

4 x 4 Block

“In contrast with the traditional daily six-, seven-, or eight-period schedule, a block schedule consists of three or four longer periods of daily instruction.” – National Education Association (NEA)

(Includes some 4 x 4, some 4 x 4 A/ B – 8 periods a term) plus some 4 x 4 with “skinnies” and other hybrid examples)

Includes examples from the following schools/districts (among others):

- *Garner Magnet High School, Wake County Public School System, Garner, North Carolina*
- *Hickory High School, Chesapeake Public Schools, Chesapeake, Vermont*
- *James Campbell High School, Ewa Beach, Oahu, Hawaii*
- *Arleta High School, Los Angeles, California*
- *Vergudo Hills High School, Tujunga, California*
- *Colfax High School, Colfax, California*
- *South Lenor High School, Lenor, North Carolina*
- *Irvine High School, Irvine, California*
- *Digital Media and Design, Kearny Complex, San Diego, California*
- *Monterey Trail High School, Elk Grove, California*
- *El Cerrito High School, El Cerrito, California*
- *Lutheran High School of St. Charles County, St. Peters, Missouri*
- *Virginia Beach Schools*
- *Roosevelt High School, Los Angeles, California*

On the 4 x 4 Block, the school day is divided into four instructional blocks, each of which is approximately 90 minutes and the school year is divided into two semesters or terms.

4 x 4 Semester/Term Block

	Semester/ Term 1	Semester/ Term 2
Period 1	Course 1	Course 5
Period 2	Course 2	Course 6
Period 3	Course 3	Course 7
Period 4	Course 4	Course 8

On a traditional 4 x 4 block, blocked classes meet daily for a semester term and student load is typically eight classes a year, but only four classes a semester/term.

On a traditional 4 x 4 block, blocked classes meet daily for a semester term and teacher load is typically six classes a year, but only three classes a semester/term.

Faculty cost factor, if teacher teaches six out of eight classes – 6/8 75%

Benefits:

- Class periods are typically 92 minutes allowing time for deeper learning.
- Student work load and teacher work load are reduced; students are responsible for four courses each semester term; teachers are responsible for three courses each semester term
- Supports Advisory period
- Each semester/term course is the equivalent of a full year course and students can complete eight courses each year
- More time on task and less time wasted in passing periods.
- Students can earn up to 32 credits and there are more options for elective courses, including dual enrollment courses.
- Mirrors college and life: Focusing on 4 classes per semester is similar to a college schedule and the pace of work.
- Opportunity for struggling student to repeat a course or otherwise retrieve credits.
- Relationships: teacher interact with fewer students each day; students interact with fewer teachers each day.

Challenges:

- Teachers may need professional development and initial support for teaching in the block
- Potential gaps in content
- Potential gaps in learning and testing (end of year exams, AP and State testing schedules, etc.)
- Ability to accommodate students who transfer in from schools on a more traditional schedule.

4 x 4 A/B (or 8 period Alternating A/B Block)

	A Day	B Day
Period 1	Course 1	Course 2
Period 2	Course 3	Course 4
Period 3	Course 5	Course 6
Period 4	Course 7	Course 8

Benefits

- Class periods are typically 92 minutes, time for deeper learning
- Supports continuity of learning/curriculum
- Better able to accommodate students who transfer from a more traditional schedule
- Students can take up to eight courses each year.
- Supports Advisory period

Challenges

- Teachers may need professional development and initial support for teaching in the block
- Lack of daily immersion in subject material (foreign language, math, etc.)
- Student and Teacher work loads; Students are responsible for 8 courses a week/term/year; teachers are responsible for six courses a week/term/year.

Often on the 8-Period Alternating A/B bell schedule format, students may meet for all eight classes on one day of each week so that the A days and B days can be consistent each week.

There are variations on the use of time on the one day each week that is a non-A/B schedule, including late start or early release days for professional development/community of practice/common planning time meetings for teachers and internship and community service opportunities for students. Instead of all eight courses meeting that day for short periods of time, the school may schedule two to four courses on a rotation schedule for the term.

Monday	Tuesday A Day	Wednesday B Day	Thursday A Day	Friday B Day
Course 1	Course 1	Course 2	Course 1	Course 2
Course 2				
Course 3	Course 3	Course 4	Course 3	Course 4
Course 4				
Course 5	Course 5	Course 6	Course 5	Course 6
Course 6				
Course 7	Course 7	Course 8	Course 7	Course 8
Course 8				

Similarly, many schools using an alternating day A/B bell schedule format also have a special bell schedule for 4-day weeks (weeks that include a holiday) and that may not include a day on which all classes meet.

SAMPLE PATHWAY SCHEDULE on a 4 x 4 Block

1	Pathway Core	Pathway Core
2	Pathway Core	Pathway Core
3	Outside Pathway Core	Outside Pathway Core
4 (skinny classes)	Math Lab/ Elective	Seminar
	Reading Lab/Elective	PE/Elective

Possible 4 X 4 Visual and Performing Arts Pathway schedule (one among many possibilities)

Block 1	VPA Art	VPA English
Block 2	VPA Math	VPA Music
Block 3	VPA Science	Elective
Block 4	Government Economics	VPA Internship

A Comparison of 4x4 with 4x4 A/B (8 period A/B) bell schedule format:

	4 x 4	4 x 4 A/B (or 8 period A/B) alternating A/B
Period Length	Approximately 90 minutes	Approximately 90 minutes
Courses available for students to take each year	Eight	Eight
Course Meeting Schedule	One set of four full courses meets daily for the Fall term and another set of four full courses meets daily for the Spring term	Two sets of four courses meet on alternating days for the duration of the year.
Duration of Courses	One term	One school year
Student "load"	Four courses per day every day/ Four full courses per term/ Eight courses per year	Four courses per day every other day/ Eight "semester" courses per term/ Eight full courses per year
Teacher "load"	Three courses each day; three courses each week/ term; one prep period each day Teachers teach 3 on 4 all year long.	Three courses each day For a total of six courses each week/term; one prep period per day – teachers teach 6 on 8 all year long

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Hybrid 4 x 4 with “embedded” A/B Classes and “embedded” skinnyies

Mitigates concerns about testing and continuity in certain subjects

	Term 1	Term 2
Block 1	Course 1	Course 5
Block 2	A/B Day – 2 courses “dovetailed”/back to back A Day – Course 2 B Day – Course 3	
Block 3	Course 4	Course 6
Block IV	Course 7 – yearlong “skinny”	
	Course 8 – yearlong “skinny”	

Garner Magnet High School

Wake County Public School System

Garner, North Carolina

Approximate student enrollment: 2400

4 x 4 Block with 3 lunch periods; Third Block includes lunch

Daily Schedule: 7:25 a.m. – 2:18 p.m.

1 st Block 7:25 – 8:54
2 nd Block 9:00 – 10:31
3 rd Block (Includes Lunch) A. Lunch 10:31 – 11:08 Class 11:14 – 12:43 B. Class 10:37 – 11:18 Lunch 11:18 - 11:55 Class 12:01 - 12:43 C. Class 10:37 - 12:06 Lunch 12:06 – 12:43
4 th Block 12:49 – 2:18

Hickory High School

Chesapeake Public Schools

Chesapeake, Vermont

4 x 4 w. four lunches

Daily Schedule: 8:45 a.m. – 3:43 p.m.

1 st Block 8:45 – 10:20			
2 nd Block 10:26 – 11:56			
<i>1st Lunch</i> 11:56 – 12:26	3 rd Block Class 12:02 – 12:29	3 rd Block Class 12:02 – 1:01	3 rd Block Class 12:02 – 1:35
3 rd Block Class 12:29 – 2:05	<i>2nd Lunch</i> 12:29 – 12:59		
	3 rd Block Class 1:01 – 2:05	<i>3rd Lunch</i> 1:01 – 1:31	
		3 rd Block Class 1:35 – 2:05	<i>4th Lunch</i> 1:35 – 2:05
4 th Block 2:11 – 3:43			

According to information posted on the Hickory High School website and/or included in the Student Handbook, “changes in graduation requirements and curriculum with a higher emphasis in academics.... present new challenges for all high schools. In order to meet these challenges, high schools are using the 4x4 semester plan. In the 4x4 semester plan”,

James Campbell High School

Hawaii Department of Education

Ewa Beach, Oahu, Hawaii

Regular Bell Schedule - Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday

Description / Section	Start Time	End Time	Length
Period 1	8:00 AM	9:22 AM	82 min
Passing	9:22 AM	9:27 AM	5 min
Period 2	9:27 AM	10:49 AM	82 min
Lunch/Activity Period	10:49 AM	11:21 AM	32 min
Passing	11:21 AM	11:26 AM	5 min

Period 3	11:26 AM	12:48 PM	82 min
Passing	12:48 PM	12:53 PM	5 min
Period 4	12:53 PM	2:15 PM	82 min
Teachers' Prep Period	2:15 PM	3:00 PM	45 min

Regular Bell Schedule - Wednesday

Description / Section	Start Time	End Time	Length
Period 1	8:00 AM	9:12 AM	72 min
Passing	9:12 AM	9:17 AM	5 min
Period 2	9:17 AM	10:29 AM	72 min
Lunch/Activity Period	10:29 AM	11:01 AM	32 min
Passing	11:01 AM	11:06 AM	5 min
Period 3	11:16 AM	12:18 PM	62 min
Passing	12:18 PM	12:23 PM	5 min
Period 4	12:23 PM	1:35 PM	72 min
Teachers' Prep Period	1:35 PM	3:00 PM	85 min

VARIATIONS ON THE 4 x 4 BLOCK

Some schools add a “skinny” zero period and/or “Skinny” after school course/seminar that runs all year long.

	Semester/ Term 1	Semester/ Term 2
Period 0 45-50 minutes	(Runs full year as skinny course; counts for a semester course credit each term)	
Period 1 90 minutes	Course 1	Course 5
Period 2 90 minutes	Course 2	Course 6
Period 3 90 minutes	Course 3	Course 7
Period 4 90 minutes	Course 4	Course 8
Period B/ 25 minutes	(Runs full year as required freshman seminar course – students earn the equivalent of a semester credit for the full year.	

Some schools offer “skinny” courses that run all year long as an option in “select” periods. During the same 90-minute period, some students may be taking

A full course and others may be taking one or two skinny courses. Sometimes for example, a math or foreign language course might be offered as a skinny course that runs all year long. Sometimes skinny courses are only offered during 2nd term so that students can make up a course for which they did not earn a “C” or better grade.

	Semester/ Term 1	Semester/ Term 2
Period 0 45-50 minutes	(Runs full year as skinny course; counts for a semester course credit each term)	
Period 1 95 minutes	Course 1 (runs all year long; w. 5 min. passing period) Course 5 (runs all year long)	
Period 2 90 minutes	Course 2	Course 6
Period 3 90 minutes	Course 3	Course 7
Period 4 90 minutes	Course 4	Course 8

Similar variations on the 4 x 4 A/B (8-period A/B) schedule

Monday	Tuesday A Day	Wednesday B Day	Thursday A Day	Friday B Day
Zero Period – runs as a skinny all year long				
Course 1	Course 1	Course 2	Course 1	Course 2
Course 2				
Course 3	Course 3	Course 4	Course 3	Course 4
Course 4				
Course 5	Course 5	Course 6	Course 5	Course 6
Course 6				
Course 7	Course 7	Course 8	Course 7	Course 8
Course 8				
B period, Extended/expanded learning, Twilight school, concurrent enrollment opportunities, etc.				

Arleta High School

Los Angeles Unified School District

Wall-to-wall SLCs:

Visual and Performing Arts (VAPA)

Social Justice (SJ)
 Science, Math, and Related Technology (SMART)

Each class is 82 minutes long.

Each of the 8 classes on the 4 x 4 block is the equivalent of a year-long course; students complete eight courses each year.

32- minute Advisory class w. adult advocates

An Early College program in partnership with LA Mission College

BELL SCHEDULE

	Start Time	End Time	Length
Period 1	8:30 a.m.	9:52 a.m.	82 minutes
Period 2	9:58 a.m.	11:20 a.m.	82 minutes
Advisory/Lunch	11:25 a.m.	12:30 p.m.	65 minutes
Period 3	12:35 p.m.	1:58 p.m.	83 minutes
Period 4	2:03 p.m.	3:26 p.m.	83 minutes

Every Tuesday is a Professional Development day. School starts at 10:00 a.m.

VERGUDO HILLS HIGH SCHOOL

Tujunga, California

Los Angeles Unified School District

Vergudo Hills High School first implemented a block schedule in fall 1998.

Small Learning Communities include:

- Health/Fitness/Biomedical Science
- Humanitas
- Media Magnet
- Visual/Performing Arts Magnet

Monday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday

	Start Time	End Time	Length
Period 1	8:00 a.m.	9:30 a.m.	90 minutes
Period 2	9:36 a.m.	11:06 a.m.	90 minutes
Lunch	11:06 a.m.	11:36 a.m.	30 minutes
Period 3	11:42 p.m.	1:12 p.m.	90 minutes
Recess	1:12 p.m.	1:30 p.m.	18 minutes
Period 4	1:36 p.m.	3:06 p.m.	90 minutes

Tuesday – Late start for Faculty Professional Development

	Start Time	End Time	Length
Period 1	9:10 a.m.	10:27 a.m.	77 minutes
Period 2	10:33 a.m.	11:50 a.m.	77 minutes
Lunch	11:50 a.m.	12:20 p.m.	30 minutes
Period 3	12:26 p.m.	1:43 p.m.	77 minutes

Period 4	1:49 p.m.	3:06 p.m.	77 min
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Colfax High School

Placer Union High School District
Colfax, California

Monday – Early Release for Teacher Collaboration

Block 0	6:50 -7:44	54 min.
Block 1	7:50 – 9:06	76 min.
Nutrition	9:06 – 9:14	8 min.
Block 2	9:20 – 10:36	76 min.
Block 3	10:42 – 11:57	75 min.
Lunch	11:57 – 12:29	32 min.
Block 4	12:35 – 1:50	75 min.

Tuesday- Friday

Block 0	6:50 -7:44	54 min.
Block 1	7:50 – 9:21	91 min.
Nutrition	9:06 – 9:14	8 min.
Block 2	9:35 – 11:06	91 min.
Block 3	11:12-12:42	90 min.
Lunch	12:42 – 1:14	32 min.
Block 4	1:20 – 2:50	90 min.

There are also a minimum day bell schedule, a finals schedule, a rally schedule, a senior awards bell schedule, etc. on the school’s website.

South Lenoir High School

Lenoir, North Carolina

South Lenoir High School is one of many schools in North Carolina which have been utilizing a 4x4 or 4x4 hybrid bell schedule since the 1990s.

4 Period Block Schedule with 4 lunches

Block 1	7:45 a.m. – 9:16 a.m.
Block 2	9:21 a.m. – 10:51 a.m.
Block 3	10:56 a.m. – 1:05 a.m.
1 st lunch – 10:56 a.m. – 11:26 a.m.	
2 nd lunch – 11:26 a.m. – 11:59 p.m.	
3 rd lunch - 11:59 p.m. – 12:32 p.m.	
4 th lunch – 12:32 p.m. – 1:05 p.m.	

Block 4	1:10 p.m. – 2:40 p.m.
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Another version of the South Lenoir HS Bell Schedule had three of the lunch blocks occurring during an extended Block 2 and the fourth lunch occurring in Block 3 (with part of Block 3 occurring during the “extended” time in Block 2 for the Lunch 4 group. Additionally, a 45-minute “flex” period for intervention and enrichment was added for Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays. On Wednesdays, there was a late start for teacher Professional Learning Communities and classes began at 9:20 that day.

Block 1	85 minutes	
Intervention/Enrichment	45 minutes	
Block 2	85 minutes+30+4	
Lunch 1	Block 2 (85)	
Block 2 (45)	Lunch 2	Block 2 (40)
Block 2 (85)	Lunch 3	
Block 2 (85)	Block 3 (35)	
Block 3	85 min	
Lunch 4	Block 3 (50)	
Block 4	85 min	

Irvine High School

Irvine, California

Hybrid 4 x 4 Block “Blended Block Schedule”

Irvine High School first implemented its current block schedule in 1996. The formal name for the 4 x 4 at Irvine High School is the “Academic Focus 4/4 Semester Plan”; however, in practice the block schedule become a hybrid schedule with some classes meeting daily as a solid block for a semester term and others meeting every other day for a full year. Irvine HS refers to this has a “blended block schedule.”

Regular Schedule:

Period	Time
0	7:00 – 7:55
1	8:00 – 9:30
*Advisement/ Tutorial	9:35 – 9:45
Break/ Tutorial	9:45 – 9:55
2	10:00 – 10:30
Lunch	11:30 -12:10

3	12:15 – 1:45
4	1:55 – 3:25

- Mon, Wed & Friday – Advisement
- Tuesday & Thursday – Tutorial (9:35 – 9:55)

On the Irvine High School website, there is also a set of alternate bell schedules – 8:00 a.m. TA, 8:15 Late Start, 9:00 Late Start, 10:00 Late Start, Assembly, Double Assembly, Extended Lunch (student activities), and Finals.

Four 90-minute periods per day.

Zero period = 55 minutes – newspaper production and marching band

Classes on the regular 4x4 “solid block” schedule include: math, English, World studies, U.S. History, Spanish levels 1-4, French, German, and Korean 1 & 2 as well as some non-lab, non-college preparatory science classes, and some elective classes.

Lab Science Classes, all Advance Placement classes, and some upper level foreign language classes meet every other day for a year. Most fine arts, performing arts, career technical courses, and academic elective courses, and all physical education classes meet every other day for a semester.

Athletics meets during fourth period each day and, when in season, practice extends beyond the school day.

Every student has a schedule that includes some combination of both solid block classes and alternating block classes.

Teachers teach three classes per day and have a ninety-minute prep period each day.

NOTE: Valuable resource. There is a “primer” on the Block Scheduling available on the Irvine High School web site. Topics include: Introduction to Block Scheduling, Regular Schedule, How Block Scheduling Works, What Block Scheduling Means for Students, What Block Scheduling Means for Teachers, Advantages, Disadvantages, The History, the Rationale, Getting Ready, Special Schedules.

Digital Media and Design

Kearny High School Complex
San Diego Unified School District
San Diego, California

4 x 4 Block with Period 0 and Advisory twice weekly

Digital Media and Design is a certified Linked Learning pathway AND also a California Partnership Academy.

Monday, Wednesday, Friday
(No Advisory)

Period 0	7:45 a.m. – 8:40 a.m.
Period 1	8:45 a.m. – 10:14 a.m.
Period 2	10:19 a.m. – 11:48 a.m.
Lunch	11:53 a.m. – 12:23 p.m.
Period 3	12:28 p.m. – 1:57 p.m.
Period 4	2:02 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.

Tuesday, Thursday
(with Advisory)

Period 0	7:45 a.m. – 8:40 a.m.
Period 1	8:45 a.m. – 10:01 a.m.
Period 2	10:06 a.m. – 11:22 a.m.
Lunch	11:27 a.m. – 11:57 p.m.
Period 3	12:02 p.m. – 1:18 p.m.
Advisory	1:23 p.m. – 2:09 p.m.
Period 4	2:02 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.

Monterey Trail High School

Elk Grove Unified School District
Elk Grove, California

4x4 with 0 period and two lunches

MTHS BELL SCHEDULES 2013-2014

MTHS REGULAR			
Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday			
Period	Begin	End	Minutes
0	7:00	7:45	45
1 Class	8:00	9:31	91
2 Class	9:37	11:16	99
3 Lunch	11:16	11:56	40
3 Class	11:22	12:53	91
4 Lunch	12:53	1:33	40
4 Class	12:02	1:33	91
5 Class	1:39	3:10	91

MTHS LATE START			
THURSDAY			
Period	Begin	End	Minutes
Prof. Learning Comm. Staff	8:00	9:15	75
1 Class	9:35	10:34	59
Advocacy	10:40	11:10	30
2 Class	11:16	12:22	66
3 Lunch	12:22	1:00	38
3 Class	12:28	1:27	59
4 Lunch	1:27	2:05	38
4 Class	1:06	2:05	59
5 Class	2:11	3:10	59

MTHS also has Assembly schedules, Rally schedules, and Final Exam schedules.

El Cerrito High School

El Cerrito, California

West Contra Costa Unified School District

4 x 4 with “skinny” classes

Regular Schedule (Mon, Tues, Thu, Fri)	Wednesday Schedule	Minimum Day
A Period	7:15 – 8:00	7:15 – 8:00
Block One	8:05 – 9:25	8:05 – 9:20
Period 1A	8:05 – 8:45	8:05 – 8:40
Period 1B	8:55 – 9:45	8:45 – 9:20

Block Two	9:55 – 11:35	9:35 – 11:00	9:30 – 10:45
Lunch	11:35 – 12:10	11:00 – 11:35	10:45 – 11:20
Block Three	12:20 – 2:00	11:45 – 1:05	11:30 – 12:40
Block Four	2:10 – 3:45	1:15 – 2:35	12:50 – 2:00
Period 4A	2:10 – 2:55	1:15 – 1:55	12:50 – 1:25
Period 4B	2:55 – 3:45	1:55 – 2:35	1:25 – 2:00
Collaboration		2:45 – 3:45	

Virginia Beach Schools

Virginia Beach City Public Schools,
Virginia Beach, Virginia

4 x 4 A/B Hybrid Block Schedule

“A High School Schedule for 21st Century Learners:” This 12-page document describes the proposal of the High School Master Schedule Committee to the School Board regarding a recommendation to adopt a new bell schedule. The recommendation is for a hybrid AB schedule with some courses that would be offered on a 4x4 schedule. “The kind of courses that would be offered on a 4x4 are the ones that are typically roadblocks to graduation such as Algebra 1, Earth Science, English 11 and English 12 The majority of the courses offered would remain on the AB block schedule.”

The targeted audience involves student leaders at each of the high schools.

<http://www.vbschools.com/curriculum/high/content/pdfs/SchedulePresentationStudents.pdf>

A/B Hybrid Block Schedule

- Block 1: 7:20 a.m. – 8:50 a.m.
- Block 2: 8:55 a.m. – 10:25 p.m.
- Block 3: 10:25 a.m. – 12:35 p.m. (includes embedded lunch)

1 st Lunch		2 nd Lunch		3 rd Lunch		4 th Lunch	
Lunch	10:25 – 10:55	Class	10:30 – 11:00	Class	10:30 – 11:35	Class	10:30 – 12:05
Class	11:00 – 12:35	Lunch	11:00- 11:30	Lunch	11:35 – 12:05	Lunch	12:05 – 12:35
		Class	11:35 – 12:35	Class	12:10- 12:35		

- Block 4: 12:40 p.m. – 2:10 p.m.

“The proposed A/B Hybrid Block schedule incorporates the A/B and 4x4 models in a manner that we believe will best meet the needs of our students. This schedule embeds a 30-minute lunch into an extended 3rd block. Students are no longer automatically scheduled with a study hall attached to their lunch period. Lunch is now embedded and scheduled along side a credit class, or instructional support period designed to meet the learning needs of students.”

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR YOU?

- “Extends the school day 15 minutes to allow all students to have a scheduled lunch and take advantage of the multitude of course offerings available in Virginia Beach.
- Most students would continue taking courses on the A/B schedule where they see their teacher every other day all year long. This includes AP courses.
- Students will take 6-8 classes; up to 32 credits over 4 years of high school, which includes six credits of elective choices for students.
- Time is used during the instructional day to provide student support and to implement programs such as Read 180, Math Labs, SOL prep, and SAT prep.
- The only courses to be offered using a 4x4 schedule would be core classes that often become a stumbling block to on-time graduation. This allows for timely credit recovery and reduces the need for summer school.”

Lutheran High School of St. Charles County

Saint Peters, Missouri

4 x 4 with “Prime Time”

“In the 4x4 Block Schedule, the school year is divided into two semesters, and the school day is divided into four instructional blocks of 80-minute periods.

During the first semester, students are enrolled in four courses that meet daily. Instruction once taught over the entire school year is now taught in one semester much as it is in colleges and universities nationwide. At the end of the fall semester, students receive one full credit for each course successfully completed and then enroll in four new courses for the spring semester.

Teachers instruct for three of the four 80-minute periods and use the fourth block as a planning/conference period.

A PRIME TIME period is built into the school day, 3-4 days per week. It allows for extended class time when needed, for students needing extra help, for time to meet with class advisors or counselors, and for special programs or activities.”

“What are the Benefits of the 4x4 Block Schedule?

Advantages for students:

- Less stressful schedule. Rather than struggling 7 classes at once, the student can focus on four classes at a time.
- More time on task and less time wasted in shifting from class to class throughout the day.
- Preparation for college and life. Focusing on 4 classes per semester simulates both a college schedule and work pace.
- More time for reflection and concentration. Student focus is less fragmented by a multitude of study tasks at a time.
- Graduates exit with 32 credits including more options for elective and advanced courses both at LHS and local colleges.
- Improved course preparation leading up to the ACT exams in the junior year. A student will have completed more overall coursework prior to taking the exams.
- Easier access to teachers. Longer conference periods and student discretionary periods facilitate this. Longer contact within the classroom environment also provides further opportunity to ask questions.
- Opportunity for struggling student to repeat a failed core class within the school schedule versus earning retrieved credits at summer school or with on-line course.
- PRIME TIME allows student to expand their learning opportunities and self-determine how to use their time, a skill vital for the college prep student.
- The semester break becomes a fresh start with new classes and new instruction.

ADVANTAGES FOR TEACHERS:

- Less stressful schedule. Rather than juggling 6 classes per day with one prep period a full-time teacher would teach 5 classes per semester.
- Teachers interact with 60-70 students per day vs. 120-140 giving greater opportunity to work individually with students and to build relationships.
- Longer daily class periods allow for a wider variety of teaching methods to be used and different levels of learning to occur.
- Longer daily class periods and longer prep periods allow for more in-depth lessons and conference times with students.
- Allows teachers more opportunities to work with students both inside and outside of class time in order to build stronger relationships.”

WHAT IS PRIME TIME AND HOW WILL IT BE USED?

“The skill of learning to use one’s discretionary time wisely and productively is valuable for the college bound student. Since LHS feels this is important to teach and model with students, the 4x4 schedule includes 3-4 30-minute time allotments per week known as the PRIME TIME period. These times are to be used by the students at their discretion for purposes linked to their personal and academic goals.

Students will be able to use this time to schedule a meeting with a teacher for extra help, writing guidance, or to make up a test or quiz. They will be able to use the time to

organize personal study groups, work on collaborative projects, or touch base with an instructor for additional instruction in small groups.

In addition, the PRIME TIME ... slot can be used by student organizations for meetings and to plan larger activities. Students can choose to spend time in the library or meeting with guidance....”

Source: <http://lutheranhighstcharles.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/07/4x4block.pdf>

Academy of Environmental & Social Policy (ESP)

Roosevelt High School

Los Angeles Unified School District

Los Angeles, California

“Nesting” of Classes on a 4x4 Schedule

CCASN NOTE: This example is from 2012-2013. In 2013-2014, the Academy of Environmental & Social Policy (ESP) at Roosevelt High School employed a 7-period A/B block schedule.

“How the Roosevelt HS: Environmental Social Policy small school modified its regular 4x4 schedule in 2012-13 to provide the more needy of its first and second year students with additional in seat course hours and full year instruction for certain core subjects...

Looking at the second year students first:

- This small school has approximately 93 -second year (class of 2015) students. As a QIEA class size reduction school, these 93 were divided into 4 groups of about 23 each.
- The most advanced of the 4 groups followed the usual 4x4 type schedule. This group took their English 10 AB, Biology AB and World History AB classes only during one semester of 2012-13 school year (either fall or spring).
- The other three groups of students, based on the school’s prior experience, it was thought, would greatly benefit (1) from more total time of task in these three core subjects and (2) from continuous instruction in these subjects throughout the entire school year rather than instruction limited to just one of the two semesters.
- To accomplish this, the three core classes for these three groups (labeled XX, YY and ZZ below) were contained (“nested”) within the time envelope of the last two adjacent 80 minute length 4x4 periods as shown below. The “nested” classes are sometimes referred to as “skinny” classes since they are not as long each day as are the 4x4 classes.

4x4 Class Schedule (A1 classes)

Class Schedule (AF classes)

(Classes meet daily for 45 days)
days)

Per. 3 (80 min.)

Passing Period (5 min.)

The “Nested” (“Skinny”)

(Classes meet daily for 90

Per. E (52 min.)

Passing Period (5 min.)

Per. F (52 min.)

Passing Period (5 min.)

Per. 4 (80 min.)
min.)

Total: 165 min.

45 days x 1 1/3 hrs/day per course
course

=60 total class hours for 5 credits
class hours for 5 (which is the Carnegie unit minimum
same number of in class hours per
in class hours for 5 credits)
period schedule)

Per. G (51

Total: 165 min.

90 days x (1 hr. minus 8 min)/day per

=90 hrs. minus 720 min. [12 hrs.] = 78 total
credits (= approx. the
course for 5 credits as on a traditional six

- **The teachers' schedules for the nested classes:**

	<u>Period E</u> <u>G</u>	<u>Period F</u>	<u>Period</u>
English 10A Teacher YY	Group XX	Group ZZ	Group
Biology A Teacher ZZ	Group YY	Group XX	Group
World Hist. A Teacher XX	Group ZZ	Group YY	Group

- **Student groups' schedules for the nested classes:**

	<u>Period E</u> <u>G</u>	<u>Period F</u>	<u>Period</u>
Group XX Hist. A	Eng. 10A	Biol. A	World
Group YY 10A	Biol. A	World Hist. A	Eng.
Group ZZ	World Hist. A	Eng. 10A	Biol. A

- The students in the nested afternoon classes took their PE and Math and other classes as regular 4x4 type classes during periods 1 and 2 during the fall and spring semesters.
- A similar "nesting" was established within the school's 4x4 periods 1-2 by setting up "nested" periods B, C and D to provide additional support for needy first year students in English 9AB, Algebra 1AB, and Physical Geology AB."

Source: Lew McCammon, Retired
Mentor APSCS 3/14/2013

Challenges and Solutions for Advanced Placement Courses on the 4x4 Block

Variation – 2 skinny AP classes

Block	Semester/Term 1	Semester/Term 2
Period	45 minutes: AP U.S. History	
	45 minutes: AP Composition and Language	

Variation – 4x4 hybrid with 2 AP classes “dovetailed” and meeting every other day

Block	Semester/Term 1	Semester/Term 2
Period	A/B Day Schedule for AP classes – year long	
	A Day: AP U.S. History	
	B Day: AP Composition and Language	

Variation – 4x4 hybrid with AP class dovetailed /back to back with an advanced composition course OR expository reading and writing course designed to support student success in A.P. courses

Block	Semester/Term 1	Semester/Term 2
Period	A/B Day Schedule for AP classes – year long	
	A Day: AP U.S. History	
	B Day: Advanced Composition OR Expository Reading & Writing (designed to support student success in the AP class, good option for 1 st time AP students)	

Variation

Block	Semester/Term 1	Semester/Term 2
Period	Prerequisite Course – (Biology)	A.P. Course (AP Biology)

Variation

Block	Semester/Term 1	Semester/Term 2
Period	27 weeks AP	
		9 weeks elective (equivalent of semester course)

OR

Block	Semester/Term 1	Semester/Term 1
Period	9 weeks elective	27 weeks AP

Solutions for Offering Band/Music on the 4 x 4 Block

Similarly, there are solutions to other perceived challenges.

MUSIC – BAND Sometimes band is offered during 0 period, say from 7:30 to 8:30 or as a skinny class that runs all year long during the last block of the day and can extend beyond the school day.

Another possible solution involves a combination of a 9-week block with two 27-week skinny classes.

	Semester/Term 1	Semester/Term 2
Block 1 OR 4 (beginning or end of day; other blocks – possible as well)	9 week marching band or other elective	27 weeks Concert Band
		27 weeks elective (music or other elective)

Block	Semester/Term 1	Semester/Term 2
Period	Marching Band	Concert Band

Block Period	Semester/Term 1	Semester/Term 2
	Orchestra	Advanced Orchestra

Block	Semester/Term 1	Semester/Term 2
Period	A/B Day Schedule for Music– year long A Day: Band, PE/Health, other electives B Day: Orchestra, PE/Health, other electives	

Similar or different solutions can be found for courses such as foreign language or mathematics in order to avoid a gap in learning. A student might take two full-year equivalent foreign language courses in a single year. All or many students might double-dose in Algebra in order to build strong knowledge and skills in mathematics. There are many possibilities.

Similarly, the 4 x 4 can accommodate Special Education students and English language learners with support classes that may run as skinny classes at the end of the day.

We will continue to update the bell schedule resources in the CCASN Master Schedule Guide. If you are aware of a bell schedule that supports student learning and achievement and includes innovations in the use of time or know someone we should talk with about a particular District or school bell schedule, please share your bell schedule examples and resources with Patricia Clark (patricia510@gmail.com) and/or Phil Saroyan (jp9@jps.net) from the College and Career Academy Support Network at the University of California Berkeley, Graduate School of Education. Thank you.