



Rethinking the high school schedule

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Use this scheduler to dream big about a high school that will prepare your child for the future.

Those who don't know their history are doomed to repeat it...

The American high school was designed more than a century ago when people were moving from farms to cities to work in factories. Society needed a literate workforce and high school promised to teach young people skills in an orderly and predictable fashion.

This meant standardizing everything! Based on their grade level, students read the same books and took the same tests at the same pace. They sat in rows, listened to the same lectures, and moved from class to class based on a bell system, which was borrowed from the factory. Even separate subjects – math, science, history, English – had a standardized curriculum based on the idea that future workers needed a minimum of abstract skills and knowledge to become productive.

Unfortunately, most high schools today still resemble high schools 100 years ago:

- Desks in rows
- Bell schedules
- Textbooks
- Long lectures
- Focus on grades
- Factory-style start times
- Standardized timelines
- Abstracted academic subjects
- Hall passes to go to the bathroom
- Sorting high performers from low performers (tracking)

Traditional high schools also offer lots of “fun stuff,” like sports, electives (theatre, art, band), and clubs (robotics, leadership, mock trial). Often it's during these extra classes that students experience the autonomy and passion of going deep into a topic of their choosing. If you think about your own high school experience, you may remember that some of your big educational moments happened outside of the classroom.

In the past century, a lot has changed about our society, including how we live and work. We've also learned a lot about how the teenage brain learns. So it makes sense to redesign high school for this new historical moment.

Fortunately, many educators have created new solutions to help students thrive in an increasingly complex world. Some of these include:

- **Project-based learning**

Students learn by doing projects rather than just listening to lectures as passive learners. Sometimes called [Design for Change](#), [Civic Action Projects](#), or expos.

- **Interdisciplinary blocks**

Class time with more than one subject taught together, such as computer science and visual design or English and Biology.

- **Advisory**

Students meet with the same faculty member and group of students for the school year (or longer) to track their academic progress and get emotional support.

- **Internships**

Schools help students find internships in the community.

- **Capstone projects**

A single, long-term learning project designed by the student.

- **Career pathways**

A series of classes focusing on a career path, such as biomedical engineering, culinary arts, journalism.

- **College transition classes**

These classes are called different things at different schools, but generally, they take students through the process of exploring their passions, researching possible colleges and careers, and applying to colleges or postgraduate programs.

Here are two potential schedules for two different students, followed by a blank schedule that you can fill in for your child.

Use the blank schedule below to fill in what you think would work well for your high schooler. Since every year is different, we chose just one year to think about — junior year — since that's when so much learning comes to fruition.

Consider which academic classes your high schooler might need to take to be eligible for the kind of college or career that they're interested in. For example, if your child wants to pursue sciences, it's useful to take advanced math. On the other hand, if your child is interested in making things with their hands, they would want to get access to advanced arts or technical design.

Jose wants to be a music engineer/producer and eventually run his own recording studio.

	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
Block 1: 9:00-9:45 am (45m)	College Transition/ Advisory	AP Computer Science	College Transition/ Advisory	AP Computer Science	AP Computer Science
Block 2: 9:55-11:10 am (75m)	Honors Statistics	Spanish 3	Civics	Honors Statistics	Honors Statistics
Block 3: 11:20- 12:35 pm (75m)	Spanish 3	English Writing	English Writing	Spanish 3	English Writing
Lunch: 12:35-1:05 pm					
Block 4: 1:05-2:20 pm (75m)	Civics	Internship at Music Studio	Free	Internship at Music Studio	Advanced Music Tech (Pathway class)
Block 5: 2:30-3:45 pm (75m)	Science Research	Internship at Music Studio	Science Research	Internship at Music Studio	Capstone project

Melody wants to go into the healthcare field with the ultimate goal of being a doctor or nurse practitioner.

	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
Block 1: 9:00 am 9:45 (45m)	Free	Advisory	College Transition	Advisory	College Transition
Block 2: 9:55-11:10 am (75m)	Capstone project	Spanish 3	Precalculus	Precalculus	Precalculus
Block 3: 11:20-12:35 pm (75m)	Precalculus	Precalculus	Spanish 3	Precalculus	Precalculus
Lunch: 12:35-1:05 pm					
Block 4: 1:05-2:20 pm (75m)	Humanities	Internshi at General Hospital	Humanities	Internship at General Hospital	Capstone Project
Block 5: 2:30-3:45 pm (75m)	Science Research	Internship at General Hospital	Science Research	Internship at General Hospital	Capstone Project

Ideal high school schedule for: _____

	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
Block 1: 9:00- 9:45 am (45m)					
Block 2: 9:55-11:10 am (75m)					
Block 3: 11:20- 12:35 pm (75m)					
Lunch: 12:35-1:05 pm					
Block 4: 1:05-2:20 pm (75m)					
Block 5: 2:30-3:45 pm (75m)					