

Stakeholder Advocacy for 8-Period Day

The District is currently negotiating with the Teachers' Union (PAT) about different possible daily student schedules for our high schools. We have heard from school administrators that the District is advocating for a four class per semester, eight classes per year, schedule for all our comprehensive high schools, or 4x4 model. **We understand that this schedule decision will be finalized at the school board meeting on August 11th.**

This would be a mistake: a 4x4 schedule will not only damage essential academic school programs, increase racial disparities, create more stress, increase workloads for students and severely impact community and support systems, but it will specifically diminish any progress we've made towards equitable access to Music and Arts education for all PPS students.

The 4x4 schedule is incredibly detrimental to so many programs across the curriculum, including World Language, Science, but especially the Visual and Performing Arts (VAPA). Severe ramifications of a 4x4 schedule will include:

- **A semester-based model will severely diminish student learning in courses that require near daily practice and skill development.** Math, World Language, and Visual and Performing Arts courses require regular practice to learn and retain. A 4x4 schedule could result in a student going nearly a year (April 2020 to February 2021) without that opportunity, impacting learning and performance in subsequent years.
- **Year long academic and socio-emotional support classes such as AVID and 9th grade Student Success courses will be reduced to one semester, or half the year.** These programs boost graduation rates, provide targeted academic skills, and foster increased socio-emotional wellness to students often pushed out by traditional programming. They also make IB accessible to historically underrepresented groups.
- **The 4x4 schedule is incompatible with IB curriculum and programming and has the potential to harm student learning and deny our students a pathway to college credit.** The two semesters would be inequitable with students enrolled in a second semester course having less than half the time to complete required IB assessments (which teachers must also score) and 2/3 the time to cover the curriculum before testing. It also makes it impossible for a Full Diploma Senior to engage in more than 4 subject areas at once, a requirement of IB. Students enrolled in IB classes in the fall will be responsible for their own review and examination preparation in the second semester, amplifying inequities for students with other financial and familial obligations.
- **A 4x4 schedule will ask students to complete double the work in one half the time.** Rather than reduce stress, a 4x4 schedule threatens to increase stress and workload for students. This model also does not give students the opportunity to ruminate over new material, ask questions, and get feedback before moving on. If a student falls behind or

falls ill, the compressed timeline could exacerbate the stress associated with getting caught up.

- **Building community is challenging in a typical year and will take extra effort and time for students and teachers in a virtual setting.** Reducing our connection to a semester leaves half the usual time for students, families, and teachers to build meaningful relationships.
- **VAPA classes offer unique opportunities for individual creativity, culturally responsive instruction and social emotional learning/support/development.** By *not* utilizing the 8-period schedule, the access to these culturally important classes is greatly diminished as students will have fewer elective opportunities in their schedules and administrators will have fewer scheduling options for creating the least amount of scheduling conflicts.
- **Year-long instruction in the VAPA courses benefits students, not only in what is taught, but in terms of developing artistic expression and having an outlet to express themselves.** Having only one opportunity to take a VAPA course for one semester cuts the growth for students at the root level, will create a myriad of unintentional ramifications including logistical challenges, prohibiting students from participation in state-wide events, and hurting the reputation of PPS for recruiting not only a world-class workforce, but ultimately students and families.

Rather than *mandate* a one-size-fits-all schedule, we ask that the district provides support for the 8-period A/B schedule, but with options for students to not be *required* to take eight periods of classes. This would allow Communities across our district to differentiate our schedules to meet the needs of students and families.

Thank you.