

Albemarle High School
Request for Pilot of Bell Schedule for 2006-07
(Submitted in 2006)

Information about the Pilot:

Last year (2005 – 06), Albemarle County initiated a process whereby all three of the comprehensive high schools would move toward adopting the same bell schedule rotation. As a result, Albemarle High School used a fixed weekly schedule this year. We also added an intervention period for teachers to provide extra time and support for students within school hours. Further, weekly content team meetings are scheduled during the intervention period to support staff development and improved instruction through team-work around examination of results from formative assessment.

On February 7, 2006, we held a special department chair meeting to review the current bell schedule. Department chairs were asked to take input from their teaching staffs and bring it to the meeting. We listed the advantages and disadvantages of the bell schedule. Serious issues that affect our students' learning environment were discussed as themes. One fatal flaw for the schedule for AHS students is that

- Our AAA sports district is on average two hours from the school. Because of the fixed weekly schedule, our interscholastic competitors (athletic and academic) miss the same classes every week. With 825 athletes across three seasons, this has a significant impact. This impact is increased with 25 teachers on our coaching staff who miss the same classes every week.
- We also found that the fixed rotation has eroded our ability to share staff and students with our feeder middle schools, causing wasted time for middle school students traveling here to take math courses. The same is true for our orchestra program.
- The Monday schedule also wastes time for GATEC students.
- With three time amounts (one for Monday, one for 7th period, and one for block periods) a teacher needs to make three lesson plans for the same subject each week. Teachers have indicated that the three preps never match up.
- Parents and students have indicated that Mondays have become assessment and "homework due" days.

Other feedback from students, staff, and parents is attached from our feedback site on the school's web page.

In the spirit of continued experimentation, we would like to propose the following schedule. This schedule was generated by teaching staff as a way to reduce the complications built over time with the 2004-05 and 2005-06 schedules. It also offers an intervention period in the vein of our current LEAP period, only it provides for a larger block of time for all types of student activities along with intense intervention.

Teachers teach 5 classes plus an intervention period.

All students are assigned to an intervention period.

This schedule would put us back on a schedule that allows us to share staff and students with Jouett and Sutherland.

Students and teachers who participate in sports and other interscholastic activities will have less than a 50% chance of missing their classes each week.

We would be back on a schedule that makes for a quick transition for CATEC students. In fact, Mr. Jeck created a schedule that would double the amount of students he could accommodate at CATEC if all three high schools went on a rotation like the one we propose.

Teachers would have one length of class period for which to plan, and no day in particular would become a “homework due” or test day for students.

With the content team meetings held outside of the bell schedule, all activities that have taken away from class time could be accomplished during the intervention period. Also, teachers could really collaborate to set up intervention “specials,” like an SOL Academy.

For special circumstances, 8th period could be used in place of the “early bird” period.

Above all else, this schedule is simple.

Proposal for an Eight-Period Schedule

4 Lunches & 8 minutes in between classes

Period 1 / 2: 9:00 – 10:30

Period 3 / 4: 10:38 – 12:33

Period 5 / 6: 12:41 – 2:09

**Period 7 / 8: 2:17 – 3:45

Lunch Schedule

		Students report to class	
*	10:38		
1	10:41	11:06	25
2	11:10	11:35	25
3	11:39	12:04	25
4	12:08	12:33	25

***Long Lunch & 8 minutes in between classes**

Period 1 / 2 : 9:00 - 10:28

Period 3 / 4: 10:36 - 12:00

Lunch: 12:00 - 12:40

Period 5 / 6 : 12:45 - 2:10

**Period 7 / 8: 2:18 - 3:45

Content Team Meeting Day modeled after Monticello’s pilot for the spring of 2006 (Haven’t chosen a particular day of the week yet & we may do content team meetings during Period 8)

4 Lunches & 8 minutes in between classes

8:30 to 9:20 will be the weekly content team meeting time. Since teachers will be coming in 15 minutes earlier than contract time, they will be able to leave 15 minutes earlier at 3:45. Buses will arrive at the regular time. Long lunch will not be an option on content team meeting days.

4 Lunches & 8 minutes in between classes

Period 1 / 2: 9:25 – 10:45

Period 3 / 4: 10:53 – 12:48

Period 5 / 6: 12:56 – 2:17

**Period 7 / 8: 2:25 – 3:45

Lunch Schedule

*	10:53	Students report to class	
1	10:56	11:21	25
2	11:25	11:50	25
3	11:54	12:19	25
4	12:23	12:48	25

*Long lunch would no longer be a regularly scheduled weekly event. We would pre-plan no more than 12 long lunches during the school year based on student leadership requests and needs to accommodate special programs such as SOL testing.

**LEAP is 8th Period, allowing for pep rallies, clubs and content team meetings during that time.

The rotation will be between odd and even classes.

Bell changes would go back to 8 minutes in between classes, since we will be meeting for longer blocks every day.

Teachers teach 5 classes plus a LEAP period.

A. Relationship of Pilot to School Division Goals and Objectives:

Albemarle High School is seeking to fully implement the tenets of the Professional Learning Community model by offering extra time and support for students and regular weekly time for teachers to meet to work on curriculum, instruction, and assessment in content teams. Ultimately, our ability to provide this support for students and staff development time for teachers will lead to addressing the achievement gap while enabling us to retain and foster leadership among excellent teachers.

By moving back to a rotating schedule, we will be in line with our middle schools, and we will not punish our athletes and coaches for attending and working at a AAA school in central Virginia. They will miss less class time and be more productive. This change will allow us to maximize our use of resources. Further, these staff will have built in, guaranteed make up period.

This bell schedule represents a move toward simplicity and concentrated effort. During the 2005-06 school year, many changes were brought on board at AHS. The most difficult change has been the complicated and hard to manage bell schedule.

B. Financial or Space Impact implications for the school or school division.

One concern is our ability to share classes and staff. Sharing will take place with special situations, like our UVA Calculus classes. Regardless of the schedule we use, these "specials" will always take extra effort and planning to execute. We are willing to do this planning, but I think it is inappropriate to affect a 1700 student high school's operation around a few classes, when we can work to adjust the meeting times of these classes around the needs of the many.

C. We will evaluate the initiative based on the following data:

We will conduct the same feedback process we have used to evaluate the current bell schedule.

D. System-wide impact:

Success with this schedule affirms the county's commitment to two tenets: site based management and the PLC model.