



NOVATO HIGH SCHOOL

Novato Unified School District
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Dr. Jan La Torre-Derby
Superintendent

December 10, 2008

RE: Modified Block Schedule Beginning on January 5th

Dear Parents and Students:

This letter will provide you with **important information** about our upcoming change to a modified block schedule **starting next semester, January 5, 2009**. Enclosed, you will find the new modified block schedule, information about why we are changing the schedule and how it will work.

About the New Modified Block Schedule

We are changing to a modified block schedule for a number of reasons. The new schedule will allow all students to have one 95 minute period in each of their classes every week.

- The 95 minute extended classes are on Tuesday periods 1, 3, 5, 7 (1st period warning bell rings at 7:15) and Wednesday periods 2, 4, 6. (2nd period warning bell rings at 9:00)
- All classes meet on Mondays, Thursdays and Fridays. (1st period warning bell rings at 7:15) Eighth period meets daily for 50 minutes.
- **Please be aware** that NHS students will be starting class **at the same time** each Wednesday at 9:05 am. Please plan to drop your student off **early** on Wednesdays to avoid the traffic jam that may occur with all students arriving at about the same time. For students arriving early on Wednesdays, the cafeteria and library will be open and supervised as a study hall.
- On Wednesdays from 8:15 to 9:00 Teachers and Administrators only meet in their Professional Learning Community groups. Office staff and campus supervisors will be working as usual.

Why are we changing Schedules?

We are changing to the new schedule because studies have shown that students learn better when they have extended time to explore subject areas in greater depth. The 95 minute periods are valuable for science to do extended lab work, research and analysis. In English, History, and Foreign Language the extended period allows teachers to use a wide variety of teaching strategies to create lessons that have multiple activities. A.P. classes will have time for in depth study and to complete larger units of study in one class period. Longer periods are ideal in project based classes like arts, wood and auto shop and minimize set up and clean up time. In P.E. the longer period allow the students to have more time for activities with less time for dressing out.

“Achievement for All – Our Call to Action”

The new modified block schedule will allow the staff time on Wednesday mornings to meet in their Professional Learning Community to design and implement educational strategies to improve student achievement.

The Process Used to Make the Schedule Change

In 2004 Administrators and staff at Novato High School, in response to a School Board directive to implement high school reform, began a process of training and study with the intention of creating Professional Learning Communities at Novato High School. The focus of these reforms was to improve student achievement. Beginning with Administrators and Lead Teachers, the entire staff and interested parents went through a series of Professional Learning Community seminars, workshops and trainings from 2004 to 2008 designed to teach us how to implement successful educational reforms. These activities provided us with valuable information about how to bring these new educational innovations to Novato High. In 2007, based on the trainings, the staff took a number of actions. These included:

- Student/Parent survey of alternative schedule preference
- Monthly staff meetings to present and evaluate alternative block schedule
- NHS Reform Committee creates proposals for block schedules
- Creation and site approval of alternative schedule
- Presentation of alternative schedule to the NUSD Cabinet

In 2007-2008 the staff voted in favor of developing an alternative schedule to help achieve SMART Goals. The staff and students endorsed a schedule that was presented formally to the NUSD Cabinet. The recommendation from the Cabinet was to continue research and gather input from parents, students and staff to develop a schedule the best supported student achievement.

At the beginning of the current 2008- 2009 school year, the staff created and received site approval for a new modified block schedule. PLC and Block Schedule Presentations were given to the staff, PTSA, SLT, ELAC, MSA Board and Sports Boosters. This Fall, two evening presentations about the new schedule and PLC's were given for interested parents.

On November 2nd, 2008 we made a formal proposal to the NUSD School Board to approve and begin the new Modified Block Schedule on January 5, 2009. The School Board, in a 4 to 2 vote, approved our request to change to the new schedule.

Moving Forward

We understand that the new schedule may create problems for student schedules. The counselors are ready and willing to help work through any scheduling issues that may come up. Please contact them with any questions.

Please understand that our main reason for moving to the modified block schedule is to improve achievement for your student. We believe that, with everyone's support, we can achieve this goal.

Sincerely

Rey Mayoral
Principal

Novato High School

New Modified Block Schedule 2009

Regular Day Schedule- Monday, Thursday, and Friday		
Warning Bell	7:15	
Period 1	7:20	8:12
Period 2	8:17	9:09
Period 3	9:14	10:06
Break	10:06	10:16
Period 4	10:21	11:13
Period 5	11:18	12:10
Lunch	12:10	12:45
Period 6	12:50	1:42
Period 7	1:47	2:39
Period 8	2:44	3:34

Tuesday Block Schedule			Period Length
Warning Bell	7:15		
Period 1	7:20	8:55	95 minutes
Break	8:55	9:05	
Period 3	9:10	10:45	95 minutes
Break	10:45	10:55	
Period 5	11:00	12:35	95 minutes
Lunch	12:35	1:10	
Period 7	1:15	2:50	95 minutes
Period 8	2:55	3:45	50 minutes

Wednesday Block Schedule			Period Length
Staff Only Planning	8:15	9:00	
Warning Bell	9:00		
Period 2	9:05	10:40	95 minutes
Break	10:40	10:50	
Period 4	10:55	12:30	95 minutes
Lunch	12:30	1:05	
Period 6	1:10	2:45	95 minutes
Period 8	2:50	3:40	50 minutes

Minimum Day Schedule		
Warning Bell	7:30	
Period 1	7:35	8:10
Period 2	8:15	8:50
Period 3	8:55	9:30
Period 4	9:35	10:10
BREAK	10:10	10:20
Period 5	10:25	11:00
Period 6	11:05	11:40
Period 7	11:45	12:20
Period 8	12:25	1:00

Rally Schedule		
Warning Bell	7:25	
Period 1	7:30	8:10
Period 2	8:15	8:55
Period 3	9:00	9:40
BREAK	9:40	9:50
Period 4	9:55	10:35
Period 5	10:40	11:25
Rally	11:30	12:20
LUNCH	12:20	12:55
Period 6	1:00	1:40
Period 7	1:45	2:25

SPRING FINAL EXAM SCHEDULE	
MONDAY June 8	P1 8:00 – 9:55 Brk 9:55 – 10:10 P2 10:15 – 12:10
TUESDAY June 9	P3 8:00 – 9:55 Brk 9:55 – 10:10 P4 10:15 – 12:10
WEDNESDAY June 10	P5 8:00 – 9:55 Brk 9:55 – 10:10 P6 10:15 – 12:10
THURSDAY June 11	P7 8:00 – 9:55 Brk 9:55 – 10:10 P8 10:15 – 12:10