

October 8, 2009

Dear parents and guardians:

The Chief Sealth Building Leadership Team has been studying the possibility of moving to a modified block schedule for the past couple of years. We have done extensive research and have weighed the pros and cons of a schedule change. We would now like to engage you in the discussion before we move any further. Please take a moment to read the summary below and leave any comments and questions that you have. We hope to make a decision by the end of January, 2010. We plan to conduct a more formal survey of parents and guardians in November.

A modified block schedule is still six classes. In the draft schedule that we put together (see reverse side), students would attend longer periods two days a week. Mondays, Tuesdays, and Fridays would not change. The total number of class hours per week would not change. Please note: this is not the same type of block schedule that West Seattle had. Currently, Garfield, Nathan Hale, and Cleveland use modified block schedules similar to what is being proposed for Chief Sealth, as do all high schools in Bellevue School District.

-Chief Sealth Family Engagement Team (F.E.A.T.)

Some known benefits and challenges:

<b>Benefits</b>	<b>Challenges</b>
Fewer students per day for teachers, fewer classes per day for students = less to focus on each night.	Teachers need professional development to help them adjust their teaching styles to longer class periods.
Longer class periods allow for more project-based learning to occur during the school day.	Future coordination of bell schedules will need to take place with Denny International Middle School.
More academic support (study/tutorial period) can be built into the day for 9th and 10th graders to help them prepare for rigorous IB classes as 11th and 12th graders. Likewise, support for IB students can be built into the school day.	Scheduling of students involved in Running Start would need to be taken into consideration.
A single lunch allows for clubs and teachers to meet.	A single lunch impacts supervision of students.
Fewer class changes during block days means fewer disruptions and disciplinary problems.	
Research indicates block scheduling for 9th graders leads to higher on-time graduation rates.	