

## Central Campus & Central Academy

1. How is busing to and from Central Campus and Central Academy going to work with the proposed schedule?
  - a. **We are aware that issues with the busing between Central Campus and the home high schools have caused problems this year and the district is working hard to fix these issues. That being said, the cause of these delays is related to a shortage of bus drivers across the district as well as unanticipated effects of delays in elementary school busing on Central Campus shuttles. Neither of these issues is caused by the schedule of classes. There are two ways in which the proposed schedule allows for travel time to and from home high schools and Central Campus/Academy. First, the home high schools have a 35-minute MTSS period built into the proposed schedule, which allows Central Campus and Academy students to accommodate travel time into their schedule without giving up a for-credit course. Second, the start and end times of classes at Central Campus/Academy are off-set from those of the home high schools to allow for students to travel between buildings. This is true in the current schedule as well. By having the MTSS period in the home high school schedule and by having the start and end times of classes at Central off-set from those at the home high schools, students have time to travel between campuses without having to give up class time in order to make it work.**
2. How will this affect students' ability to take classes at Central?
  - a. **Students will still be able to take classes at Central Campus and/or Central Academy on the proposed schedule. The schedule is designed to allow students to be at Central Campus and/or Central Academy for any number of blocks from one course up to the entire seven-period schedule.**
3. What impact does the schedule have on students attending Central Campus that have a course that is more than one period?
  - a. **The proposed schedule will still allow for Central Campus to offer courses that are more than one period long, just like the current schedule allows. These classes would be intentionally placed within the master schedule to allow for easier transitions for students and to allow for necessary community support for Central Campus programs, such as internships. For example, a course might be two periods long in the schedule, so would be offered in periods 2-3, 4-5, or 6-7. This means that because of how the proposed schedule works, students would be in that class every day for approximately 90-95 minutes, even on the block days, allowing for more consistency and the ability for those students to do extended projects, labs, community-events, internships, etc.**
4. How are you going to deal with Central vs. home high school schedules?
  - a. **As with the current schedule, counselors and scheduling personnel at Central Campus, Central Academy, and the comprehensive high schools will work together to coordinate schedules for students attending multiple buildings. The scheduling between buildings is all done simultaneously with lots of collaboration between counselors to solve scheduling problems and resolve conflicts.**
5. This schedule seems like it would really cut those classes short since they are usually a little shorter anyway to allow for travel – what about those classes?
  - a. **The classes at Central Campus and Central Academy would be the same length as the classes at the home high schools on the proposed schedule, not shorter. The travel time for students going to and from Central will be absorbed through the MTSS periods built into the home high school schedules.**
6. Will Central Campus have to cut classes they offer with this new schedule?
  - a. **The proposed schedule does not require Central Campus to cut any classes or programming. Cuts to Central Campus courses, if any, would be based on budgetary decisions and would happen regardless of a change to the high school schedule structure.**

7. Will students have to miss a partial class to go to and from Central?
  - a. **No, students will not have to miss a partial class to go to and from Central. The time to allow them to travel between buildings is built into the schedule through the MTSS period in the comprehensive high school schedules and the staggering of start and end times at Central Campus and Central Academy.**
8. Is it true that Central Academy will be limiting access to those students who take the most classes there?
  - a. **That is not true. Central Academy will not be limiting access to those students who take the most classes there or even to students who take multiple courses there. Students will still be able to attend Central Academy to take just one class there on the proposed schedule.**
9. Is it true that Central Academy students will no longer be able to have a Directed Study period, which is necessary for many students to be able to complete the heavy homework load and still be able to participate in extracurricular activities?
  - a. **It is true that with the proposed schedule, 8<sup>th</sup> graders at Central Academy would not have a mandatory Directed Study period built into their schedule. These 8<sup>th</sup> graders would have three classes at Central Academy and then return to their middle schools where they would take an additional elective or CTE course. For high school students, there would still be options for them to elect to take a release period, study hall/directed study course, or teacher aide period where they could complete homework if they wanted to work that into their schedule.**
10. Will Central students be forced to have fewer subjects on their schedule to incorporate travel time?
  - a. **No, Central students will not be forced to have fewer subjects or fewer classes on their schedule to incorporate travel time. This was true in DMPS prior to the block schedule when the district was on an 8-period day and students going to Central had to give up period four to travel back and forth. On the proposed schedule, Central students can take the same number of course as non-Central students. The travel time is accounted for in the MTSS period at the home high schools and through the off-set start and end times of classes at Central.**
11. Will students attending Central Academy be forced to take multiple classes there or will they still be able to take only one or two?
  - a. **No, students at Central Academy (and/or Central Campus) will not be forced to take multiple classes there. The proposed schedule allows for students to take just one or two classes at Central if that is what they want to do.**

### **Phys Ed Requirement**

1. Can you tell us the qualifications around Contract PE? Who can take it? What does it look like?
  - a. **Contract PE is an option for students to complete their yearly PE requirement outside the regular school day. To be eligible for Contract PE, students must have a full academic school, no previous high school PE failures, and participate in a sport or activity at their high school that is overseen by a licensed coach. If they meet that criteria, the student may request to take Contract PE instead of taking a traditional PE course in their schedule. For Contract PE, students must regularly track their physical activity, such as training, practices and games for their sport or activity, through an online platform and complete reflections and assignments in conjunction with that fitness tracking.**
2. Are you going to make Contract PE easier to do, so kids can still take those extra academic classes?
  - a. **There are no current plans to change the requirements for Contract PE, but it will be an option for students who meet the criteria listed above.**

3. In the past when DMPS has only 7 periods, students were allowed to take Contract PE or Early Bird PE so they could take more academic classes during the school day – will this be approved again?
  - a. **Contract PE will continue to be an option for students meeting the criteria listed above. Central Campus currently offers an Early Bird PE option for students who attend there for the first block of the day, which should still be available as an option for students next year. The district is also currently piloting a virtual PE option through the Virtual Campus program that we hope to be able to offer to more students in the future. All of these alternative PE options would allow students to continue taking seven non-PE courses in their schedule in the proposed schedule structure and still meet their PE requirement.**
4. Can 6 am sports training at Lincoln count towards PE since it is led by teachers and coaches?
  - a. **Morning sports training, such as that mentioned in this question, could certainly be counted towards a student's activity for Contract PE if they meet the other criteria to take it. The training would not replace the PE required but could be used as part of an alternative PE option like Contract PE.**
5. Will PE be optional for students to account for the loss of a class block?
  - a. **Per Iowa law, PE is required for all students every year of high school. This is not something that the district controls. Students will still be required to take a PE course every year, but they may be able to take advantage of some of the PE options listed above to take an additional academic course if they so choose.**

### **Band/Marching Band**

1. How will this affect Marching Band?
  - a. **Band is currently offered the first block of the day at the five comprehensive high schools, sometimes in both blocks 1 and 5 in order to meet daily. On the proposed schedule, band would most likely continue to be offered in first period, which would allow all schools to meet daily for band. This is especially beneficial during the marching band season, as students would have band built into their schedule daily and would not have to have two periods dedicated to the course during the fall semester.**
2. Lincoln requires freshman to take 3 blocks of band – will that change?
  - a. **Yes, on the proposed schedule, band would no longer need to be offered in multiple blocks to allow students to meet daily, so the practice of having 9<sup>th</sup> graders take two blocks for band in the fall semester plus a block for band lessons would no longer be the case.**
3. Please explain what will be happening with band at Roosevelt?
  - a. **Like the other comprehensive high schools, Roosevelt would be able to offer band in period 1 on the proposed schedule, allowing them to meet daily throughout the year. While the buildings have not yet begun building their 19-20 master schedules, we are not aware of any plans to otherwise change the format of how band is offered at Roosevelt.**

### **Schedule Logistics & Implications**

1. How are double block classes going to work? Do we spend 90 minutes in class on Monday, Tuesday, and Friday and then 180 minutes on Wednesday and Thursday?
  - a. **No, that is not how double-blocked classes would work. If you have a double-blocked, or two-period class on your schedule, you would take that class for about 90 minutes daily on the proposed schedule. For example, if your two-period course is scheduled in periods 2 and 3 (or 4 and 5, or 6 and 7, etc.), you would have those two periods back-to-back on the regular days Monday, Tuesday, and**

**Friday totaling 90 minutes of class. On the block days, you would have your block for period 2 on Wednesdays for 95 minutes and then your block for period 3 on Thursdays for 95 minutes, all meeting at approximately the same time of day. This means you would have the two-period, or double-blocked class every day in your schedule for 90-95 minutes.**

2. Period 1 meets 5 days per week while others don't. What's the period 1 going to be?
  - a. **Buildings would intentionally schedule courses during period 1 when building their master schedules so that specific courses, like Band, are always scheduled during that time. Specific classes, such as a lab-heavy science or visual art course that really need to make use of the extended time provided by the block day would also intentionally not be scheduled during that time.**
3. Will students be able to take AP and DMACC classes just like they do now, or will there be more restrictions/limitations?
  - a. **Students will still be able to take AP and DMACC dual-credit courses like they do now. No new restrictions or limitations will be put into place because of the proposed schedule.**
4. If students can't focus, why have a 95-minute class on block days?
  - a. **The idea is that while the shorter class times for non-block days would better align with the typical teenager attention span and allow for an increased frequency of instruction, there are still beneficial ways for teachers to utilize an extended class period for hands on labs, projects, etc. with the block. Having just one day in each class with the longer period, 95 minutes on the proposed schedule would help limit the negative impacts of a loss of attention.**
5. What does a student do during MTSS on Wednesday or Thursday?
  - a. **MTSS at the comprehensive high schools is 35 minutes every day of the week on the proposed schedule. During this time, students receive additional help on courses in which they are struggling, they get additional time to make-up tests or labs, do excursions or enrichment activities, volunteer projects, and much more. What the student does during MTSS time depends on how the student is doing in each class, where they need additional support, and sometimes also is their choice.**
6. With respect to student/teacher interaction time, doesn't the proposed schedule negatively impact students involved in activities that will have to leave early and miss the same class regularly?
  - a. **Students do have to occasionally miss classes or leave early for activities. This is true regardless of what the schedule looks like. In the current schedule, missing one class can mean the student will not see that teacher for a significant amount of time before their next class. The proposed schedule removes that issue because the increased frequency of classes means that when a student misses a class for an activity, they will see that teacher again the following day. This increased frequency makes it easier for the student to keep on top of the class work and connect with the teacher despite the absence.**
7. How does the Wednesday/Thursday block day make sense?
  - a. **For block days, students would attend half of their classes on Wednesdays and half of them on Thursdays. On the proposed schedule, students would go to their even numbered blocks on Wednesdays and their odd numbered blocks on Thursdays.**
8. Where is lunch going in the new schedule?
  - a. **Lunch falls in the middle of the day on the proposed schedule, around period 4. The exact time that a lunch occurs depends on which school the student attends. Comprehensive schools with one lunch would most likely have their lunch following period 4. Comprehensive high schools with two lunches would have one lunch before period 4 and one lunch following period 4. Comprehensive high schools**

**with three lunches would have one lunch before period 3, one lunch between periods 3 and 4, and one lunch following period 4. The individual high schools determine how many lunches are required based on their facilities and personnel.**

9. Why are block days 20 minutes longer than other days?
  - a. **The block days are not 20 minutes longer than non-block days. In the proposed schedule, the block days and regular days are the same length of time (they have the same start and end times for the day). The reason they appear to have different lengths of time is because there are three more passing periods on the regular days. When you add in the transitions time between classes, the two days are the same length. We did have drafts of the schedule with the daily, 50-minute period being the last block of the day. After receiving feedback from building leadership teams and teachers suggesting the daily class period be first block, we agreed and implemented that change.**
10. AP, Campus, and Academy daily learning assignments can be very in-depth – will the teachers and students really have time in 45 minutes to get settled and really dig into the lesson plan?
  - a. **The depth of thinking in the courses is dependent upon the level of questioning and the instructional design. There are advantages of having time to warm up to those deep dives. Providing PD for teachers this spring if this change is adopted will be important to addressing this concern.**
11. How is this preparing our students for college where lectures are longer and class sizes larger?
  - a. **While some college lectures are longer than 45 minutes and some college classes are larger, the length and size of college classes varies drastically depending on the institution and subject area or course. Many colleges have larger courses with periods for 45-50 minutes on some days and smaller lab or discussion classes for 60-90 minutes on other days. Other colleges have very small classes that meet for longer periods of time – it depends on the school. There is too much variation in college schedules to make a blanket statement about all college classes being longer and larger.**
12. How would this impact IB students traveling to Hoover?
  - a. **Students who participate in the IB Diploma Programme will have to attend 7 periods to meet the requirements of the credential. They will not have to travel to Hoover during the day, as the program will require that they be there all day.**
13. What happens with classes that were 2 blocks long before this change?
  - a. **The proposed schedule allows for classes to be multiple periods long if necessary. Those classes would be scheduled in a deliberate manner to ensure the best placement within the proposed schedule structure.**
14. How is this going to work for SPED?
  - a. **Our Special Education students would take classes on the proposed schedule if it is approved. Special education teachers and district consultants were represented throughout the process of building leadership team and teacher feedback. In the proposed schedule, special education students would be able to take the required courses they need for the IEP's and would benefit from the increase in instructional time and frequency of interactions with their teachers.**
15. Are students going to have to redo schedule for next year since they've already submitted scheduled based on having 8 periods A/B Blocks?
  - a. **Students should not have to redo their schedule requests for the 19-20 school year. Counselors were instructed to have students enter requests for 7 courses per semester plus alternates, which allows us to use their requests to build a schedule with a 7 or 8 class base, depending on the superintendent's**

**decision regarding the schedule proposal. If students need to adjust their requests, there will opportunities to do that.**

16. How will MTSS be used?

- a. **The MTSS period will continue to be used as a time for academic and behavior intervention at the comprehensive high schools where students can receive additional supports in the subject areas in which they most need those supports. For those students who are on-track and not identified as needing additional support, the MTSS period can be used as a time for enrichment and special projects beyond their regular coursework.**

17. You are cutting time in class and increasing class sizes – how will the students’ interactions with teachers improve?

- a. **The proposed schedule has the opposite impacts – time in each class will increase and class sizes will stop increasing if the proposed schedule is improved. Students’ interactions with teachers will be most improved due to the increased frequency of their classes. Students will see their teachers at least 4 days per week on the proposed schedule, allowing those relationships to better develop throughout the school year.**

18. How will this impact electives?

- a. **Students will have access to the same elective options that they have on the current schedule and will still need to earn 7.5 Elective and 1.5 Fine/Applied Arts credits to graduate. While they will ultimately take one less course per semester, they will still have room in their schedules over four years to fit in all their required elective courses plus additional courses beyond those requirements if they choose to take them.**

19. How does the proposed schedule impact current seniors and juniors with credits towards graduation?

- a. **The vast majority of next year’s 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> graders will have no issue fitting in the courses that are required for them to graduate on the proposed schedule. For example, if we look at the current senior class and their credit levels going into this year, over 55% of them are already at or beyond the required 23.0 credits to graduate. Just over 92% of current seniors would be considered on-track on the proposed schedule and be able to fit everything into their schedule that they need to meet graduation requirements. Of the remaining 7.6% of students that would not be on track, 86% of them would still be considered under-credited on the current schedule. The same basic statistics hold true for the current junior class. The proposed schedule does not create a situation where students cannot meet graduation requirements and results in the approximately same number of students being under-credited as the current schedule.**

20. How will doing the 7-period everyday schedule stop increasing class sizes?

- a. **By changing to a schedule that is based on 7 classes rather than 8 classes, teacher utilization will increase by approximately 11%. On the current schedule, most of our teachers spend 75% of their day teaching classes. On the proposed schedule, teachers would spend 86% of their day teaching classes. This means that at any given period in the day, 86% of teachers would have a class being offered, as opposed to 75% of them on the current schedule. If you look at a school the size of Roosevelt, for example, this means that on the current schedule, about 55 teachers are teaching a course every period. If we assume they have the average class size of 30 students, that would mean there are approximately 1650 seats available for students each period of the day. On the proposed schedule, about 63 teachers would be teaching a course every period. Assuming the same average class size, that would mean there are approximately 1890 seats available for students each period of the day. This results in 240 additional seats for students each period of the day for the same number of**

**students. Because there are more available seats in the proposed scenario, you can absorb staff reductions without class sizes increasing.**

21. How does a single absence result in a student not seeing a teacher for a week? A/B is every other day so would see teacher every week regardless?
  - a. **Because of the rotating A/B block schedule, if a student has a class on a Tuesday, for example, and is then absent on Thursday (the next time the course meets), the next time the class is scheduled to meet would be the following Monday, assuming it is a standard week without any holidays or professional development days. If there is any day without school in that time frame, the next time the class would meet would be the following Tuesday, a full week after the student last had the course.**
22. It notes that class time increases in the proposed schedule – is this due to the full Wednesday or is that factored into the current schedule if used next year as well?
  - a. **The calculations for both the current schedule and the proposed schedule were done using the proposed calendar for 19-20, which does not include early-out Wednesdays.**
23. The proposal is going to a 7-period day which would mean everyone gets a release block if we switched – how is having a release block a concern or con when it is a proposal within the new schedule?
  - a. **The proposed schedule would not mean every student gets a release block. In fact, we would hope that the frequency of students having release blocks would decrease on the proposed schedule. The change from 8 blocks of classes to 7 periods of classes would mean that students take one fewer class in their schedule, and because of the proposals increase in teacher utilization, would result in more kids in classes each block without increasing class sizes.**
24. If this changes for next year, what happens if juniors can't take everything they need for all graduation requirements and college expectations?
  - a. **The proposed schedule allows for students to take all the courses they need to graduate plus additional classes each year. Just like with the current schedule, there are options available for those students who have fallen behind or need an alternative setting to earn credits. These options will still be available with the proposed schedule should a student need them.**
25. What's being done to mitigate the negative impacts on lab type classes (science, foods, wood shop, etc.)?
  - a. **The modified block is specifically designed to allow for these lab-type classes while already increasing frequency of instruction. By having block days built into the schedule, teachers are still able to do intensive labs, projects, experiments, etc. during the extended block time on Wednesdays and Thursdays but also get to see students a minimum of four days per week. Classes like lab sciences, foods, wood shop, etc. would be able to do their more in-depth and time-consuming activities on the block days. Teachers would receive professional development on how best to address the changes to the schedule to work within its structure.**

## **Teacher Schedules**

1. Do teachers not teach all 8 blocks? Can't they plan after the last class of the day until 5:00-ish?
  - a. **No, teachers do not typically teach all 8 blocks in the current schedule. Just over 70% of current high school teachers teach 6 out of the 8 blocks and just over 26% of current high school teachers teach 7 out of 8 blocks. When they are not teaching a class, they use their time to plan, which includes developing curriculum, lesson planning, grading assessments, collaborating with colleagues, analyzing data, working on professional development, and many other things. Even with the built-in planning time that teachers receive, many of them still plan well beyond the regular work day.**
2. How will teachers that are full time but only teach 4 or 5 on 8 be utilized better?

- a. **Only in extremely special circumstances does this ever happen, and those teachers who do not teach a full load of classes are either not on full-time contracts or have other responsibilities during their contract time.**
3. Would all teachers transition to 6 out of 7?
  - a. **Yes, on the proposed schedule, all high school teachers would teach 6 out of 7 classes.**
4. What are the differences in minutes for teacher planning time for each schedule?
  - a. **On the current A/B schedule applied to the proposed calendar for next year, teachers who teach 6 on 8 have planning time every day, totaling 840 minutes of planning time every standard two-week period and teachers who teach 7 on 8 have planning time every other day, totaling 420 minutes of planning time every standard two-week period. On the proposed schedule, all teachers would have planning at least 4 days per week, totaling 460 minutes every standard two-week period.**
5. If all teachers went to 7 on 8, wouldn't that help support more students just like the new schedule?
  - a. **Moving all teachers to a load of 7 on 8 is not sustainable. This creates a scenario where all teachers have planning time only every other day and even as more and more teachers have moved from teaching 6 on 8 to teaching 7 on 8 over the last three years, the district has still seen a significant rise in class sizes and the number of release periods in students' schedules. This may could theoretically help with class size issues in the short term, but is not a long-term solution and does not provide a method for absorbing staff reductions to the same extent as the proposed schedule.**
6. If you are worried about teachers not having enough planning while teaching 7 out of 8 blocks, how it is better to have more teachers teaching 6 out of 7 periods where they would have less time in a single planning period?
  - a. **While they would have shorter individual planning periods three days of the week, they would still have more planning time total than if they were teaching 7 on 8 in the current schedule structure. Teachers who teacher 7 on 8 in the current schedule have planning time every other day, which conversely means they have no planning time every other day. On the proposed schedule, teachers would have planning time a minimum of four days a week. This would be an increase in both the frequency of planning time and in the total number of minutes of planning time for those teachers.**
7. So, teachers who have 4-5 preps will now go from 435 minutes of planning to 180? Is this accurate?
  - a. **Teachers who are currently teaching 6 on 8, which is approximately 70% of current high school teachers, would go from 850 minutes of planning time every two weeks to 460 minutes of planning time every two weeks. This is a decrease of 390 minutes over that same time frame. Teachers who are currently teaching 7 on 8, which is over 25% of current high school teachers would go from 425 minutes of planning time every two weeks to 460 minutes of planning time every two weeks. This is an increase of 35 minutes over that same time frame. If you look at the actual teaching assignments of those two groups, the teachers currently teaching 7 on 8 have significantly more preps than those teachers who teach 6 on 8, as most of our current elective and CTE teachers fall into that group. Very few of the teachers who fall into the 6 on 8 category have as many as 4 or 5 preps outside of the special education or ELL departments. We have also seen the number of teachers moving from teaching 6 on 8 to teaching 7 on 8 increase significantly over the last three years due to budget cuts and staff reductions, a trend that will have to continue without intervention.**
8. Is increasing teacher utilization really a way to ask teachers to do more with less time?
  - i. **Increasing teacher utilization is about redistributing how teachers spend their time more than anything. On the proposed schedule teachers would teacher 6 courses, meaning they have the same number of classes if they currently teach 6 on 8 (or one less class if they currently teacher 7 on 8) and approximately the same class sizes, assuming the proposed schedule was**

approved. They would spend a bigger percentage of their day with those students than they do in the current schedule, which is where the increase in utilization comes from.

### **Budget, Budget Cuts, & Finances**

1. Regarding teacher reductions – what about next year’s financial cuts? Every year there are budget cuts so what about next year and the year after that and the year after that?
  - a. **We are always conscious of reductions. Teachers are the last place we look for reductions, but the reality is that we have not received the funding necessary to maintain our staffing.**
2. Why are only teachers on the budget cuts? Don’t we have 41 non-teaching directors?
  - a. **The district chiefs are currently working on the budget, and no specific decisions have been made as to which individual personnel or positions will be cut at the district or building levels. When the budget requires staff reductions, like it will this year, all district positions are considered as possible reductions.**
3. If budget was not an issue, would this change be proposed?
  - a. **Discussions about changing our current schedule have been going on since we adopted it in the 2010-2011 school year. While the budget issue makes the necessity of considering this change more pressing, we still believe this schedule is better for students given the advantages it has for increased instructional time and frequency.**
4. How many teachers are being cut per building?
  - a. **No decisions regarding specific staffing cuts or the number of cuts per building have yet been made.**
5. Have you thought about increasing school fees?
  - a. **The district can only charge fees based on what is allowed by Iowa code. Additionally, all fees must be waived for students who participate in the free/reduced lunch program, which is approximately 76% of current DMPS students. Increasing school fees would not solve our current budget issues.**
6. Where does the budget come from?
  - a. **The CFO, chiefs, and budget committee work together to create the annual budget, which is based on the district’s enrollment and state funding.**
7. Will you be increasing teacher pay if they will be utilized more?
  - a. **No, teacher pay is not based on utilization rates. For example, teachers who teacher 6 on 8 are compensated the same as teachers who teacher 7 on 8. This is determined by the contracts made between the district and the teachers’ union.**
8. How will going to this plan save the district money?
  - a. **The proposed schedule by itself does not save the district money. It is not designed to do that. The proposed schedule is merely a tool to allow high schools to react to budget cuts and staff reductions without continuing to increase class sizes for its students.**
9. I think I am hearing that the block schedule has academic benefits for students and is too expensive to maintain with the budget cuts we are facing – is this an accurate summary of the first few slides?
  - a. **There are definitely some benefits to the current block schedule, but there are also some significant negatives to it as well that are independent of finances. One of the benefits of the proposed schedule**

**is its ability to help mitigate the effects of coming budget cuts on class sizes, but there are other factors about the proposed schedule that are positive for students outside of finances as well, such as increased instructional time and frequency.**

10. Will Central Campus and Central Academy programs and teachers be cut? Which programs will be most heavily affected?
- a. **The proposed schedule would not require Central Campus or Academy to make programming cuts. Any cuts to Central Campus or Academy programming or teachers would be determined by district budget considerations, regardless of the schedule structure. Programs at Central would obviously have to be adapted to work within the proposed schedule structure if it is adopted, but Central Campus and Academy administrators and scheduling personnel would work together with comprehensive high schools to adjust their master schedule in the best manner to allow students to take the classes they are interested in taking.**

### **Proposal, Feedback, & Decision-Making Process**

1. Where other similar schools examined outside of the district?
  - a. **Yes, the committee looked at the schedule structures of the surrounding suburban districts as well as other urban districts in the state of Iowa to see what they were using.**
2. How does this compare to other districts around us?
  - a. **There are a lot of different schedules surrounding us and in other urban districts around the state. Of our neighboring suburbs, there are districts on a traditional 8-period day, a traditional 7-period day, multiple version of a modified block, and a traditional block schedule. West Des Moines, Urbandale, and Johnston all utilize a modified block schedule for their high schools, Waukee uses a traditional block schedule, Norwalk and Ankeny both use a traditional period schedule with each class meeting daily. Across other urban districts in Iowa, this same variance is also found. While there are examples of all types of schedule structures, there are also districts who operate with a schedule of 6, 7, and 8 classes as the base. The majority of districts run a schedule with 7 classes as the base.**
3. Is this a school board decision or an Ahart decision?
  - a. **The decision to change the high school schedule will be made by Dr. Ahart.**
4. How do you expect students to attend these meets with short notice or to miss class to attend?
  - a. **The town hall meetings on December 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> were intended for parents and community members to attend. Student feedback was obtained from student focus groups that took place in November at each comprehensive high school and both Central Campus and Academy.**
5. Are there test scores to indicate that lack of meeting times affects success rates?
  - a. **Schedules are not linked to performance. You can find research that supports any schedules. So many factors affect student performance, so linking them to a schedule is not very responsible or accurate.**
6. Why didn't you ask students and teachers for input or let us know so we could prepare?
  - a. **Both teachers and students, as well as building administrators, were asked for input and provided feedback on the proposed schedule. Information was presented in a similar format to the town hall meetings to building leadership teams, comprised of teachers, administrators, counselors, and support staff, and to students in focus groups. The Teacher Advisory Council (a DMEA committee made up of high school teachers from multiple buildings) was also given information about the schedule proposal and given opportunities to provide feedback and ask questions. Feedback was gathered from each of**

**these various groups in terms of advantages of the proposed schedule, disadvantages of the proposed schedule, and questions or concerns about the proposed schedule.**

7. Are you sure that the student voice is accounted for?
  - a. **We think that having student input and voice is very important and worked to make sure they were able to participate in this process. We conducted student focus groups at each comprehensive high school as well as Central Campus and Central Academy. These focus groups included students from all demographic groups, ELL, SPED, and multiple grade levels. They were presented with information about the proposal, given time to ask questions, and provide feedback. This feedback was shared in its entirety with the committee and then with Dr. Ahart for his review as well.**
8. Wouldn't it be simple for each school to hold an assembly and then give their students a survey?
  - a. **While it would certainly have been easier for the committee to get feedback by hosting assemblies and doing surveys, we felt this feedback would not be as meaningful as the feedback from the open dialogue allowed by the focus group format. The focus groups allowed us to get more substantive and in-depth feedback from students because of the ability to engage with them in discussion.**
9. Does this schedule account for people who need time to process extra info?
  - a. **Yes, it does. The proposed schedule provides more instructional time than the current schedule and provides more frequent class sessions. Additionally, the extended class period on block days provides students who need extra processing time an opportunity to do that if necessary.**
10. Where did the new schedule come from?
  - a. **The new schedule was designed and proposed by the schedule committee. The modified block format is a common schedule structure that is seen in school districts around Iowa and other states, so the committee did not start from scratch in designing the proposed schedule.**
11. What research is there to support the success of the schedule?
  - a. **This is one of the difficult parts of designing a schedule structure – there is no consensus in the research. There is research available that both supports and refutes all types of schedule structure options. It is possible to find research supporting any schedule structure and research denouncing every schedule structure. Ultimately, the research is clear that student success is more impacted by quality instruction than the structure of the schedule.**
12. What is the timeline for this decision?
  - a. **The proposal is currently being considered for the 19-20 school year. The Superintendent is working to decide on it as soon as possible to allow for schools to plan accordingly.**
13. Was this schedule proposed by a teacher or a budget builder?
  - a. **The proposed schedule was designed by the schedule committee, which is made up of district and building administrators, a district scheduling specialist, and a teacher. While financial impact was considered, and the proposal was presented to the district's CFO, no one from the Business and Finance Department was directly involved in the creation and layout of proposed schedule.**
14. Is this a one-year trial, then back to normal?
  - a. **No, the proposal is not intended to be limited to just the 2019-2020 school year.**
15. Has this decision already been made and these meetings for formality and appearance?
  - a. **No, this decision has not yet been made and the feedback from these parent town hall meetings is an important step in the decision-making process. The feedback from these town hall meetings, along**

**with the feedback from teachers, building leadership teams, and student focus groups will be given to the superintendent for his review to aide in his decision making.**

16. Does anyone supporting this plan or on the committee have students in the system?
  - a. **Yes, multiple members of the scheduling committee have students attending DMPS.**
17. What about the research has changed that caused the district to make this drastic change so soon after implementation of the block schedule?
  - a. **The district fully implemented the block schedule in 2010, so has operated with the current schedule structure for 9 academic years. When the district implemented the block schedule, we were excited about the potential benefits to students. In practice we have found that the potential of that block schedule has not been realized. The proposed schedule hopes to take advantage of some of the good parts of the block structure while also addressing its biggest flaws, such as a lack of frequency of instruction.**
18. What are the names of the members of the committee members working on this?
  - a. **The committee members are: Michael Vukovich (Director of High Schools), David Johns (Director of IB Schools), Kaitlyn Evans (District Scheduling Specialist), Noelle Tichy (Executive Director of Teaching & Learning), Tascha Brown (Director of Central Campus), Jessica Gogerty (Director of Central Academy),**
19. Will a survey be sent to parents on a larger scale as a very small percentage of parents attended the meetings?
  - a. **We do not currently plan to send out a district-wide or large-scale survey to parents regarding the proposed schedule. Because of the complicated context of the proposal, we feel it is essential to provide the necessary background information to get meaningful feedback. Therefore, we went with the meeting format (and student and teacher focus groups) to receive feedback and input.**
20. Should other work be done first, like how to change instructional methods?
  - a. **Professional development to support teachers in how to adjust instructional methods to better operate within the proposed schedule would take place prior to the implementation of the new schedule for the 19-20 school year. Once a decision is made regarding the schedule, plans regarding necessary professional development to support the change would begin. Discussions have already started on the schedule committee as to what types of supports would be needed for teachers if the proposed is adopted, and these discussions would continue to take place.**
21. Is this the superintendent's decision? Is this a recommendation proposed to the school board for approval?
  - a. **Changing the high school schedule to the proposed modified block is the superintendent's decision and not subject to formal board approval.**
22. Have other schools benefited from this change?
  - a. **We have not found a similar district who moved from a traditional block schedule structure to a modified block schedule like this proposed change. The surrounding districts that are currently on a modified block schedule were previously on a traditional period day. The variation in schedules across the state make it very difficult to do a direct comparison with another district, as there are many factors that vary district to district.**
23. Once more information is solidified, will you circle back and hold a second session to share the thought process?
  - a. **We will continue to answer questions and share information throughout the decision-making process. Presently, there is not a plan to have additional meetings to share this information, as it would be shared via other means such as the district's website, social media, and messages to parents through**

**Infinite Campus. If it is determined that additional meetings are needed to disseminate information, then that option would be considered as well.**

24. Could you post/email a link to the presentation?
- a. **The presentation is available on the website. Both a video of the town hall presentation and a link to download the power point is available here: <http://www.dmschools.org/hsschedule/>.**
25. Were students who attend Central Campus and Central Academy included in the student focus groups?
- a. **Yes, there were focus groups held at Central Campus consisting entirely of students attending Central Campus, and there were focus groups held at Central Academy consisting entirely of students attending Central Academy. Additionally, there were some students on the comprehensive high school focus groups who attended Central programs as well.**
26. What qualitative feedback has been obtained from students, teachers, and school administrators? Surveys, focus groups, etc.?
- a. **We received similar feedback from the multiple groups of teachers and administrators at each building: they found that the increase in instructional minutes and frequency of instruction were pros of the proposed schedule and were concerned with the decrease in planning time for those teachers who currently teach 6 on 8 schedules. These responses were consistent across the different building leadership teams and teacher groups from whom we obtained feedback. Student focus groups provided feedback that was contradictory in nature, meaning that what one student would identify as a possible benefit of the proposal, another student would identify as a possible negative of the proposal. This was true for much of the feedback we received from students. There was consensus from students that seeing their teachers every day would be helpful to their learning, as well as the ability to focus on one lesson per day on the shorter class periods. Students consistently brought up a concern about not having enough class time to complete homework assignments as a negative to the proposed schedule.**
27. Why are you combining block schedule and regular schedule? Why not one or the other?
- a. **The proposed schedule is a sort of hybrid that uses aspects of a regular, 7-period day schedule and aspects of a block schedule. The idea is that students get to have more frequent contact with their teachers in the classroom but also still have access to a longer class period (or block) where they can make use of the extended time.**
28. What data was used to make these proposed changes?
- a. **The committee looked at both quantitative and qualitative data when designing the proposal. Data such as instructional minutes, frequency of instruction, planning minutes, and teacher utilization rates was used to design the proposal. Qualitative data from teacher and administrator feedback, student focus group feedback, and now parent town hall feedback is also being considered to ensure that concerns are addressed and issues with the proposed schedule are considered prior to its potential implementation.**
29. How can this possibly be ready for prime-time next year?
- a. **We have gone through many drafts and different configurations of times within the proposal and are continuing to refine it to best address concerns that have been raised about the schedule. The schedule committee is confident that if Dr. Ahart decides to go with this schedule proposal it will be ready for implementation in the 19-20 school year.**
30. What differences arose from the focus groups between students who utilize Central vs. those who do not?

- a. **Some of the feedback received from the focus groups at Central Campus and Central Academy did vary slightly from that received from the comprehensive high schools. While there was a lot of overlap, between the groups, students in the Central Campus focus groups asked questions about how the proposed schedule would work for their specific course programs at Central Campus. Students in the Central Academy focus groups raised concerns about increased homework loads, the decrease from 8 to 7 courses in the schedule, and the potential impact of shortening periods on lessons and labs for their upper-level courses. Both groups raised concerns about transportation to and from Central Campus/Academy and their home high schools. Those in the focus groups at the comprehensive high schools identified more positives in the proposed schedule than those in the Central Academy groups and did not raise questions about the logistics of traveling between buildings.**
31. When will this decision be made (or has it already) and when will students be able to adjust their planned schedules?
- a. **The decision regarding the high school schedule structure has not yet been made and will be made by the superintendent in the very near future to allow the district and high schools necessary time to plan for the 19-20 school year. Counselors at each high school were instructed to have students select enough courses to fill a 7-period schedule plus alternates to allow their requests to work on the proposed schedule or to be adjusted to the current schedule if there is no change. Because of this, students should not have to make any significant changes to their course requests if the proposed schedule is approved. If a student does need to adjust their requested courses, they will be able to do so after the decision regarding the proposed schedule structure is finalized.**
32. Has a survey been sent to the students asking them what they prefer?
- a. **No, we did not send out a survey to students asking them what type of schedule they prefer. Given the nature of the proposed change, we felt it necessary for students to be educated about the proposed before rendering feedback. By obtaining student feedback in through focus groups, we were able to provide the necessary context and information for students to understand the proposal and provide meaningful feedback, something that isn't possible with a large-scale survey.**

### **Other Schedule Options & Ideas**

1. Why not switch from 8 classes every other day to 8 classes daily?
  - a. **The schedule committee did look at the possibility of utilizing a daily 8-period schedule, but found that doing so resulted in a decrease in instructional minutes, required students attending Central Campus or Academy to give up one class for travel, and did not provide any way to address issues with increasing class sizes and release time.**
2. Is there a way to transition to a 7-period schedule without eliminating block scheduling?
  - a. **Given the number of minutes needed in each school day to meet state requirements, it is not possible to operate a traditional block schedule with an odd-number as the base of the schedule. Doing so would require an early out built into the schedule every other day, which is not feasible. Additionally, the issue with frequency of instruction is not addressed in a traditional block schedule, regardless of how many classes are used.**
3. Would a 7-period day every day be a better option?
  - a. **The schedule committee did consider a 7-period day as a potential option. After gathering feedback from building leadership teams, administrators, and teachers, we found that having the one period of extended time allowed in the modified block was preferable to a regular 7-period day because it**

**allowed for more in-depth projects, labs, etc. to be planned into the class time while also increasing the frequency of contact for each course.**

4. Is a modified block better than block scheduling?
  - a. **Yes, the schedule committee believes that a modified block is a better schedule for students than traditional block schedule like the one DMPS used now. Because of increased instructional minutes and the significant increase in frequency of each course, the modified block is a better option for students while also having the added benefit of allowing schools to mitigate impacts of budget cuts on class sizes.**
5. Have you looked at flexed or staggered start times – having one group of teachers teach blocks 1 through 7 and another teach 2 through 8 to give students more options?
6. Why not put the daily 50-minute class at the end of the day?
  - a. **At one point during the proposal process, the daily 50-minute class was at the end of the day. After receiving feedback from building leadership teams, teachers, and administrators, the committee decided to move that daily class to the first period of the day. This improved consistency for students and teachers, allowing them to start each day with the same class. Additionally, having the daily 50-minute class be at the end of day would create a situation where any time a student left early for activities or athletics they would be required to miss the same class, regardless of the day. To prevent this issue, and to allow students to start their day in the same location, we placed the daily 50-minute class during the first period of the day.**
7. What other schedule options were considered when working on this proposal?
  - a. **The schedule committee considered a variety of schedules when working on this proposal, including schedules with 7 and 8 periods. We considered a traditional block schedule like the one currently in use, a modified block schedule, a regular period day, and a MWF/TH schedule.**
8. How have you tried to make the AB schedule work better? Non-early outs? Teach 7 on 8? Extended class day?
  - a. **The biggest problems with the AB block schedule are in the lack of frequency of instruction due to the nature of the schedule. This problem is not solved by changing teacher loads, early-out times, the length of the class day, etc. We have looked at many ways to better utilize the block schedule but could not fix the issue with lack of frequency.**
9. Have we looked at an 8-period modified block? If so, what is the negative?
  - a. **We did look at the possibility of doing an 8-period modified block. While it would have some benefits, such as working nicely on the block days with four blocks each day, it results in classes being too short on the non-block days and does not provide the needed mechanism to account for staff reductions within the schedule structure. This means we would continue to see increasing class sizes, more forced release time, and more teachers going to teaching loads of 7 on 8.**
10. Many schools have recently moved to block scheduling to provide longer class sessions and more in-depth group work/experiments – how do you respond to this reasoning?
  - a. **This isn't entirely accurate – we have not seen schools around the Des Moines area or the state move toward block scheduling. We have seen some surrounding districts move toward a modified block schedule in recent years (Johnston and Urbandale, for example). The proposed schedule is designed to still allow some longer class sessions for more in-depth group work/labs/projects/etc. on block days while also increasing the frequency of interactions between students and teachers.**

## Release Time

1. How will less classes make less release blocks?
  - a. **Moving from a schedule based on 8 classes to one based on 7 classes helps address the issue of release blocks by increasing teacher utilization. Because a greater percentage of teachers would be teaching classes each period, there are more seats available each block in the schedule. This means that there are more seats available to students to pick from instead of being forced into a release block due to courses being full.**
2. Why so many release times – why are class sizes not just increasing? As class sizes increase, wouldn't that reduce release times?
  - a. **We are seeing both trends happen simultaneously. Class sizes are continuing to increase while more students are taking release blocks and more teachers are moving to teaching loads of 7 on 8. The class sizes would be increasing at a much faster rate if the other factors were not also happening simultaneously. Class sizes cannot increase limitlessly. As class sizes have grown closer to their capacities, more students have been required to take release time and more teachers have had to pick up an additional class in place of much needed planning time. These are all connected, and each will continue to worsen without a change to the status quo.**
3. If students can't get into classes they want, why aren't they being encouraged to take other classes?
  - a. **Students are encouraged to take other courses when the classes they want to take are unavailable or full. The issue that students are running into with more frequency is that there are no elective options available because they are all full. When this happens, the student has no option but to take the release block.**
4. Why are you so worried about release periods?
  - a. **Release periods are problematic for a few reasons. Release periods are problematic in those cases where students do not want to take them but are required to because there is no class in which to put them. Release time is also an issue because in many cases, the students do not leave the building during their release time which then requires staff to supervise them (this is an issue because there as staff reductions happen, there are not always adults available to provide the necessary supervision for these students). Release time is also a problem in some areas for our community partners, where students are outside the school and getting into trouble while unsupervised.**
5. The possible forced release time do to overcrowding, can this be in the middle of the day?
  - a. **Yes, release time can fall in the middle of the day between other classes. This is true of forced release periods and release periods that the student requests.**
6. What plans are being made to staff for those students who remain in the building during release times?
  - a. **This is one of the difficulties with having students on release time. Many students with release periods do not leave the building during that time, which means that they are remaining on campus and need to be supervised, which requires staff to supervise them. As schools deal with budget cuts and staff reductions, it becomes even more challenging to allocate staff to supervise students on release time who remain on campus. Schools are working to solve this issue at the building level within their own personnel.**
7. Of the 30.34% that have release time, what percentage of these are forced release because of class size issues?
  - a. **Unfortunately, we do not have any way to track this distinction, as a request release time looks identical in our data system to a forced release time. We know that students are being forced to take**

**release time based on contact with parents and students in that situation, but it not currently possible to quantify how many of the 30.34% of students with release time fall into each category.**

8. How will this proposed change reduce forced releases if no new courses are being offered?
  - a. **The proposed schedule would create a reduction of release time overall because of the increase in teacher utilization, which results in more seats available to students each period of the day (even with projected staff reductions). Furthermore, by changing the base of the schedule to 7 classes per semester, students will have 28 opportunities to earn the required 23 credits to graduate. Currently, they have 32 opportunities to earn the 23 required credits, meaning they have a lot more space in their schedule to take release periods in the status quo. Over time, this change will also reduce the number of students taking release periods.**

### **Early-Out Wednesdays & Start Times**

1. Will start time be the same (8:25 AM) or will it change?
  - a. **The Superintendent and district leadership are reviewing the start times and any decisions about this issue will be communicated as soon as possible.**
2. What happens to the current early-out on Wednesdays?
  - a. **There is a proposed calendar that eliminates early outs on Wednesdays. Any decisions regarding the calendar, including early out Wednesdays, are decided by the district's calendar committee and go through board approval. While the proposal is obviously impacted by calendar decisions, those decisions are made by a different committee and separate from the schedule proposal.**
3. Are you eliminating early out Wednesday's due to this schedule?
  - a. **No, early out Wednesdays are not being eliminated due to this schedule. Any decisions regarding the calendar, including early out Wednesdays, are decided by the district's calendar committee and go through board approval. While the proposal is obviously impacted by calendar decisions, those decisions are made by a different committee and separate from the schedule proposal.**
4. Will this have any impact on schedules for elementary and middle schools early-out Wednesdays?
  - a. **Any decision regarding changes to early-out Wednesdays comes from the calendar recommended by the district calendar committee and approved by the school board. Changes to early-out Wednesdays, if approved, would be district-wide and impact elementary, middle and high schools. This decision and approval process is separate from the schedule committee and proposal.**
5. How would Wednesdays becoming a full academic day impact the 7-period schedule?
  - a. **The proposed schedule was designed around a calendar that has Wednesdays being a regular, full academic day, so this was already accounted for in the information presented.**
6. With the block schedule and no early outs, how many minutes does that add to the current schedule?
  - a. **All the instructional minute calculations presented were done using the proposed 19-20 calendar with no early-out Wednesdays, so the 425 instructional minutes per two-week period on the current schedule already accounts for not having early releases.**

### **Implications of Changing to 7 Classes**

1. By offering fewer opportunities to students, you are restricting the number of credits high achieving students can take towards college – this essentially costs students money at college and restricts their chances to explore interests. Please justify this.

- a. **Students will still be able to take advantage of AP and dual-credit opportunities to earn credits towards college on the proposed schedule. Depending on what they choose to do with their schedules, students would be able to take alternative PE options, such as Contract PE or Virtual PE or take required courses during summer school or DMPS Virtual Campus to allow them to take additional elective courses in their regular schedule that can count towards college credits. These opportunities are not lost in the proposed schedule. If anything, the ability of students to take these kinds of courses will be more restricted if the schedule is not changed because classes will continue to increase in size and many of the high achieving students who are working on college credits would be forced to take release time instead of a class when the classes are full. The proposed schedule provides a way to lessen the impacts of staff reductions by increasing teacher utilization and thereby allowing more students to take the classes they want to take, including our high-achieving students who want to take courses for college credit.**
2. **If a student is sick for a five-day period, wouldn't it be more damaging to miss classes?**
  - a. **Missing five days of classes is detrimental to a student, regardless of the schedule structure. In the current schedule, that student would see their teachers every other day to try to get things caught up while also learning new material. In the proposed schedule, the student would see their teachers more frequently and for a longer amount of time when they do return. While it would be difficult for that student to catch up in either schedule, we believe that by seeing their teacher more frequently and for more time when they do return, the proposed schedule would provide a better mechanism from which to recover.**
3. **If students are not able to get more than 28 credits, doesn't this discredit them when it comes to the college acceptance process?**
  - a. **No, it would not discredit them or disadvantage students in the college admissions process. Most high schools operate on a schedule with 7 classes at the base. Furthermore, colleges look at specific course work taken by students, such as math, science, English, social studies, and world language courses. On the proposed schedule, students would be able to take all these courses each year in high school if they choose to do so, allowing them to be competitive at any level of post-secondary institution to which they apply. Colleges would not view DMPS students as less competitive because of this proposed schedule change.**
4. **Why did you have students plan 4-year schedules if you were changing the schedule?**
  - a. **Students are required to do 4-year academic plans per Iowa law. This is regardless of the schedule or potential changes to the schedule. Additionally, counselors at the high schools were instructed to have students select 7 courses plus an alternate during the schedule selection process this year to accommodate both the proposed schedule if it is adopted or the current schedule if it is retained.**
5. **How are you going to handle the required number of credits (total and in each subject) to graduate, since kids can't take as many classes?**
  - a. **The proposed schedule allows for students to take all required credits for graduation, both in total and in each subject. Students must take 23 total credits to graduate and the proposed schedule allows students to earn 28 credits if they take only traditional courses in the regular schedule. In terms of subject area credits, students must earn 4.0 credits of English, 3.0 credits of math, 3.0 credits of science, 3.0 credits of social studies (including 1.0 US history, 0.5 government, 0.5 economics, and 1.0 history), 1.0 PE credits, 7.0 credits of electives, 1.5 credits of Fine Applied Arts, and meet their 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills requirements and CPR certification in order to graduation. These will all fit within the proposed schedule. Students would be able to take an additional 5.0 credits, or 10 semesters of courses, in the proposed schedule beyond those needed for graduation if they choose to do so.**
6. **How do the lessened credit options compare to schools not just in Iowa but nationwide?**

- a. **Having a schedule based on 7 courses per semester is in line with the majority of high school schedules in Iowa and nationwide. While there is significant variation in how those schedules are structured, there are high school schedules based on 6, 7 and 8 courses per term in many different configurations.**
7. How will changing from 8 to 7 class options impact students' opportunities of including electives in their schedule? How does this new schedule support teaching the whole child?
- a. **On the proposed schedule with 7 courses, students will still be able to take the electives they are interested in taking. Over the course of their 4 years in high school, students will be able to take 28 semesters (or 14 credits) of elective courses, assuming they do a regular schedule including a traditional PE course. Students can take music, art, world language, CTE, or other electives during this time. Students wanting to take an additional elective course in their schedule can do so by taking a required course virtually or through summer school or by taking a non-traditional PE course, such as Contract PE or the in-development Virtual PE course. This allows students to take the courses they enjoy and in which they are interested as their electives in the proposed schedule, while still benefiting students in terms of increased instructional time and frequency.**

### **Equity Issues**

1. Statistically, traditional schedules show success in GT and upper white social classes only. How are you going to insure success for all?
  - a. **Academic research has been conducted on the effectiveness of block schedules, traditional period schedules, and modified block schedules and has found that while there are benefits in each schedule model, there is not demonstrable advantage from one model to the next in terms of student achievement, including across various subgroups like GT or students with high socioeconomic status. The district is committed to the success of all its students and the schedule committee believes this proposed schedule is a step in the right direction for better serving all students.**
2. How will you work to serve the needs of accelerated students vs. poor students for which this seems to be targeted?
  - a. **The district works to best serve the needs of all its students, including those who benefit from accelerated course work. Opportunities like Central Academy will still be available for students who want to take advanced classes and accelerate their courses. It is incorrect to state this schedule is targeted to poor students. The schedule committee is confident this schedule will provide the best opportunities moving forward for all our students, including those on an accelerated course pathway.**
3. How will this change impact the equity of students who can accelerate their course work?
  - a. **Students who are on an accelerated course path will still be able to continue with accelerated classes and advanced content. The programs that serve many of these students, like Central Academy, would continue to serve those students needing accelerated course work. Additionally, those students who are accelerated and have more credits than necessary for graduation are the ones most likely to lose opportunities if we continue to use the current schedule structure next year, with class sizes continuing to increase and more students required to take release time.**

### **Goals & Rationale of Proposal**

1. Why is increasing teacher utilization a goal?
  - a. **As we move forward with necessary budget cuts, the district is always looking for ways to make better utilization of current resources and teachers are no exception. Increasing teacher utilization is a necessary consequence of the budget reality in which we currently find ourselves. If it was not a necessity to increase teacher utilization, we would not be looking to do so, but the reality is that we**

are increasing teacher utilization in the current schedule as we move more and more teachers to a load of 7 on 8. The proposal is actually a lower teacher utilization rate than at 6 on 7 than what those teachers would have to eventually go to in the current schedule structure with a load of teaching 7 of 8 classes.

2. How will this change be monitored for its impact, good or bad?
  - a. **We will use the same data points around student achievement, but just like the current schedule we will not directly link the schedule to the one factor of success. If we are able to absorb our reductions and maintain class size for next year, then that would be one indicator that it was a good move.**
3. Can you please just admit that this is about saving money?
  - a. **The schedule itself does not save the district money – that is not how it works. The budget cuts are determined independently from the schedule and will happen regardless of what the schedule looks like. The proposed schedule merely allows us to adjust to these cuts without continuing to increase class sizes.**
4. What is the rationale behind this decision?
  - a. **The schedule committee is proposing the 7-period modified block schedule because it is confident that this is the best option for students as it allows the district to increase instructional time and frequency while also providing a mechanism for the district to mediate the impact of necessary staff reductions on class sizes and maintaining student opportunity and access to programming.**
5. If the block schedule is not working, why are you keeping the block schedule for Wednesday and Thursday?
  - a. **There are some aspects of the block schedule that are beneficial, and by utilizing a modified-block schedule structure for Wednesday and Thursday in the proposed schedule, we can still access those benefits while also improving the areas where the block schedule is lacking, such as time and frequency of instruction. The modified block schedule lets us increase the frequency of instruction by having classes meet 4 or 5 days per week but still allows for the extended class time on block days so students can do labs, projects, and other types of work that benefits from the longer class time.**

### **Homework & Textbooks**

1. Will students be expected to handle homework for all classes every night?
  - a. **Professional development and strategies would need to be provided to teachers to educate them how to best operate within the proposed schedule if approved, and part of that includes how to structure classes and exams schedules to prevent students from having overwhelming homework loads and an abundance of tests on one day. Administration and district leaders are aware of this issue and will work to ensure it is properly addressed if the proposed schedule is approved.**
2. Will my student have to carry all 7 classes' textbooks with him in his backpack every day because he doesn't use a locker? What solutions do you propose here?
  - a. **Students would not have to carry text books for 7 periods worth of classes. There are lockers available at each high school for students to use. Currently, many students choose not to get a locker, but the option is there if they want to take advantage of it. Additionally, many classes use classroom sets of text books, so students do not have to carry their books to and from school. If the proposed schedule is approved, the high schools can encourage all students to utilize lockers rather than trying to carry books throughout the day.**

### **Passing Periods & Student Transitions Between Classes**

1. How much passing time is being considered?

- a. **The proposed schedule includes five-minute passing periods between classes.**
2. Will there be shorter transition times between periods?
  - a. **No, the proposed schedule includes five minutes for passing periods, which is either the same amount of time in the current schedule or one minute more than the current amount of time allotted for passing between periods.**

### **Other/Miscellaneous**

1. Have you considered the fact that if you do not offer classes (and that means that even if the classes are on the books and approved through the district, but our students do not have access to those classes) – students may request to take them in other districts?
  - a. **The district is aware of the state requirements for these types of situations. This question oversimplifies the legal requirements for students to be approved to take a course outside of the district in this scenario and would not really apply to the discussion surrounding the schedule proposal. For a student to request to take a course outside the district due to a lack of access, it must be a class that is not offered by the district. It is not enough for the class to not fit into the student’s schedule, as long as they have the option to take it if they prioritize doing so over their other options.**
2. Is the term ‘over-credited’ student a common term in other districts in Iowa?
  - a. **We do not know if other districts use this term specifically. We merely use it as a way of describing the numerical credit situation of students who have earned an amount of credits over the requirements needed to graduate. Similarly, we use the phrase under-credited to describe students who have too few credits.**
3. Can you address the items in the news that have been incorrectly reported?
  - a. **There were multiple reports in various news reports indicating incorrect schedule proposals, with bases of 6 and 8 classes. There was also misinformation provided that this schedule change was being used to cut teaching positions, which is not accurate. The schedule change is being proposed for several reasons and is not a means of cutting teachers. Any cuts to staff are happening regardless of the schedule structure. The proposed schedule is merely a way to mediate the impact of potential staff cuts on class sizes.**
4. If a student wants to take an AP class that is only offered at one high school (not Central or their home high school), but using Central as a transfer point for transportation, would that be feasible with the proposed schedule?
  - a. **No, it would not be feasible to use Central Campus as a transfer point for transportation between other high schools. The way the transportation to and from Central Campus works, there would not be time for students to get from their home high school to Central Campus and then from Central Campus to another high school in between two periods in the proposed schedule (or in the current schedule structure). There are occasions where students from one high school take a class at another comprehensive high school because it is not offered at their home school, but they typically transport themselves between the two buildings.**
5. What is the EQ Committee?
  - a. **The EQ Committee is the Educator Quality Committee. The EQ Committee is governed under Iowa Code 284.1 Student Achievement and Teacher Quality Program.**
6. Would DMACC or Drake be options instead of forced release time?

- a. **When students can enroll at a post-secondary institution like DMACC or Drake while still in high school is governed by Iowa law regarding PSEO, or post-secondary enrollment options. If a student met the state and district criteria for something like a PSEO, it might be an option for that student in place of taking a release period.**
7. If classes have enough space for 35 kids, is that best for students as it lowers their chance of receiving one on one learning?
  - a. **We would like to see all class sizes kept as small as possible - 35 students in a class is definitely a large number and can prevent students from receiving one-on-one attention during class time. Class sizes have continuously increased over the last few years as the district has had to make budget cuts, a trend that will continue if we don't change the schedule. This is part of the rationale behind the proposed schedule change.**
8. What does MTSS stand for?
  - a. **MTSS stands for Multi-Tiered Systems for Success.**
9. How are teachers being trained regarding how to build relationships?
  - a. **We are currently working on an infrastructure around Social Emotional Learning. This will help us create a framework to train our teachers. Currently we have many staff trained in Restorative Practices and CPI. This is a high priority right now for our district.**
10. How does the new financial literacy requirement fit into your decision?
  - a. **There are still a lot of unknowns surrounding the new financial literacy requirement. We are waiting on clarification on some of those questions from the state. In the meantime, the curriculum department is working to come up with multiple options for students to meet this requirement, including an online version. Students will be able to accommodate this requirement within the proposed schedule.**
11. You look at class size so much – so why was my Roosevelt student sitting on a 5-gallon bucket for the first 3-weeks of school?
  - a. **High school class sizes have increased significantly across all content areas in DMPS over the last few years as the district has had to reduce staff and make budget cuts. The situation described in your question is certainly indicative of that problem. In many cases, classes have increased to the point of capacity in terms of the physical space of the room or the number of available desks. The proposed schedule is designed to help mitigate this problem by increasing teacher utilization, which results in move seats being offered each period of the day, helping to stop the increase in class sizes.**
12. Why is our district focusing more on schedules than academics?
  - a. **We are trying to be strategic on using our resources effectively to support our core mission of academic development of all our students. We are focusing on the schedule as a structural support to address some academic needs we are noticing in our students. The schedule is the structure through which we educate our students, so is important in discussions about academics.**