

4J High Schools

Are we a system or are we islands?

As we strive to improve our graduation rates and meet the district and state goal of 100% graduation by 2020-2021 with no remediation needed in college, we must do all we can to increase student learning in our high schools. To that end, Eugene School District 4J high school principals believe it is necessary to create a common schedule in our high schools.

While there are differences among students in our schools, high school principals believe it is not possible to argue that the students in one region will learn better if provided one schedule and students in another region will learn better on another.

High school principals also believe that a school's schedule is an instructional tool that can improve teaching and learning. It is more than an operational tool for fitting students into classes based on numbers.

Additionally in the high school principals' view, a common schedule will provide common language, thereby allowing us to make systemic change for our students and schools.

The high school principals see a variety of benefits resulting from all high schools operating on the same daily schedule:

Student learning

- A common schedule opens doors for students and allows them to take courses at schools across the district.
- A common schedule enhances our opportunity as a district to partner with U of O and LCC and provide our students with access to college course offerings.
- A common schedule paves the way for improving the articulation and sequencing of courses within schools and regions and across the district.
- A common schedule provides students with an amount of instructional time and course load that is alike at each school.
- A common schedule prevents disruption and gaps in student learning for those transferring from one school to another, some of whom are our most vulnerable learners.

- A common schedule increases opportunities for teachers to collaborate and problem solve with one another both within a school and across the district. This in turn leads systemically to practices that maximize student learning.
- A common schedule increases the likelihood of systemic interventions for students needing additional support.

Operations and Management

- A common schedule reduces challenges for staff shared across buildings and itinerant staff.
- A common schedule equalizes time across buildings by eliminating inequities in teacher preparation, planning, and collaboration time and for student learning time.
- A common schedule increases efficiencies and reduces costs in district operations departments (Human Resources, Computing Information Services, Finance, Facilities and Transportation).
- A common schedule provides opportunities for standardizing procedures managed through the Student Information System, such as calculating grade point averages and accumulating credits.

Community and Parents

- A common schedule provides a clear picture to parents and community members about what a high school day should look like in District 4J and what can be expected to be provided to students, thereby minimizing perceived differences among schools.
- A common schedule results in standardized and predictable communications from schools and the district, such as those reporting student progress to parents.

Today we expect that all 4J students will graduate from high school prepared to be successful in colleges and careers. At present, more than a quarter of our high school students do not graduate from our high schools within four years. For instructional, operational, and financial reasons, the high school principals believe it is time for Eugene School District 4J to create a common schedule in our high schools.

*Laurie Moses
Director of Secondary Education*