

**WHAT IS A BLOCK SCHEDULE?**

An alternating block schedule consists of eight alternating class periods across two days, so that a student would attend Period 1, 2, 3 and 4 classes on one day and Period 5, 6, 7 and 8 classes the next, alternating throughout the school year.

**HOW DOES THE BLOCK SCHEDULE DIFFER FROM WHAT DISTRICT 214 HAS HAD IN THE PAST?**

While most District 214 schools have previously used a traditional schedule in which students attend each class on their schedule, covering eight periods every day, we have a history of success implementing block schedules in the past.

**DIDN'T DISTRICT 214 UTILIZE A BLOCK SCHEDULE DURING THE 2020-2021 SCHOOL YEAR?**

Yes, District 214 implemented a modified block schedule during the 2020-2021 school year to better accommodate the needs of students and teachers alike during hybrid learning. In addition, a block schedule potentially minimizes the number of students who would need to quarantine in the event of a COVID-19 infected student. Because students participate in half of their schedule on a given day, the potential for quarantining students is significantly reduced.

**HOW, EXACTLY, DOES AN ALTERNATING BLOCK SCHEDULE WORK?**

As mentioned, the schedule for the pilot will consist of eight alternating class periods across two days. Each block will consist of 80 minutes of instructional time, with one block each day extended to 130 minutes to accommodate a 45-minute lunch period. The 45-minute lunch will provide flexibility in scheduling and for students in music programs to continue to meet on a more frequent basis. Passing periods will be five minutes. The student school day will run from 8:35 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Students would, for example, attend Column A classes on Monday, Wednesday and Friday one week and then Tuesday and Thursday the next week. That same student would attend Column B classes on Tuesday and Thursday of the first week and then Monday, Wednesday and Friday the following week.

SCHEDULE		A	B
ZERO HOUR	TBD	Zero Hour	Zero Hour
BLOCK 1	8:35 - 9:55 am	Period 1	Period 5
BLOCK 2	10:00 - 11:20 am	Period 2	Period 6
BLOCK 3	11:25 am - 1:35 pm (embedded 45-minute lunch)	Period 3	Period 7
BLOCK 4	1:40 - 3:00 pm	Period 4	Period 8
AFTER SCHOOL	3:00 - 3:20 pm	Student Support	Student Support

### WHAT ADDITIONAL BENEFITS DOES THE ALTERNATING BLOCK SCHEDULE OFFER?

District 214 has identified several benefits, in addition to those listed above. Among them:

- **Support students return.** All students will have access to an independent study period and lunch. The American Recovery Act requires school districts to develop a return to school “learning loss” plan that supports students’ academic and social emotional needs. Maintaining the current block schedule ensures every student can not only have a lunch for the social interaction essential to their engagement with school, but also access to support services during the school day.
- **Flexibility in student scheduling.** Recent State of Illinois legislation increasing graduation requirements has the potential to eliminate most freshmen and sophomores from all elective programs in our traditional schedules. A block schedule offers flexibility for electives.
- **Improved access to dual credit.** A block schedule supports student participation in dual credit courses at Harper College and, more generally, reduces class schedule conflicts for students in off-campus, work-based learning experiences.
- **Support for labs and project-based learning.** Extended class periods allow for flexibility in delivery of instruction as well as student learning.
- **Consistency for music programs.** Embedding lunch within a 130-minute block instead of designating lunch as a stand-alone period improves scheduling flexibility and ensures that music programs have a dedicated two-hour block to meet daily with students.
- **Later start times.** Later start times for students, in keeping with research on later start times indicating sleep and academic benefits for adolescents.

### HOW DID DISTRICT 214 GAUGE SUPPORT FOR AN ALTERNATING BLOCK SCHEDULE?

After initially hearing unsolicited positive responses from students, staff and parents about the block schedule implemented during hybrid learning, District 214 invited students, staff and guardians to complete interest surveys about possibly extending the block schedule into a two-year pilot program for the 2021-2022 and 2022-2023 academic years.

### WHAT WERE THE SURVEY RESULTS?

A survey of guardians, students and staff members conducted in January and February of 2021 indicates a strong interest in maintaining a version of the A/B block schedule. Among parents, guardians and students responding, 69 percent agreed or strongly agreed that a block schedule would likely be better for students. Among staff respondents, 67 percent indicated that they could envision supporting a block schedule.

### WILL THE PILOT RUN FOR TWO YEARS AT ALL DISTRICT 214 SCHOOLS?

Because of the potential benefits, District 214 will implement for the 2021-2022 year a block schedule at all six of its comprehensive high schools.

### WHAT HAPPENS AT THE END OF THE TWO-YEAR PILOT?

District 214 will assess and evaluate the block schedule throughout the pilot time period and will survey students, staff and parents as the pilot concludes.