

Palo Alto High School Innovative Schedule Committee
DESIRED OUTCOMES FOR A NEW BELL SCHEDULE

The bell schedule is one of many important factors that can support a school to meet its goals on behalf of students, staff and families. The Innovative Schedule Committee (ISC) encourages the Palo Alto High School community to have realistic expectations about what a new schedule is likely to accomplish. The community should not expect a schedule change to be “the solution” for complex goals like optimizing student learning and well-being. With any schedule, students, staff and families all share responsibility to make daily choices that promote desired goals.

We believe that there is no “perfect schedule.” Every schedule option establishes a structure that requires different trade-offs, making certain goals and activities easier and others more challenging.

ISC has consensus that any schedule decision we make should promote, support and contribute to the following prioritized outcomes for the Palo Alto High School community:

1. The schedule should help OPTIMIZE STUDENT AND STAFF WELL-BEING by...

a. ...minimizing potential stress, anxiety, and negative health consequences linked to the structure of the school day.

- E.g., classes start no earlier than 8:15 a.m. There are a reasonable number of classes and transitions each day to reduce overload, homework and test stacking. The schedule provides sufficient time for nutrition, breaks, and passing between classes.

b. ...allocating time to personalize student support, deepen student-teacher relationships, and build a strongly connected school community.

- E.g., there is ample time in the schedule for advisory, flex periods, and social-emotional learning.

2. The schedule should help OPTIMIZE STUDENT LEARNING by contributing to a productive learning environment where...

a. ...teaching and learning are well supported by the ways time is allocated within the schedule.

- E.g., block class periods are of sufficient length and frequency to support project-based learning, authentic assessment, and instruction aligned with required teaching standards.

b.teachers have dedicated time and opportunities to develop professionally, collaborate, and share best practices.

- E.g., there is enough time within the schedule for professional learning communities (PLC’s) to align and enhance curriculum, instruction, and assessment.

c. ...time is allocated to personalize learning and address the needs of different types of learners.

- E.g., the schedule provides the time needed for tutorial/flex or advisory periods. Class periods are of sufficient length to support differentiated instructional strategies.