

INNOVATIVE SCHEDULE COMMITTEE MINUTES

Meeting Date: November 14, 2017

Members Present: Radhi Dhall, David Foster, Aimee Fuller, Jenny Gardiner, Sam Howles-Banerji, Samantha Hwang, Sue La Fetra, Sam Moore, Erik Olah, Steve Sabbag, Susan Shultz, Corrie Sid, David Simoni, Misha Stempel, Nathan Strope, Andrea Struve, Kristina Vetter, Maurice Wang **Members Absent:** Kimberly Diorio **Support Staff Present:** Christa Brown, Ken Yale

Decisions Made:

- Discussion of the research article, “The Effects of Block Scheduling,” will be postponed until the 12/5/17 ISC meeting.

Issues Bin:

- Questions related to schedule innovations:
 - Could Paly offer an intersession that would still align with Gunn’s academic calendar, as mandated by the Required Criteria?
 - Would intersession count toward instructional minutes?
 - How would intersession work, e.g., which courses would be offered, could we fill them, what class sizes, what are the logistics?
 - Could something like an intersession be done after the second semester, like a “May Term” or “post-session”?
 - Are interdisciplinary blocks an issue for ISC to decide and/or design, or would that be done administratively as part of building the master schedule?
 - If modular periods were used, which courses would have single vs. multiple modules?
- Questions related to late start times and late start days
 - Can we get survey data on the impact of class start and end times on the commute times of staff?
 - How do teachers and students perceive student performance in 1st and last period classes compared to other times of the day?
 - Given a choice between a consistent start time at 8:15 or 8:30 every morning vs. starting at 8:15 or 8:30 on 3 days a week, and starting later on the other 2 days, which would students prefer?
 - What does the research say about the impact of a more or less consistent schedule?
 - Can we get key studies on what strategies other schools have used to implement later start times?
 - How would starting at 9:00 or later impact the end time?
 - Would it be possible to have a brunch at 8:15 prior to the first class?
 - Can we have an 8-period day (e.g., from 8:15 to 4:00), with different students having varied or staggered starting and ending times?

Action	Who's Responsible?	By when?
Read the final required reading for the next ISC meeting	All ISC members	12/5/17
Provide a model of a schedule with a mandatory free period for ISC discussion	Schedule Design Subcommittee	12/12/17
Do follow up research on the Issues Bin questions above	Facilitator will make a plan with subcommittee coordinators	Ongoing
Implement subcommittee action plans	All subcommittees	Ongoing

Additional Notes:

Welcome & Team Building

- Today's meeting focused primarily on sharing perspectives on the Hot Button issues related to schedule innovations, school start time, and teacher collaboration/ professional learning communities.
- The importance of attending to the community agreements related to "building inclusion and belonging" was emphasized now that ISC is starting to turn towards a more "product" phase of our work and beginning to debate the Hot Button issues.

Hot Buttons: Locating Ourselves

- ISC members reviewed the results of an internal survey they took at the last meeting about their perspectives on 13 Hot Button issues they had previously identified. Hot Buttons are issues that could have a major impact on schedule design AND are potentially controversial within ISC and/or the school community. ISC members identified the key areas where they currently have a lot of agreement or disagreement, as well as areas where they most need additional information.
- ISC members discussed the survey responses to the Hot Button on schedule innovations. 13 of 18 respondents expressed interest in a mandatory free period. The Schedule Design Subcommittee will bring a model with this innovation for discussion at the 12/12/17 meeting. 11 of 18 respondents expressed interest in a full block schedule. This will be addressed in the next meeting when the article by Rettig & Canady is discussed.
- At least 5 respondents expressed interest in each of three more innovations: intersession, interdisciplinary blocks, and modular blocks. A list of questions for further research on these innovations was generated and included on the Issues Bin list above. The facilitator will work with the subcommittee coordinators to follow up on these questions.

- At least 1 respondent each expressed interest in intensives, internship periods, and club/activity periods.
- A Four Corners protocol was used to begin debating alternative viewpoints within ISC on the Hot Buttons with the greatest impact on schedule design and/or the greatest degree of controversy. The purpose of the protocol was to understand each other's perspectives and begin moving toward more shared viewpoints without making any actual decisions at this stage.
- Today's discussion focused on the #1 Hot Button, school start time. The first question addressed in the protocol was: *"To best address ISC's Desired Outcomes, when should the first regular period of the day begin on most or all days?"* By the end of the protocol:
 - 8:15 a.m.: 7 members supported this option. Some key points they raised included: they believe there is no clear data indicating a major difference between an 8:15 vs. 8:30 start time; a 15-minute later start is not worth the problems caused for bus schedules and commuters; and a later start would result in students who leave early for sports missing more class time.
 - 8:30 a.m.: 5 members supported this option. Some key points they raised included: studies and policy statements by major health organizations like the American Academy of Pediatrics recommend a school start time of no earlier than 8:30; the school community would be upset if ISC does not move to at least an 8:30 start given all of this research and publicity; and a later start would have strong support from students.
 - 8:45 – 9:00 a.m.: 4 members supported this option. Some key points they raised included: general agreement with the points raised by the 8:30 group; research shows that teenagers need to sleep later and their learning and well-being will benefit; they prefer a more significant change in start time than 15 minutes; and a consistently later start time like 8:45 – 9:00 would be better than a mix of early and late start times.
 - Later than 9:00 a.m.: 2 members supported this option. Some key points they raised included: general agreement with some points raised by the 8:45 – 9:00 group, but they believe students need to sleep beyond 9:00; there is lots of anecdotal evidence on students not being awake or performing well in the morning; sports can adjust to a different start time; it's better for students to have more free time in the morning than the afternoon; and they prefer a daily late start.
- The second question addressed in the protocol was: *"To best address ISC's Desired Outcomes, on how many days per week should there be a late start day, (i.e., a day that starts later than other days?)"* By the end of the protocol:
 - 0 late start days: 4 members supported this option. These members actually supported a later start time than 8:15, but opposed having some days start later than others. They want a consistent daily starting time that begins later than the current schedule.
 - 1 late start day: 1 member supported this option, and wanted it to be on every "C" day.

- 2 late start days; 10 members supported this option. A key point raised was that research shows students perform better when they have the opportunity to catch up on sleep on the weekends, so late start days would help students catch up on some of that sleep during the weekdays.
- More than 2 late start days: 3 members supported this option. A key point raised was that a consistent start time wouldn't account for the different needs and preferences among students, so a mixture of earlier and later start days would be better.
- Throughout both protocol discussions, it became clear that members' responses to the two questions were interdependent and somewhat overlapping. For example, many members who supported an 8:15 or 8:30 start time on most days would support a later start time on one or two days per week. Some members who supported a later start time would only support it if it was consistently later every day. A key point of discussion was whether a higher value should be placed on a later start time or a consistent start time.
- ISC identified questions that would help create more consensus and directed them to the subcommittees. They are listed on the Issues Bin above.

Learning From Schedule Research

- ISC continued its review of research articles selected by the Research Subcommittee, discussing the article "Creating the Structures for Collaboration," by Richard DuFour. The discussion focused on the question: *"Which of the ways DuFour suggests for creating time for professional learning communities (PLC's) are within ISC's purview AND could be effectively implemented at Paly?"*
- There was strong agreement among ISC members that teacher collaboration time is important and beneficial for high quality instruction and innovation. Paly's WASC report recommends more opportunities for teacher collaboration and PLC's, and ISC's Required Criteria mandate at minimum maintaining the current 95 minutes of weekly time for collaboration. It was clarified that there can't be financial impacts from additional collaboration time, but rather that more collaboration time would need to come from how time is reallocated within the schedule.
- Many ISC members expressed support for more PLC and teacher collaboration time, including buddy time, course-alike time, common preps, interdisciplinary collaboration, and time for horizontal and vertical alignment (across subjects within a grade level and across grade levels within a subject area).

Closure

- The next meeting will be held on 12/5. It will focus on further discussions of the schedule research and the Hot Buttons.