that are already in practice:

1. Turn 3-day weekends into 4-day weekends! Create specialized programming days, separately staffed on the days before each break- Indigenous Peoples Day, Veterans Day, Thanksgiving, Christmas, Presidents' Day, etc. If additional staffing isn't available, rotate which staff work on these days and run whole-school activities.
2. Allowing educators to rotate additional duties - like being outside for recess - so that at least one day a week educators get a small additional planning time.
3. Principals support educators in their pursuit of higher learning by tailoring their teaching schedules to allow for their classes.
4. Prioritizing educators with children for a first period off and allowing them to arrive later, especially if they need to drop off their own children at school.
5. Stay 30 minutes late once every other week and be allowed to leave 2 hours early once a month.

“




Particularly as a career changer that used to have more flexibility (albeit with a similarly demanding work load) I find myself struggling to imagine how I can sustain the lack of flexibility and the demands of the job long term, particularly when I know I could make more money elsewhere. I am a single mom of three, and can't really afford to turn down more money and more flexibility if the opportunity arises.

- Ward 3 DCPS Teacher

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POTENTIAL SCHEDULES

A NOTE: On the following pages you will see a number of sample flexible schedules. They show both the teacher & student view with that model. They are matched with grade levels, but many of the schedule models (though not all) could be used for different grade levels. These are provided to "make it real", but aspects of each may not work for particular school communities. Take these examples as inspiration to explore, edit, pick apart, combine and whatever you need to do to make them work for you!

MODEL: Half Day 1 Day/ Week GRADE BAND: Early Childhood

Student Schedule View

Time	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
8:00-8:30 am	Morning Arrival	Morning Arrival	Morning Arrival	Morning Arrival	Morning Arrival
8:30-10:30 am	Instructional Time	Instructional Time	Instructional Time	Instructional Time	Instructional Time
10:30-11:00 am	Recess with students	Recess with students	Recess with students	Recess with students	Recess with students
11:00-11:30 am	Instructional Time	Instructional Time	Instructional Time	Instructional Time	Instructional Time
11:30am-12:00 pm	LUNCH	LUNCH	LUNCH	LUNCH	LUNCH
12:00-1:30 pm	Rest/ Nap time	Rest/ Nap time	Rest/ Nap time	Rest/ Nap time	Rest/ Nap time
1:30-2:30 pm	Instructional Time	LEAP/ Coaching/ Planning	Students- "experiential learning" block with school partners or early start to after-care	Instructional Time	Instructional Time
2:30-3:15 pm	Small Groups/ Targeted Instruction	Specials		Specials	Specials
3:15-4:15 pm					

CONTEXT:



Providing additional flexibility for educators, could increase the amount of time early childhood students spend in enrichment activities such as outdoor learning, project-based learning, physical activity, and much more.

POTENTIAL SCHEDULES

Hi!

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Hola!

MODEL: Half Day 1 Day/ Week GRADE BAND: Early Childhood

Teacher Schedule View


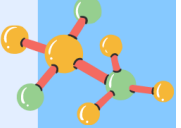
Time	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
8:00-8:30 am	Teacher Planning	Teacher Planning	Morning Collaboration	Teacher Planning	Teacher Planning
8:30-10:30 am	Instructional Time	Instructional Time	Instructional Time	Instructional Time	Instructional Time
10:30-11:00 am	Recess with students	Recess with students	Recess with students	Recess with students	Recess with students
11:00-11:30 am	Instructional Time	Instructional Time	Instructional Time	Instructional Time	Instructional Time
11:30am-12:00 pm	Lunch with students	Lunch with students	Lunch with students	Lunch with students	Lunch with students
12:00-1:30 pm	Rest/ Nap time with students	Rest/ Nap time with students	Teacher early release (3 Wednesdays a month, 1 Wednesday-PD) <small>*Support Staff cover nap time</small>	Rest/ Nap time with students	Rest/ Nap time with students
1:30-2:30 pm	Instructional Time	LEAP/ Coaching/ Planning		Instructional Time	Instructional Time
2:30-3:15 pm	LEAP/ Coaching/ Planning	Additional Teacher Planning		Teacher Planning	Teacher Planning
3:15-4:15 pm	After-Care	After-Care	After-Care	After-Care	After-Care

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CONTEXT:

For many schools, this schedule would include a substantial increase in planning time for early childhood educators and additional opportunities for professional development, with the potential to greatly improve both educator wellness and instructional quality.

POTENTIAL SCHEDULES

Hi! 嗨
Hola!

MODEL: Full Day "Enrichment Day" GRADE BAND: Elementary

Student Schedule View

+	%
x	=

Time	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
8:00-8:30 am	Morning Arrival/ Planning	Morning Arrival/ Planning	Morning Arrival/ Planning	Morning Arrival/ Planning	Morning Arrival/ Planning
8:35-9:00 am	Circle Time and SEL	Circle Time and SEL	Project-Based Learning & Targeted Instruction Block	Circle Time and SEL	Circle Time and SEL
9:00-10:30 am	Instruction Block 1 (Math, ELA, SS or Science)	Instruction Block 1 (Math, ELA, SS or Science)		Instruction Block 1 (Math, ELA, SS or Science)	Instruction Block 1 (Math, ELA, SS or Science)
10:30am-12:00pm	Instruction Block 2 or Specials	Instruction Block 2 or Specials		Instruction Block 2 or Specials	Instruction Block 2 or Specials
12:05-12:40 pm	LUNCH OR RECESS (Grades Alternate)	LUNCH OR RECESS (Grades Alternate)	LUNCH OR RECESS (Grades Alternate)	LUNCH OR RECESS (Grades Alternate)	LUNCH OR RECESS (Grades Alternate)
12:40-1:15					
1:20-2:20	Instruction Block 3 or Specials	Instruction Block 3 or Specials	School Partner and Community Group Experiential Learning	Instruction Block 3 or Specials	Instruction Block 3 or Specials
2:20-3:15 pm	Instruction Block 4 or Specials	Instruction Block 4 or Specials		Instruction Block 4 or Specials	Instruction Block 4 or Specials
After-School					

Educator Perspective:

“

I am feeling extremely burnt out. I think especially the option of having a reduced class schedule for reduced pay or reducing teaching loads/increasing flexibility would make a HUGE difference in my decision to stay in the profession. I want to stay, but right now, I feel like my only option is leaving or giving 120% at all times, which is just not sustainable.

- Ward 1 DCPS teacher

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POTENTIAL SCHEDULES

Hi! 嗨
Hola!

MODEL: Full Day "Enrichment Day" GRADE BAND: Elementary

Teacher Schedule View

+	%
x	=

Time	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
8:00-8:30 am	Morning Arrival	Morning Arrival	Morning Arrival	Morning Arrival	Morning Arrival
8:35-9:00 am	Circle Time and SEL	Circle Time and SEL	Every Other Wednesday: Support PBL/ Planning (can be remote)	Circle Time and SEL	Circle Time and SEL
9:00-10:30 am	Instruction Block 1 (Math, ELA, SS or Science)	Instruction Block 1 (Math, ELA, SS or Science)		Instruction Block 1 (Math, ELA, SS or Science)	Instruction Block 1 (Math, ELA, SS or Science)
10:30am-12:00pm	PLANNING	PLANNING		PLANNING	PLANNING
12:05-12:40 pm	LUNCH OR RECESS (Grades Alternate)	LUNCH OR RECESS (Grades Alternate)	LUNCH OR RECESS (Grades Alternate)	LUNCH OR RECESS (Grades Alternate)	LUNCH OR RECESS (Grades Alternate)
12:40-1:15					
1:20-2:20	Instruction Block 3 or Specials	Instruction Block 3 or Specials	3 Wednesdays: Teacher/ Staff Release Time	Instruction Block 3 or Specials	Instruction Block 3 or Specials
2:20-3:15 pm	Instruction Block 4 or Specials	Instruction Block 4 or Specials	1 Wednesday a Month: PD	Instruction Block 4 or Specials	Instruction Block 4 or Specials
After-School					

Educator Perspective:




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Play-based, creative, and project-based learning are crucial for student well being and academic success. Being able to access programs that immerse them in the arts, STEM, athletics, community activism, and languages will improve student engagement, trauma-responsive practice, interpersonal and stress management skills, and academic and cognitive skills.

- Ward 1 DCPS Teacher




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POTENTIAL SCHEDULES

MODEL: Half Day 1 Day/ Week GRADE BAND: Elementary

Student Schedule View

Time	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
8:00-8:30 am	Morning Arrival/ Planning	Morning Arrival/ Planning	Morning Arrival/ Planning	Morning Arrival/ Planning	Morning Arrival/ Planning
8:35-9:00 am	Circle Time and SEL	Circle Time and SEL	Circle Time and SEL	Circle Time and SEL	Circle Time and SEL
9:00-10:30 am	Instruction Block 1 (Math, ELA, SS or Science)	Instruction Block 1 (Math, ELA, SS or Science)	Instruction Block 1 (Math, ELA, SS or Science)	Instruction Block 1 (Math, ELA, SS or Science)	Instruction Block 1 (Math, ELA, SS or Science)
10:30am-12:00pm	Instruction Block 2 or Specials	Instruction Block 2 or Specials	Instruction Block 2 or Specials	Instruction Block 2 or Specials	Instruction Block 2 or Specials
12:05-12:40 pm	LUNCH OR RECESS	LUNCH OR RECESS	LUNCH OR RECESS	LUNCH OR RECESS	LUNCH OR RECESS
12:40-1:15	(Grades Alternate)	(Grades Alternate)	(Grades Alternate)	(Grades Alternate)	(Grades Alternate)
1:20-2:20	PLANNING	PLANNING	Every other Wednesday: support PBL or release time/ remote planning	PLANNING	PLANNING
2:20-3:15 pm	Instruction Block 4 or Specials	Instruction Block 4 or Specials		Instruction Block 4 or Specials	Instruction Block 4 or Specials
After-School					

Educator Perspective:

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I think that one of the biggest issues at my current school is there is not flexibility in personal days. We are given 10 sick days per year but only two of them are supposed to be used for personal days. As a result, a lot of staff end up being "sick" at the last minute to take personal days, but then this puts a strain on the remaining staff at school. I think that if staff were allowed to use their 10 days as they see fit, then there would be more proactive reporting of days that they had to take.

- Ward 5 Charter School Teacher

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POTENTIAL SCHEDULES

Hi! 嗨

Hola!

MODEL: Half Day 1 Day/ Week GRADE BAND: Elementary

Teacher Schedule View

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x	=

Time	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
8:00-8:30 am	Morning Arrival	Morning Arrival	Morning Arrival	Morning Arrival	Morning Arrival
8:35-9:00 am	Circle Time and SEL	Circle Time and SEL	Circle Time and SEL	Circle Time and SEL	Circle Time and SEL
9:00-10:30 am	Instruction Block 1 (Math, ELA, SS or Science)	Instruction Block 1 (Math, ELA, SS or Science)	Instruction Block 1 (Math, ELA, SS or Science)	Instruction Block 1 (Math, ELA, SS or Science)	Instruction Block 1 (Math, ELA, SS or Science)
10:30am-12:00pm	Instruction Block 2 or Specials	Instruction Block 2 or Specials	Instruction Block 2 or Specials	Instruction Block 2 or Specials	Instruction Block 2 or Specials
12:05-12:40 pm	LUNCH OR RECESS	LUNCH OR RECESS	LUNCH OR RECESS	LUNCH OR RECESS	LUNCH OR RECESS
12:40-1:15	(Grades Alternate)	(Grades Alternate)	(Grades Alternate)	(Grades Alternate)	(Grades Alternate)
1:20-2:20	Instruction Block 3 or Specials	Instruction Block 3 or Specials	Project-Based Learning with School Partners/ SEL Team Block	Instruction Block 3 or Specials	Instruction Block 3 or Specials
2:20-3:15 pm	Instruction Block 4 or Specials	Instruction Block 4 or Specials		Instruction Block 4 or Specials	Instruction Block 4 or Specials
After-School					

Educator Perspective:

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Partners in education would be HUGE for improving our school's project-based learning experimental goals. We already partner with a couple of universities and programs in the area, so increasing that, or considering a couple elective teachers (who would also have an off day, but on a different day than Gen ed) could make a big difference overall to enriching the breadth in subjects our students get.

- Ward 4 Charter School Teacher

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POTENTIAL SCHEDULES

MODEL: Staff Choose a Schedule GRADE BAND: Middle/ HS
(could be adapted for Elementary)

Time	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	
7:00-8:00 am	Before-Care/ Enrichment	Before-Care/ Enrichment	Before-Care/ Enrichment	Before-Care/ Enrichment	Before-Care/ Enrichment	7:00 am – 2 pm Staff Shift #1
8:00-8:30 am	Regular Morning Arrival	Regular Morning Arrival	Regular Morning Arrival	Regular Morning Arrival	Regular Morning Arrival	
8:35-9:00 am	Circle Time and SEL	Circle Time and SEL	Circle Time and SEL	Circle Time and SEL	Circle Time and SEL	
9:00-10:30 am	Instruction Block 1 (Math, ELA, SS or Science)	Instruction Block 1 (Math, ELA, SS or Science)	Instruction Block 1 (Math, ELA, SS or Science)	Instruction Block 1 (Math, ELA, SS or Science)	Instruction Block 1 (Math, ELA, SS or Science)	9 am – 4 pm Staff Shift #2
10:30am-12:00pm	Instruction Block 2 or Specials	Instruction Block 2 or Specials	Instruction Block 2 or Specials	Instruction Block 2 or Specials	Instruction Block 2 or Specials	
12:05-12:40 pm	LUNCH OR RECESS	LUNCH OR RECESS	LUNCH OR RECESS	LUNCH OR RECESS	LUNCH OR RECESS	
12:40-1:15	(Grades Alternate	(Grades Alternate	(Grades Alternate	(Grades Alternate	(Grades Alternate	12 pm – 7 pm – Staff Shift #3
1:20-2:20	Instruction Block 3 or Specials	Instruction Block 3 or Specials	Instruction Block 3 or Specials	Instruction Block 3 or Specials	Instruction Block 3 or Specials	
2:20-3:15 pm	Instruction Block 4 or Specials	Instruction Block 4 or Specials	Instruction Block 4 or Specials	Instruction Block 4 or Specials	Instruction Block 4 or Specials	
3:30-4:30 pm	Music/ Art/ World Language Elective Additional	Music/ Art/ World Language Elective Additional	Music/ Art/ World Language Elective Additional	Music/ Art/ World Language Elective Additional	Music/ Art/ World Language Elective Additional	
4:30-6:30 pm	After-Care, School Clubs	After-Care, School Clubs	After-Care, School Clubs	After-Care, School Clubs	After-Care, School Clubs	

THERE ARE STUDENTS THAT ARRIVE EARLY AND HAVE TO WAIT IN THE COLD. FLEXIBLE SCHEDULING WOULD ALLOW TEACHERS THAT WANT TO COME AS EARLY AS 7 AM COULD SUPPORT WITH THEM - WARD 8 DCPS TEACHER

CONTEXT:

Under this model staff members may choose a shift that works for their schedule and life between three options: 7 am to 2 pm, 9 am to 4 pm or 12 pm to 7 pm. This would allow a broader range of time for student services, could add time to the school day, and allow staff greater work-life harmony. Schools would have to have staff pick their preferences in the spring to set up a schedule that works- like stacking electives towards the beginning of the day or the end. This would also incentivize retention as staff who stay would have priority to choose their schedule while new hired would need to fill the slots needed to ensure full staffing for the full day. Schools may also consider reducing the principal burden by having a "Day Principal" and an "Evening Principal" who would overlap mid-day which some alternative or adult schools already have.

POTENTIAL SCHEDULES

MODEL: Full Day "Enrichment Day"/ Community Service Day- Friday
 GRADE BAND: Middle School
 Student Schedule View

Time	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
8:00-8:40	Arrival/ Before Care	Arrival/ Before Care	Arrival/ Before Care	Arrival/ Before Care	Community Service Day Students are assigned a specific community project to work on outside of the building every Friday. It is a credited grade requirement with a project based learning component at the end of each quarter to reflect on the experience. It will rotate each quarter, so students only work on that community project for about 8 weeks. It will depend on investment within the community to organize and support it. Ideas: -Helping at a nursing home -Helping at an animal shelter -Helping at a food shelter -Helping with young reading groups -Helping to teach English to young children -Environmental cleanup
8:40-9:00	Student Silent Study Hall w/ teachers assigned to monitor	Student Silent Study Hall w/ teachers assigned to monitor	Student Silent Study Hall w/ teachers assigned to monitor	Student Silent Study Hall w/ teachers assigned to monitor	
9:05-9:50 am	1st period	1st period	1st period	1st period	
9:55-10:40 am	2nd period	2nd period	2nd period	2nd period	
10:45-11:30 am	3rd period	3rd period	3rd period	3rd period	
11:35-12:20	LUNCH or 4th period	LUNCH or 4th period	LUNCH or 4th period	LUNCH or 4th period	
12:25-1:10 pm	LUNCH or 4th period	LUNCH or 4th period	LUNCH or 4th period	LUNCH or 4th period	
1:15-2:00 pm	5th Period	5th Period	5th Period	5th Period	
2:05-3:15 pm	6th Period	6th Period	6th Period	6th Period	

CONTEXT:

The proposed schedule could make way for important programming and services for students. Social and emotional learning can be done through weekly Community Service Project on Fridays. This would be a required school day, but would occur outside of the school building. Students would also have a built-in study hall everyday Monday-Thursday to provide them time in the school day to get organized and complete school work.

POTENTIAL SCHEDULES

MODEL: Full Day "Enrichment Day"/ Community Service Day- Friday
 GRADE BAND: Middle School
 Teacher Schedule View

Time	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
8:00-8:40	Teacher Protected Planning Block	Teacher Protected Planning Block	Teacher Protected Planning Block	Teacher Protected Planning Block	On Fridays, teachers may have a mixture of ½ day PD, and at least ½ day of uninterrupted planning, or "office hours" for parent meetings or phone calls
8:40-9:00	Student Silent Study Hall w/ teachers assigned to monitor	Student Silent Study Hall w/ teachers assigned to monitor	Student Silent Study Hall w/ teachers assigned to monitor	Student Silent Study Hall w/ teachers assigned to monitor	
9:05-9:50 am	1st period	1st period	1st period	1st period	
9:55-10:40 am	2nd period	2nd period	2nd period	2nd period	
10:45-11:30 am	3rd period	3rd period	3rd period	3rd period	
11:35-12:20	LUNCH or 4th period	LUNCH or 4th period	LUNCH or 4th period	LUNCH or 4th period	
12:25-1:10 pm	LUNCH or 4th period	LUNCH or 4th period	LUNCH or 4th period	LUNCH or 4th period	
1:15-2:00 pm	5th Period	5th Period	5th Period	5th Period	
2:05-3:15 pm	PLANNING	PLANNING	PLANNING	PLANNING	

CONTEXT:

The major shifts in the schedule provide teachers with much needed planning that is very often taken over by department meetings, professional development, student meetings, and other required initiatives. Teachers do not currently have sufficient time to grade papers with meaningful feedback, enter grades, communicate with parents, co-plan/lesson plan, make photocopies and organize materials for lessons. Many "engaging" lessons require an extensive amount of planning that we simply do not have.

POTENTIAL SCHEDULES

MODEL: "Rotating Drop Schedule" GRADE BAND: Middle/ High School Student Schedule View

Time	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
8:00-8:40	Teacher Protected Planning Block	Teacher Protected Planning Block	Teacher Protected Planning Block	Teacher Protected Planning Block	Teacher Protected Planning Block
8:40-9:00	Student Silent Study Hall w/ teachers assigned to monitor	Student Silent Study Hall w/ teachers assigned to monitor	Student Silent Study Hall w/ teachers assigned to monitor	Student Silent Study Hall w/ teachers assigned to monitor	Student Silent Study Hall w/ teachers assigned to monitor
9:05-9:50 am	English	English	English	English	English
9:55-10:40 am	Social Studies	Social Studies	Social Studies	Social Studies	Math
10:45-11:30 am	Math	Math	Math	Science	Science
11:35-12:20	LUNCH	LUNCH	LUNCH	LUNCH	LUNCH
12:25-1:10 pm	Arts or PE Rotating/ Quarter	Arts or PE Rotating/ Quarter	Science	Arts or PE Rotating/ Quarter	Arts or PE Rotating/ Quarter
1:15-2:00 pm	Science	World Language	World Language	World Language	World Language
2:00-3:15 pm	ENRICHMENT HOUR	ENRICHMENT HOUR	ENRICHMENT HOUR	ENRICHMENT HOUR	ENRICHMENT HOUR

CONTEXT:

Each day one of the six core classes "drops off" to make space for the earlier ending time. Enrichment hour is run by a rotating set of teachers/ staff and partner organizations so that most staff end early at least 3 days a week. In this view, English and Math are still five days a week, but schools should consider ways to have the enrichment focus on social studies, science, and other content to ensure those are not sacrificed, or they may alter the drop schedule. This model does its best to keep classes the same period of the day, but to do this, one class has to be different each day.

POTENTIAL SCHEDULES

MODEL: "Rotating Drop Schedule" GRADE BAND: Middle/ High School Teacher Schedule View

Time	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
8:00-8:40	Teacher Protected Planning Block	Teacher Protected Planning Block	Content/ Grade Level Meeting	Content/ Grade Level Meeting	Teacher Protected Planning Block
8:40-9:00	Student Silent Study Hall w/ teachers assigned to monitor	Student Silent Study Hall w/ teachers assigned to monitor	Student Silent Study Hall w/ teachers assigned to monitor	Student Silent Study Hall w/ teachers assigned to monitor	Student Silent Study Hall w/ teachers assigned to monitor
9:05-9:50 am	PLANNING	PLANNING	Art 6th grade (2)	PLANNING	PLANNING
9:55-10:40 am	Art- 6th grade	Art- 6th grade	Art- 6th grade	Art- 6th grade	Art- 6th grade
10:45-11:30 am	Art- 7th grade	Art- 7th grade	Art- 7th grade	Art- 7th grade	Art- 7th grade
11:35-12:20	LUNCH	LUNCH	LUNCH	LUNCH	LUNCH
12:25-1:10 pm	Art 6th grade (2)	Art 6th grade (2)	PLANNING	Art 6th grade (2)	Art 6th grade (2)
1:15-2:00 pm	Art 8th grade	Art 8th grade	Art 8th grade	Art 8th grade	Art 8th grade
2:00-3:15 pm	ENRICHMENT HOUR- Art Teacher Supports	Teacher Early Dismissal / Work from Home/ Take care of life!	ENRICHMENT HOUR- Art Teacher Supports	Teacher Early Dismissal / Work from Home/ Take care of life!	Teacher Early Dismissal / Work from Home/ Take care of life!

Educator Perspective:

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We don't have enough time in our day to do all of the interventions our students need, and flexible scheduling would help us achieve that goal and bridge the gaps.

- Ward 4 DCPS Teacher

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POTENTIAL SCHEDULES

MODEL: "Enrichment Day" GRADE BAND: High School Student Schedule View

Time	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
8:15-9:00	Arrival/ Home Room	Arrival/ Home Room	Arrival/ Home Room	Arrival/ Home Room	Arrival/ Home Room
9:00-10:22	ELA Block	Science Block	Targeted Instruction	ELA Block	Science Block
10:26- 11:48	Math Block	PE/ Health Block	Life Skills	Math Block	PE/ Health Block
11:52-12:37	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch and leave for vocational/ Internship	Lunch	Lunch
12:42-2:04	Spanish Block	AP Math Block		Spanish Block	AP Math Block
2:08-3:30	US Government Block	Music Block	Vocational courses/ Internship	US Government Block	Music Block
3:30- After School Hours	Extracurriculars, Targeted Instruction	Extracurriculars, Targeted Instruction		Extracurriculars, Targeted Instruction	Extracurriculars, Targeted Instruction

CONTEXT:

This preserves more or less the same schedule Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday but changes the Wednesday schedule to allow for deeper student enrichment and teacher flexibility. To have sufficient staffing from the limited number of school partners, it's likely that participating schools would not all be able to hold the "Enrichment Day" on the same day. This schedule may require changes to seat hour requirements or attendance regulations to ensure that enrichment held outside the school building or traditional hours is counted. For example - if a student does an internship with a history-driven non-profit, would this count towards US or World History hours? What if the internship happens later in the evening instead of during the school day - would it meet attendance requirements? And how does that fit into the existing standards?

POTENTIAL SCHEDULES

MODEL: "Enrichment Day" GRADE BAND: High School Teacher Schedule View

Time	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
8:15-9:00	Morning Prep	Morning Prep	Co-Teacher Planning	Morning Prep	Morning Prep
9:00-10:22	US History	Planning	Grade Level Team Meeting	US History	Planning
10:26- 11:48	US History	US History	Adult Wellness Activities-Optional	US History	US History
11:52-12:37	Lunch	Lunch		Lunch	Lunch
12:42-2:04	Planning	African Studies	Remote work/ Flex Time	Planning	African Studies
2:08-3:30	AP US History	African Studies	Remote work/ Flex Time	AP US History	African Studies
3:30- After School Hours			Remote work/ Flex Time		

Educator Perspective:

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Flexible schedules can also help provide more opportunities. For example, a 3 day school instructional week with 1 day planning/prep for teachers and school wide support for students like study hall and then one day of LIFE preparation meaning, sex education, job related education, finances, how to do taxes, how to change a tire, barber shop, beauty classes, cooking, marketing, public relations, religious education; use that ONE day to provide tools that will take our students further in life.

- Ward 7 DCPS Teacher

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POTENTIAL SCHEDULES

MODEL: Developmentally Appropriate Later Start Time GRADE BAND: High School Student Schedule View

Time	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
9:00-10:20	Additional AP courses, Sports, Extra-Curriculars	Additional AP courses, Sports, Extra-Curriculars	Additional AP courses, Sports, Extra-Curriculars	Additional AP courses, Sports, Extra-Curriculars	9:30-10:30 ELA or SS Extended Instruction
10:26- 11:41	ELA Block	Science Block	ELA Block	Science Block	10:35-11:40 Math or Science Extended Instruction
11:45-12:30	Math Block	PE/ Health Block	Math Block	PE/ Health Block	11:40-12:00 Lunch & Disperse to Tailored Afternoon Activities
12:34-1:51	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	12:00-4:00 Tailored to student: Electives, Vocational, Internship, Community Service
1:55-3:10	Spanish Block	AP Math Block	Spanish Block	AP Math Block	
3:14-4:30	US Government Block	Music Block	US Government Block	Music Block	
4:30-5:30/ 6:00 pm	Additional Extra-Curriculars/ Athletics	Additional Extra-Curriculars/ Athletics	Additional Extra-Curriculars/ Athletics	Additional Extra-Curriculars/ Athletics	

CONTEXT:

Studies show the benefits of later school start times for teenagers. Another study shows that a 10 am start time improves both health and performance for students aged 13-16. These changes do present challenges and should be done with careful consideration of these factors. Many communities experience a surge in violent incidents during the immediate after-school hours with students having a large gap in the time between school ending and needing to be home (often 3 pm to 5-6 pm). If students are released later we must make modifications for athletics, after-school activities, and potentially increased safe passage support in winter when students may be released in the dark.

POTENTIAL SCHEDULES

MODEL: Developmentally Appropriate Later Start Time GRADE BAND: High School Science Teacher Schedule View

Time	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
9:00-10:20	Flex Time/ Planning Time/ Optional Coaching, Teaching	Flex Time/ Planning Time/ Optional Coaching, Teaching	Flex Time/ Planning Time/ Optional Coaching, Teaching	Flex Time/ Planning Time/ Optional Coaching, Teaching	9:30-10:30 Co-Planning Block
10:26- 11:41	Biology Block	Environmental Science	Biology Block	Environmental Science	10:35-11:40 Science Enrichment
11:45-12:30	Biology Block	Planning	Biology Block	Planning	11:40-12:00 Lunch & Disperse to Afternoon Activities
12:34-1:51	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	12:00-4:00 Early Release/ once a month professional learning block
1:55-3:10	Planning	Environmental Science	Planning	Environmental Science	
3:14-4:30	AP Biology	AP Biology	AP Biology	AP Biology	
4:30-5:30/ 6:00 pm	Additional Extra-Curriculars/ Athletics	Additional Extra-Curriculars/ Athletics	Additional Extra-Curriculars/ Athletics	Additional Extra-Curriculars/ Athletics	

CONTEXT:

In addition to the notes on the student view, with the adjusted schedule designers should consider these factors regarding the teacher/ staff schedule: This model combines both later start times with the "Enrichment Day" on Friday model. Schools may also choose to pursue only one or the other. This model has the teacher schedule beginning at 9 am. Designers may consider pairing the later high school start time along with a choice of hours for teachers and staff to have some staff work an 8 am to 3 pm or 9am to 4 pm schedule while other staff would have a 10:30 am - 5:30 pm schedule and would include after-school support (such as those who coach, conduct additional targeted instruction, etc.)

DIFFERENTIATED SCHEDULES

Model: Differentiated Schedules & Supports for New, Mid-Career & Veteran Educators

NEW TEACHERS

Years 1-3

Reduced
Course-Load &
Double
Planning

Guaranteed
a Mentor/
Sponsor

Utilize co-
teacher model
wherever
possible

MID- CAREER

Years 4-8

"Normal"
Course-Load,
but
accompanied
by new flexible
models

Targeted for
additional
professional
development funds
for personalized
growth goals

May become
mentor/ sponsor
teachers or teacher-
leader roles for
additional
compensation

VETERAN EDUCATORS

Years 8/9+

Half Day
Course-Load,
choice of hours
if possible

Choose among
teacher leadership
opportunities for
"the other half day"-
mentor/ sponsor,
family engagement,
etc...

Preference to teach
their passion &
expertise courses
like AP, IB, electives,
etc..

Notes: LEAs may choose to adjust the year ranges as appropriate given their staffing

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During the pandemic and the virtual year many of us realized how imbalanced our lives had become and having that flexibility of virtual work allowed for autonomy and choice in how we balanced our work and home lives. It was not that we worked "less" it was that we had the ability to work in a more balanced way, focused on what needed to be accomplished both for work and home.

- Ward 1 DCPS teacher

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PERSPECTIVES OF EDUCATORS WITH CHILDREN

Teachers with younger children have an added stressor because they have to balance showing up for their children and the children they serve. I can't tell you how many school events or volunteer activities I missed out on when my children were in elementary school.

DCPS has to adapt and adjust new/different and more flexible policies in order to recruit talented teachers and have them stay.

Ward 2 DCPS Teacher

This year [having a flexible schedule] has changed my life completely. I went from teaching full-time as a kindergarten teacher to having twins (I now have 3 kids under 3), and there was no way I could continue to manage that workload while raising my family. I was willing to lose the pay to decrease my hours per week but I didn't want to stop working with children. Having job flexibility has allowed me to continue serving our DCPS students while also raising my own kids. I'm so grateful to have a principal that appreciates the work I've done and wants to support me professionally. I recognize this is a privilege.

Ward 3 DCPS Teacher

I am raising three children who I need to drop off and pick up to and from school. The flexible schedule would allow me to organize my personal life around my work life in a more productive way.

I am a single mom so having a flexible schedule would be great for me, my daughter, and my students.

Since I had my first kid 5 years ago I have been constantly weighing my options about whether or not another I can remain in the classroom given the challenges of my schedule. Now that we have two kids to drop-off to different places before 8 am it feels even more untenable. I'm appealing to the administration at my school to see if they are able to make an exception for my situation and allow me to start my day a little later. If we were to have the option to work a 75 % schedule and drop a class I almost certainly would have done that.

Ward 3 DCPS Teacher

SOUNDS GREAT, BUT HOW DO YOU STAFF THESE MODELS?

All flexible scheduling models involve a commitment from the city and/or school district to invest in teacher well-being and retention. Reducing the burden on teachers and staff involves hiring additional staff and most models will require additional school funding. Without a doubt, this requires significant investment, but our current levels of teacher attrition, our inattention to educator and student mental health and the continuation of a status quo failing too many students carries huge costs as well. Here are some of the ways schools can be creative about additional staffing.

1. Start with Pilots, Utilize Community Partners: By beginning with a smaller number of schools in each grade level band, schools will be able to learn the extent to which community partners are able to scale up their partnerships in ways that provide sufficient staffing to schools for enrichment activities. DC already has a wealth of these partnerships including organizations that work with students on outdoor and environmental education, real-world learning, debate, arts education, youth center programming and so much more. As pilot programming expands, so will the capacity and the funding for partner organizations. New "Rec for All" grants from the Department of Parks and Recreation can help fund community partners to do this work.

2. Activate OST Providers, Camps, Expand Partnerships with CityYear, AmeriCorps, etc... DC has an abundance of high-quality Out of School Time (OST) organizations that run exceptionally enriching experiences with young people. We can activate and fund these groups to run enrichment day experiences for students. We can also bring popular summer camps into schools- a solution that would address an existing inequity among the families who normally have access to these programs. While it's critical that the educational experience be appropriately staffed by licensed educators, volunteers can provide critical support for project-based learning, tutoring, and more.

3. The Retired/ Former Educator Pool: We must begin to recruit a better pool of retired educators or former educators who have moved onto other fields and create the HR structures and professional development needed to allow them to teach one day a week or just one course. We have so many educators who have left the field, precisely because of the burdens of a full-time educator schedule, who would be thrilled to teach one day a week or one course- schedule permitting. If people want to help and have the expertise to help, we have to let them help! We should build this pool of eligible educators and ensure a safe and speedy background check process to help them resume working with young people.

4. Alternating Schedules: One design concept discussed above is job-sharing where more than one teacher shares the same job description and can alternate between their location- flexible hours and in-person work. This may be especially attractive to teachers who also have young children and need work from home time. These programs require additional funding as we should ensure that these teachers do not lose adequate and appropriate compensation.

5. Expand Grow Your Own programs, pay and empower paraprofessionals and teacher aides: Expanding "Grow Your Own" programs for DC students to become educators is critical to the pipeline and teacher diversity, but these programs, with their components of clinical practice, can also expand the student teaching population able to provide additional support in schools. By bolstering pay for our current paraprofessionals and teacher aides, we can also strengthen their role in schools.

THE INVESTMENT

There is no doubt that this transformation requires substantial new investments in our schools. We are calling for an initial allocation of \$10 million to allow approximately 25 schools to pilot models like the ones we've highlighted here. In estimating cost, we considered the costs of staffing for various models. For example, if a school chooses the one-day-a-week "Enrichment Day" model- we believe the success would hinge on the school hiring an "Enrichment Coordinator" to coordinate the partnerships, logistics, and staffing that make it possible, plus a substantial investment in community partnerships with the organizations that might staff student experiences during this day. We asked several current Out of School Time partners in Washington DC for cost-estimates and believe that it might cost a school (depending on school size and grade level) between \$100,000 and \$250,000 annually for these weekly service partnerships. A half-day one day a week enrichment program could cost substantially less, especially if staffed partly by expansions of CityYear or Americorps-like partnerships. Elementary schools with larger grade bands might consider operating these enrichment days every other week or once a month initially and then seek funding to expand as they learn from their experience. Other models, like models that would allow educators with young children or newer teachers to work a reduced schedule, might carry the cost of some additional part-time and full-time educators for the school to ensure full coverage. **As we estimated various models, we believe that most schools could implement a model that works for them with approximately \$200,000 to 400,000 annually- with the higher costs being for elementary schools. Starting with the initial \$10 million investment allows the city to learn from these pilot schools and produce better cost-estimates for scaling to other schools.**

While scaling these transformative models to all schools would carry a substantial cost, over the past twenty years we've made sizable investments before, many of which were substantially costlier. For example, while most states in the country continue to offer part-time Kindergarten, DC made the move to full-day for Kindergarten students knowing this investment would pay dividends for our children. We took the next step, with an enormous investment to make Pre-K 3 and 4 available and free for all of the District's 3 and 4-year-olds. And just in the past couple of years, we've invested significantly to ensure that our Early Childhood Educators receive fair compensation- aligned with what public school teachers make. That move affirmed that retaining our early educators is essential for the success of our early-year students. The same is true for K-12. When we retain educators, we can improve student results, sustain school progress, and save money. The new teacher contract recently approved between Washington DC and the Washington Teachers Union will cost approximately \$400 million over the next four years- a worthy investment for higher teacher salaries and strong benefits. While pay increases matter, many educators say improvements to working conditions (like those that flexible scheduling could help address) are equally important to their retention- and would carry a similar or lower cost even if scaled system-wide. We also believe that by providing students with a more tailored and enriching learning experience we will improve academic outcomes increase engagement and attendance - and in the long run, save money currently spent on initiatives related to these goals that have shown little progress.

[These investments, while substantial, are critical for the future of schools.](#)

THE BENEFITS FOR OUR EDUCATORS

Educators were asked in our survey to describe how flexible scheduling would impact their personal and professional lives. EmpowerEd received 596 responses that highlight the various ways teachers would benefit from flexible scheduling. Three major themes in the responses were found, all of which provide pathways for educators to potentially stay in the teaching profession for a longer period of time. First, educators indicate that flexible scheduling prevents burnout. Second, flexible scheduling gives teachers an opportunity for work-life balance. Third, teachers express that flexible scheduling would provide more time for professional development and growth and to be better educators for their students.

Flexible Scheduling Keeping Educators in the Teaching Profession

Washington, D.C. has the highest urban teacher turnover rates in the nation, with approximately 20% to 30% of educators leaving the classroom each year. Therefore, implementing flexible scheduling would be a monumental step towards preventing D.C. educators from physically, mentally, and emotionally burning out.

The teaching profession has always been extraordinarily demanding, but the pandemic has exacerbated the level of stress educators are facing. Several teachers anonymously wrote that they are looking to leave for less stressful and flexible jobs or are already planning to leave teaching.

One Ward 3 teacher responded to our question by stating, "I think of quitting daily. We cannot be an anti-racist school district and continue to teach our children to be accomplices to a white supremacy-designed, capitalist grind culture."

“ It would change everything. At this point, I am in my 10th year of teaching and I am DONE. I adore teaching, it is my passion, but the workload and added stress from admin is toxic and has an adverse effect on my mental health. ”

Other respondents referred to their former co-workers who have already left teaching to work more flexible roles. As the professional world is adapting to hybrid, remote, and other flexible working models, the teaching profession has yet to catch up to new schooling modes. For some teachers, the option of a flexible schedule allows for more autonomy, with an educator explaining "Having [flexible] options shows a level of respect to educators as professionals and reflects an appreciation of their expertise by providing alternatives that can help avoid burnout." D.C. teachers do not deserve to be overworked and burned out; if flexible scheduling is implemented, this could be what keeps teachers feeling respected and happy to stay in the classroom.

THE BENEFITS FOR OUR EDUCATORS

Opportunity for Work-Life Balance

Teachers are looking to balance their work and personal lives, but current school schedules make attaining this balance difficult. Educators in our survey express that the implementation of flexible scheduling would allow them to better balance their life outside of teaching. Specifically, teachers are looking to gain more time for their physical, emotional, and mental health and well-being, while also making time to fulfill their familial roles. Subsequently, educators are forced to neglect their physical, emotional, and mental well-being as a result of inflexible school schedules.

Responses in the survey highlight examples of having to take time off for doctor's appointments, missing sleep, and bringing extra work home. An unfortunate result of sacrificing time for personal health is burnout and researchers at RAND, a notable research organization, found that burnout is "linked to teachers' and principals' intentions to leave both before and since the COVID-19 pandemic." While burnout for teachers is not a new phenomenon, it does not have to continue permeating the lives of current and future generations of educators.

The toll of a teacher's schedule also affects those who are in the stages of family planning or already are parents. Some respondents explain they worry about having children while still teaching due to the inflexible schedules and difficulty of the teaching profession. For those educators who are already parents, being present with their families and children of all ages is increasingly difficult.

“

After 14 years in education, I am strongly considering leaving the field. So many of my friends are working remotely...In most cases these friends are less educated than I am and make more money than I do...Even if my friends' jobs are stressful their flexible schedules compensates and improves their quality of life. A quality not afforded to educators.
- Ward 6 DCPS Educator

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A Ward 1 charter school teacher noted, “I will be leaving next year (or this) due to burnout. I’m pulled between my parenting duties and my non-teaching school duties daily. I’ve had to hire someone to watch my kids get off the bus despite my last period of the day being planning (which I easily could just drive home and plan as I wait for said bus)...Some type of flexible schedule must happen or my only option will be quitting a job I’m good at.” Similarly, a Ward 1 DCPS educator shared, “I’m in no way giving parenting and teaching 100% because of a lack of time.”

THE BENEFITS FOR OUR EDUCATORS

Commuting, taking work home, working outside of paid hours, and enduring the day-to-day challenges of being a teacher take an immense toll on the personal lives of educators. If educators can regain time for themselves and their families through flexible scheduling, it could have a positive impact on their students.

Becoming Better Educators for Students

As the teaching profession continues to develop, educators must also adapt and broaden their craft. Educators further harness and improve their skillset by attaining additional certifications or advanced degrees. While there are various types of professional development a teacher can engage in, they all have the potential to improve the ways that educators engage and facilitate student learning. Ultimately, flexible scheduling can make time for investing in educator professional development, in turn, becoming an investment in student success.

According to one D.C. teacher, “In the current model, the tasks just mount up and there is little to no consistent time to complete many of the additional responsibilities that provide students with the feedback they need to grow.” This quote is emblematic of much of what we heard from educators about how additional job flexibility would - finally - provide them with the time that they need to do their main job - serving students - much better.

Teachers share a desperation to have the time that they need to be more effective in supporting their student's needs. Special education teachers expressed that they simply do not have time to effectively plan when their paperwork demands far exceed their capacity. Meanwhile, educators across all subject areas desire to give detailed feedback on assignments, better communication with families, or have the time to develop more engaging and differentiated lesson plans.

“

I would love a schedule where I can observe teachers bi-weekly in order to improve my teaching practice.
- Ward 2 DCPS teacher

”

THE BENEFITS FOR OUR STUDENTS

“A student could have enrichment and exposure opportunities in developing their whole person. Time for students to get away from the books and apply themselves in other productive outlets that speak to their passions.”

In the world of education, we know the things both students and parents, and families desire and demand from our schools often eclipse capacity. Families want strong extracurriculars, whole-child and well-rounded education, play and field based-learning, time outdoors, world languages and so much more. But the traditional bell schedule often proves a tough obstacle for ensuring students get both the traditional academic grounding and the well-rounded experiences that students deserve and families crave. Parents want smaller class sizes and more individualized feedback and instruction for their children. By breaking up the traditional bell schedule and providing educators and school staff the time they need to plan, we not only ease the burden on educators but can deliver an enriched student experience.

In our survey, educators were given the opportunity to share their perspectives on how they believe flexible scheduling will positively impact students. Out of 443 educator responses, three themes emerged including opportunities for students to receive higher quality instruction and support, whole child enrichment opportunities, and a focus on student holistic well-being. From our responses, it is evident educators believe flexible scheduling models can benefit students and encourage academic and personal growth.

Better Prepared Educators for Students

Teachers in the survey express that flexible scheduling would allow them to be better educators for their students. Educators are limited in their time to plan, collaborate with their peers, and meet deadlines. Consequently, teachers rush to prepare their lessons and are not always able to be present with their students. As stated by a Ward 1 educator, “The workload of teachers isn’t going to get smaller but giving teachers more time each day or week to prepare and plan will make a huge impact on student outcomes and quality of learning experiences students receive.”

THE BENEFITS FOR OUR STUDENTS

When teachers are not given the time to plan and prepare “rigorous and fulfilling lessons” (Ward 1 Teacher) students suffer academically. Educators are responsible for creating meaningful learning opportunities for their students. By implementing quality time for teachers to prepare and collaborate, students reap the benefits that come with well-thought-out and executed lesson plans.

Whole Child Enrichment Opportunities

One of the benefits of flexible scheduling is using school time to implement whole-child learning and approaches. A majority of educator responses agree with implementing enrichment opportunities across multiple grade levels. Ideas range from off-site experiential learning, field trips, outdoor learning opportunities, and time dedicated to community engagement.

For secondary school students, time for professional development (writing resumes, cover letters, student mentoring), and collaboration with local colleges and universities are also options to implement during flexible hours. Additionally, teachers mentioned independent working time for older students to pursue their own academic or personal interests.

It is crucial for students to be at the center of their learning, no matter what schools choose to do with their flexible time. According to a Ward 8 teacher, one of their students expressed “School does not provide me opportunities to explore and experience life.”

Fortunately, flexible scheduling is a step towards ensuring D.C. students have access to quality learning experiences outside of their academic lessons.

“

As a district, our focus is to serve the whole child. There is currently not time for that...There should be dedicated times to wellness for students on a more consistent basis. Tutoring, food/nutrition education and services, making more time for play, with down-time with choices like reading, yoga, journaling, speaking with a mental health professional, etc.

- Ward 4 DCPS Teacher

”

Holistic Student Support

Flexible hours can be used for supporting holistic student well-being. Educators in our survey emphasized the importance of allowing students to engage in productive, non-academic activities to decompress. Activities such as art, music, movement (sports, dancing, yoga), and other similar diversions, are all opportunities for students to take “brain breaks.” If students are to be successful in the classroom, they need time to reenergize their minds and bodies.

THE BENEFITS FOR OUR STUDENTS

Holistic Student Support Continued

There is evidence that K-12 students benefit socially, emotionally, and academically from arts and movement-based activities. Brookings, another notable research think-tank, reports that findings in a nationwide survey indicate "Substantial increase in [student's] arts educational experiences has remarkable impacts on students' academic, social, and emotional outcome." More specifically, students exposed to arts education have a positive school engagement and tend to be more empathetic and compassionate.

Similarly, the Committee on Physical Activity and Physical Education in the School Environment released a book on the significant impact physical activity and physical fitness have on academic performance. Students rely on basic cognitive functions, such as attention, memory, and processing, to learn in school. The committee's research suggests that physical activity contributes to enhancing these functions with results seen in the areas of reading and mathematics.

There is credibility behind the positive impact non-academic activities can have on students' social, emotional, and academic skills. The cited sources above are only two out of many articles, reports, and projects centered on the implications of non-academic activities on K-12 students.

Keeping Student Benefits at the Forefront of Flexible Scheduling

Ultimately students have much to gain from the implementation of flexible scheduling. By prioritizing whole child and holistic enrichment opportunities, students are encouraged to broaden their horizons beyond their standard academic landscapes. There is not a shortage of what students can accomplish with extra time dedicated to their well-being and growth in and out of school. It is our hope that with the proper funding, resources, and school community supports that flexible scheduling will inspire D.C. students and prepare them for a life outside the classroom.

“

Hands on enrichment opportunities where they can apply what they are learning in class like robotics, cooking, breakdancing, guitar lessons. Whatever will inspire and light a fire for our kids. Offer to all of the district's children these wonderful enrichment classes that more affluent families can afford to sign their kids up for and pay out of pocket.

”

PRINCIPAL PERSPECTIVES



Last year we lost 13 staff members, which for us was a huge hit...And in having exit interviews with them, many of them were going to opportunities where they could stay and work at home, we had some going totally out of education, so we had to look a lot at what could we do as a school to make this a place where people wanted to be and could live their lives at the same time.

Principal Kathryn Procope (Howard University Middle PCS)



I tell our team all the time, I know that you are more than just a teacher. Your identity is wrapped up in being a partner, being a parent, being an auntie, being an aspiring entrepreneur- and so when our educators come to work they are bringing their whole selves. So we have to honor and respect the fact that schedules may be different, that they need sometimes just a moment to handle something personally.

Principal Jasmine Brann (Tyler Elementary DCPS)



We have once a month our Wellness Wednesdays where we release our staff and let them take care of things because typically in teaching you have to take days off to like go to the doctor, take your kids to the doctor, so that's been a small mechanism [to help with teacher retention].

Principal Brandon Johnson (Social Justice School PCS)



PRINCIPAL PERSPECTIVES



Every Wednesday, students are released early and teachers participate in professional development. However, because maintaining a work-life balance is important to us at Center City, once a month, our Wellness Wednesdays give our campus-based staff an additional three hours to take care of themselves. Staff can go to the doctor, take a spa day, or just sit back and relax and enjoy the free afternoon! Wellness Wednesdays have been in place for over 5 years, and the initiative continues to get positive feedback from our staff. There is always going to be too much to accomplish and too little time, however prioritizing wellness helps us all use the time we have more efficiently and with more joy!

Principal Micah Westerman (Center City PCS)



I think it could improve retention and morale. Happy, invested teachers = happy kids and fewer staff absences...Having more flexibility could ease the burden of needing subs, which are rarely available. {My strategies are to} Always approve requested leave; be generous and flexible when possible; as a parent myself, I connect with them on that level and remind them that their family is their first priority over a job. Provide a lactation room/area. Strive to hold all meetings during the work day. Flexible schedules for Principals should also be explored. We are 12-month employees with a lot of evening meetings and no flexibility. Consider an 11-month model or comp time hours to offset the evening meetings.

DC Principal



Recommendations

To achieve this transformative vision for our schools- all parties must work together. Here are our specific recommendations for local education leaders and agencies.

ENSURE ADEQUATE FUNDING



Most models of flexibility will require additional funding for the schools. We estimate many of the principal models we recommended would cost between \$200,000 and \$500,000 in additional dollars/year- a worthy investment in educator well-being and student success. We ask that our education leaders work together to fund flexible scheduling pilots through a cross-sector grant program and consider long-term funding solutions to scale what works. The initial grant fund should be at least \$10 million to account for schools we already know are trying to implement flexible scheduling.



TACKLE REGULATIONS TOGETHER

We recommend the Deputy Mayor for Education convene a flexible scheduling working group with OSSE, SBOE, DCPS, PCSB, WTU and other parties to examine and revise regulations that would prevent the implementation of well-designed flexible models such as seat-hour requirements and HR regulations.



BUILD CONSENSUS FIRST

Each school's design must be the model that works for them and their school community. We urge every school or LEA to consider a flexible scheduling pilot or implementation to widely consult families, students, educators, and school partners. Each model involves tradeoffs, so ensuring the process is inclusive of all school community lives experiences and needs is critical to its long term success.

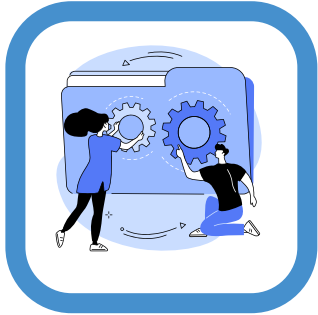


ACTIVATE OUT OF SCHOOL TIME PROVIDERS, DC AREA CAMPS

DC has an abundance of high-quality Out of School Time (OST) organizations that run exceptionally enriching experiences with young people. We can activate and fund these groups to run enrichment day experiences for students. We can also bring popular summer camps into schools - a solution that would address an existing inequity among the families who normally have access to these programs.

Recommendations Continued

WORK WITH THE WTU TO ESTABLISH AN MOU TO PROVIDE OPTIONS FOR:



- **“Job-Sharing” options** for teachers, especially teachers returning from FMLA or with young children. It is critical that these job-sharing arrangements not be forced on any teacher but be offered as an option, and that under all agreements no educator or staff person would lose full-time benefits or the accrual of retirement or other lifetime benefits.

- **“Percentage Time” options** for staff where educators could work a percentage time or teachers could teach a reduced course load voluntarily with a reduction in pay as agreed upon with the union but no reduction in full-time benefits or lifetime benefit accrual.



REQUIRE AND FUND MENTAL HEALTH DAYS

The District should provide all school staff across sectors a guarantee of at least two explicit mental health days per semester outside of current sick leave - which we know is the most effective way to ensure educators will actually take the days and prioritize their mental health (and be better prepared to show up in service of students). This must not come by reducing sick leave but by adding explicitly protected mental health days. Ensuring all schools have permanent substitute teachers is a critical and necessary corollary.



STUDY AND PROPOSE NEEDED REFORMS TO "SEAT-HOUR" RULES

Study the current “seat hour” requirements and recommend, as appropriate, revisions that allow for hours to be obtained outside the traditional courses. For example, if a student takes part in a “Real World History” course outside of school with a qualified nonprofit, those hours should count toward World History completion. OSSE should also consider where it might be appropriate to substitute hour requirements for satisfactory standard competition.



A RIGHT TO BEFORE & AFTER-CARE

Currently, not all students in DC have access to free before and after-care. While some of these models help solve that in and of themselves, if elementary, middle, and high schools across sectors utilize different flexible scheduling models, it will be even more essential that we implement universal, quality before & after care as a right, and not first come, first served, across the city.

Recommendations Continued



REVIEW AND REFORM ATTENDANCE REQUIREMENTS AS NEEDED

Study current attendance policies to permit, as appropriate, changes in required time in the school building where students might be participating in field-based learning/experiential education, internships, vocational programming, or virtual/ asynchronous learning.



EASE TIME MANDATES FOR IMPOSED CURRICULUM, FOCUS ON WELL-ROUNDED

All LEAs should review mandates they pass on to schools related to curriculum implementation or online learning programs. We've heard from schools that because of LEA requirements, for example, they are required to have students in a math program for a certain number of hours which makes implementing a more well-rounded experience for students or adding job flexibility impossible. These programs should be results-oriented, not driven by time or schedule mandates. LEAs should consider policies that deliberately promote a well-rounded curriculum and experience for students, rather than adding time in explicit reading & math instruction (which research shows is an ineffective way to increase student outcomes in those areas).



REFORM HR PROTOCOLS TO ALLOW FOR PART-TIME WORK

All LEAs should review and amend structures like "Wages as Earned" and other HR structures to allow educators who want to work part-time, or even educators who may want to work one day per week in "Enrichment Day" models. Districts must ease onboarding and clearance processes for new staff and volunteers to ensure schools do not experience long delays in setting up the additional staffing needed.

Guideposts & Cautions

As schools embark on designing flexible models, we advise utilizing these guideposts to ensure results that truly achieve greater well-being for all.



PRIORITIZE ALL SCHOOL STAFF

All models should be fully vetted to ensure that providing flexibility for some school staff will not put additional burden or stress on other positions (ex. more flexibility for teachers but increased demands on deans, school counselors, or admin staff)



UNION COLLABORATION

It is absolutely essential that all models meet the collective bargaining agreement with all affected unions and that changes to the agreement be made collaboratively either as a new CBA or an addendum Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) agreement.



CONSIDER STUDENT AGE & FAMILY

Students of different ages, social emotional, and academic needs deserve different types of programming, as well as having different appropriate biological rhythms that affect the proper school start and end times. Schools should also consider how their schedules might affect students who have responsibility for older or younger siblings, parents who regularly work during proposed drop off or pick-up times, or who cannot travel easily across the city.



SAFE PASSAGE

The safety of our students and families as they travel across the city is of utmost importance. Well-planned, flexible models could make passage safer by staggering start and end times. With different start and end times, comes the need for increased coordination and collaboration - especially with schools within the same neighborhoods.

Conclusion

Where do you go from here?

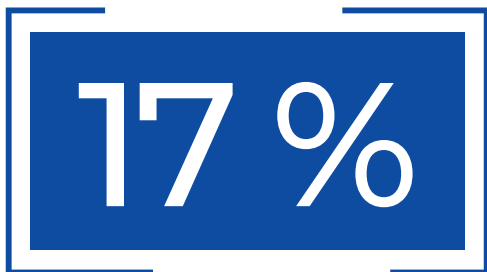
We hope that this report serves as a playbook for both educators and school leaders looking to implement flexible scheduling in their own schools and also for education leaders looking to provide sufficient support, funding, and design to enable flexible scheduling to take hold. For this to happen, we also need a shift in mentality and a recognition that educator wellness is directly related to student well-being and student success.

If we truly believe that the most important in-school factor to the success of students is their educators, we must begin to center solutions for educator well-being, professional growth, and sustainability in our education agendas. It also means de-centering (and removing) policies that are exacerbating educator stress and burnout while failing to contribute meaningfully to student growth - like punitive evaluation systems and an over-emphasis on standardized testing. To do one without the other is to undermine the impact of this effort and to further demoralize our already demoralized educator workforce.

This means that we need education leaders who recognize the realities we have highlighted in this report to not only lead the way in their own spheres of influence but to bring others along with them - fellow school leaders, district leaders, funders, school partners, and the communities they serve. What we are discussing here is a transformation of schooling - one with enormous potential to benefit students and staff alike.

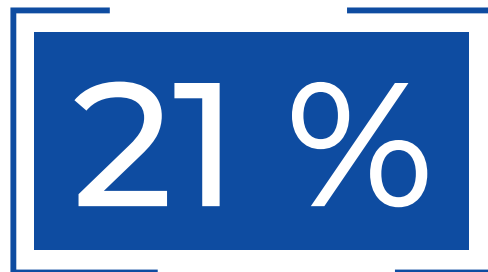
The world around schools is changing. The question now is whether schools will catch up and seize the moment or allow our education system (and our children) to be casualties of our unwillingness to think - and act - outside our comfort zone.

Additional Survey Data



"I will likely leave this role after this year."

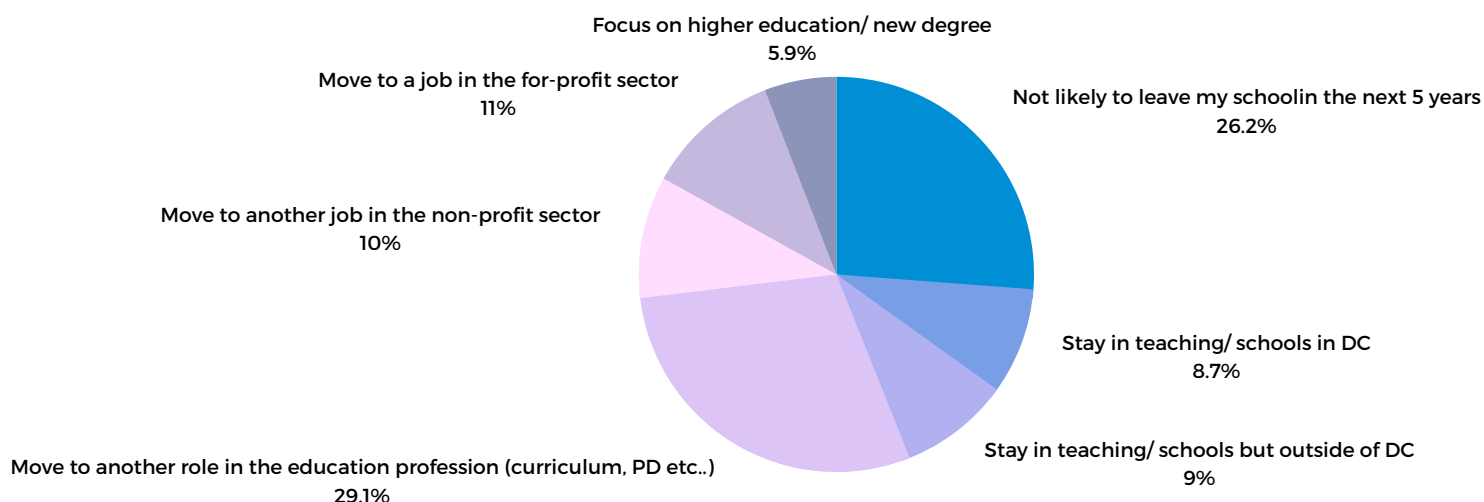
*Our survey results skewed toward more experienced teachers (who are likely to stay longer) so this might under-represents those likely to leave.



"I will likely leave my school within 1-2 years."

*This is an *additional* 21 % to the 17 % who say they will leave after this year. A total of 38 % of educators say they will likely leave within 2 years.

Which of these is most likely for you in the next five years?



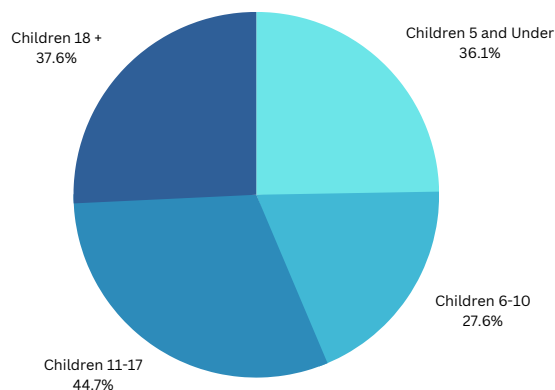
Survey Respondents & Demographics

In what ward is your school located?

Ward	% of Respondents
1	8.9 %
2	6.1 %
3	11.2 %
4	19.3 %
5	16.3 %
6	10.9 %
7	14.2 %
8	13.2 %

Do you have children?

Yes	53.1 %
No	46.9 %



Race	% of Respondents
Asian-American or Pacific-Islander	4.7 %
Black or African-American	49.1 %
Hispanic or Latino/a	11.7 %
Native American/ American Indian	2.1 %
White or Caucasion	37.7 %
Other	4.4 %

Age	% of Respondents
25 years old & under	7.1 %
26-30 years old	12.5 %
31-35 years old	20.1 %
36-45 years old	30.4 %
46-60 years old	25.1 %
61 and older	4.8 %

Survey Respondents/ Demographics

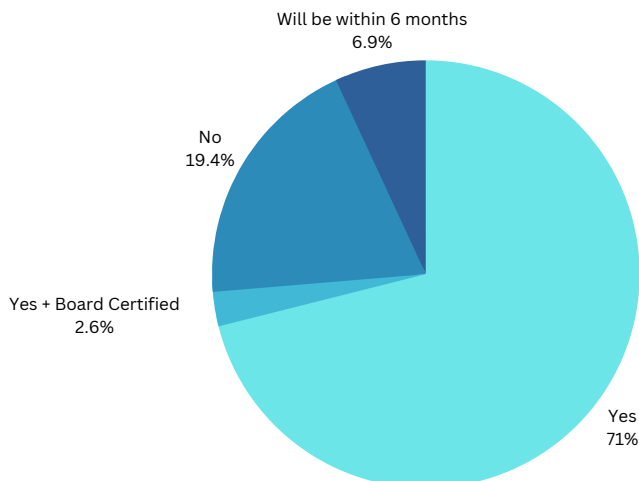
Where do you live?

Ward or State	% of Respondents
1	8.6 %
2	2.6 %
3	5.7 %
4	9.7 %
5	9.6 %
6	6.1 %
7	6.7 %
8	3.5 %
Maryland	38.3 %
Virginia	7.1 %

What do you teach?

Subject	% of Respondents
ECE/ Pre-K	12.9 %
Primary- All Subjects	14.5%
English	13.6 %
Social Studies	7.9 %
Math	12.6 %
Science	8.2 %
Art	3.1 %
Music	1.8 %
World Language	4.0 %
Special Education	15.6 %
Social Worker	1.6 %
Support Staff	8.0 %
Other	18.6 %

Are you a certified teacher?



Survey Respondents & Demographics

How many years have you been teaching at your school?

Years	% of Respondents
First Year	23.9 %
2-5 Years	45.2 %
6-10 Years	20.6 %
11-20 Years	8.1 %
21 of More Years	3.9 %

How many years have you been teaching overall?

Years	% of Respondents
First Year	4.0 %
2-5 Years	18.6 %
6-10 Years	24.9 %
11-20 Years	33.6 %
21 of More Years	19.4 %

“

"Flexible scheduling would actually provide me adequate weekly time to proactively prep and prepare for my classes. It would greatly impact my ability to provide rigorous and fulfilling lessons for students knowing that I have the time each week. Personally, it would allow me to schedule all doctor appointments for myself and my children during time which does not impede on my instructional work with students. Flexible scheduling would allow me to miss less instructional time for my students and myself. It would absolutely keep me in this profession far longer.

-Ward 1 DCPS Teacher

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Further Learning

- [Flexibility or Else: Teacher Retention in the Brave New World of Education](#)
- [Enriching Students: Different Types of Flexible Schedules](#)
- [Getting Flexible: Giving Students the Time they Need to Learn](#)
- [Simon Rodberg: Teaching Must Get Flexible Before it Falls Apart](#)
- [Improving Staff Retention Through Flexible Timetables \(UK\)](#)
- [TimeWise: Building Flexibility Into Secondary Schools](#)
- [Ed Forward DC: "It's About Time: Learnings from a Staffing Innovation Pilot"](#)
- [Center for American Progress: Reimagining the School Day](#)
- [The Surgeon General's Framework for Workplace Well-Being](#)
- Real world learning with an alternative schedule at [High Tech High in San Diego](#)

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I think having less time in the school building, sitting and learning content, and more real-world experiences will be more beneficial for students. In my perfect school, students would be out at museums, grocery stores, farms, music shops, clothing retailers, art studios, banks, mechanic shops, businesses, and corporations learning about different types of career paths and how they want to show up in the world - that aligns with their most authentic selves. The traditional school setting is not for all children, and all students deserve to be exposed to areas that make them feel empowered and seen.

- Ward 8 DCPS Teacher

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The Last Word - From a DC Teacher

Teachers are whole people. This Ward 6 DCPS teacher explains how flexibility (or a lack of it) impacts their work and their family every day. Their testimony describes many of the failings of our current systems and the promise of flexible scheduling.

"I've been teaching in DC for twenty years and I am not sure I can do it anymore. A more flexible schedule, one with more planning time, would allow me to be a more thoughtful, effective teacher. I'd have time to plan more engaging lessons (I don't need more PD on how to do that--I know how, I just don't have time). I'd also have more time to spend with individual students and give more effective feedback. As it is, there isn't time to breathe during the day--and every week there is something new to do. I realize that saying that is almost cliché, but in my 20 years of teaching, it's never been this bad. Personally, it would mean less stress, time for my own children, and some sense of being valued in the city. I have felt this way for many years but the lack of flexibility is front and center for me this year. My children have all attended DC schools all their lives--they are now in middle and high school. Unfortunately, one of them has been fighting several mental health challenges. And in September, we had no choice but to move her to an alternative private school because her very well-respected high school, could not serve her. They had absolutely nothing to offer to protect her safety or mental health...I'm not mad at the school, but I am mad at the system. What does this have to do with flexibility? Since this alternative school is in Bowie and opens at 8:00 am and I live in NW DC and work in Capitol Hill--I can't get to school until 8:45. At [my school], we pick kids up outside at 8:40. Therefore, I need a "sub" for 5-10 minutes to bring the kids from the playground to my classroom. I assumed I'd have to take 15 minutes of leave each day to cover the time when another adult was having to do my job. Unfortunately, admin is making me take an hour of leave per day from 8:00 am-9:00 am because technically (you might say contractually, but we don't have a contract) the teaching day starts at 8:00. Regardless of the fact that I am often at school until 5 or 6:00 pm. And that over the course of 20 years in DC, I've regularly worked 60+ hour weeks--hours and hours of unpaid work. On top of the fact that I have almost no leave remaining because I had to be out on FMLA last year to care for my daughter and since the LOA office is so dysfunctional it took months for the leave to be approved (supposed to be 3-5 business days) so I had to use all my sick and personal leave--and go several weeks without pay. (Still waiting on my PTL for that period). That means by the end of next month, I will lose 5 hours of pay every week even though I work a minimum of 50 hours a week. If you've gotten this far, thanks for reading but the lack of even minimal flexibility is an everyday issue for me this year. There is a lot pushing teachers out right now and I have fought to stay in education because I love teaching and I think over 20 years, I've gotten really good at it--but this lack of flexibility from DCPS may be the final straw for me.

***Final note, it is especially discouraging when I rush into the building in the morning and see so many other parents--who do have professional flexibility--leisurely dropping their kids at school. The de-professionalization of teaching driven in part by the lack of flexibility hits every day. Thanks for your work on this issue."**

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