



Norwood High School Schedule Study



March 2021





Overarching Concepts


1. “Schedule” refers to everything related to how academics are structured at a high school (# of classes, requirements, length/duration, structure, offerings/opportunities).
2. Research indicates no correlation between a school’s length of class, # of classes or structure of classes, and academic achievement (Arnold, 2002; Gill, 2011; Stallings, 1980).
3. Historically, high schools create schedules that maximize efficiency (course requests, teaching schedules, graduation requirements, class sizes, time on learning).
4. High schools change schedules to address local needs of students and long term school/district goals, but still stay within the confines of structural limitations (course requests, teaching schedules, graduation requirements, class sizes, time on learning).

Schedule Study Timeline

Phase 1: Conduct a needs assessment of the NHS schedule (March-April 2020). 

Phase 2: Research options that other high schools have used to address their own needs (May-September 2020). 

Phase 3: Develop, examine, and solicit feedback regarding potential options for a revised NHS schedule (October 2020 -January 2021). 

Phase 4: Recommend (or not) a schedule for implementation in September 2021. (February 2021). 

Benefits and Challenges of Existing NHS Schedule

Benefits:

- Length of class (55-60 minutes)
- Number of classes per day (5-6)
- Some rotation of class
- Allows for depth in electives

Challenges:

- Limited number of electives a student can take (especially students with disabilities)
- Minimal opportunities for students to pursue internships, work options, or dual enrollment
- Mandatory study hall period
- No built in common planning time for teachers
- Schedule is unpredictable (7 day rotating cycle)
- No flexible period available for extra help during day
- Limitations make achieving MassCore difficult for some students

Core Needs for NHS

1. Educator collaboration time
2. Personalized learning time for students
3. Career preparation and project-based learning integration
4. Choice and voice for students

How and Why Do other High Schools Change Schedules to Address Local Needs?

Why Do Schools Make Changes?

- To use time efficiently/in a way that meets school goals
- To increase opportunities for students and teachers
- To better address social-emotional and mental health needs of students
- To strengthen the transition from middle to high school

What Types of Changes are Made?

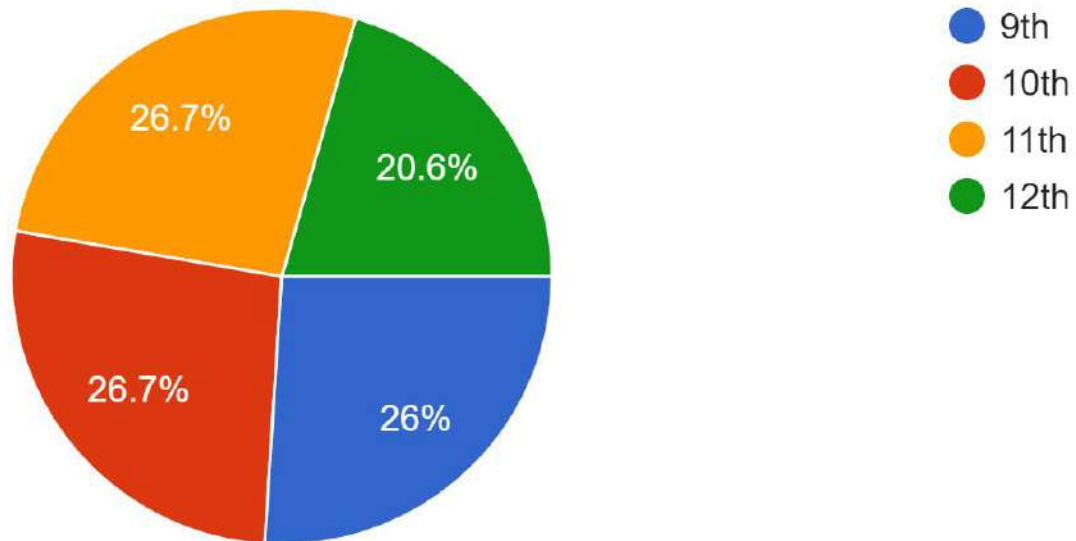
- Create common planning time for teachers
- Add flexible time during the day for students
- Change length of classes or courses, required courses, # of courses
- Modify schedule to accommodate new or existing programs

Student Feedback

- 60% response rate on student survey
- 50+ students participated in detailed focus groups
- Focus on what is working well and what could be improved in school schedule, course selection, and educational opportunities.

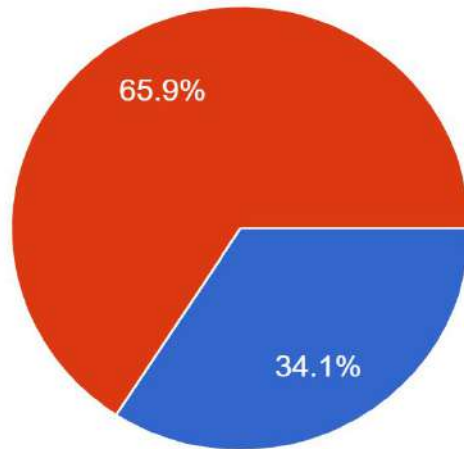
What grade are you in?

573 responses



Choose the answer that best describes your preference.

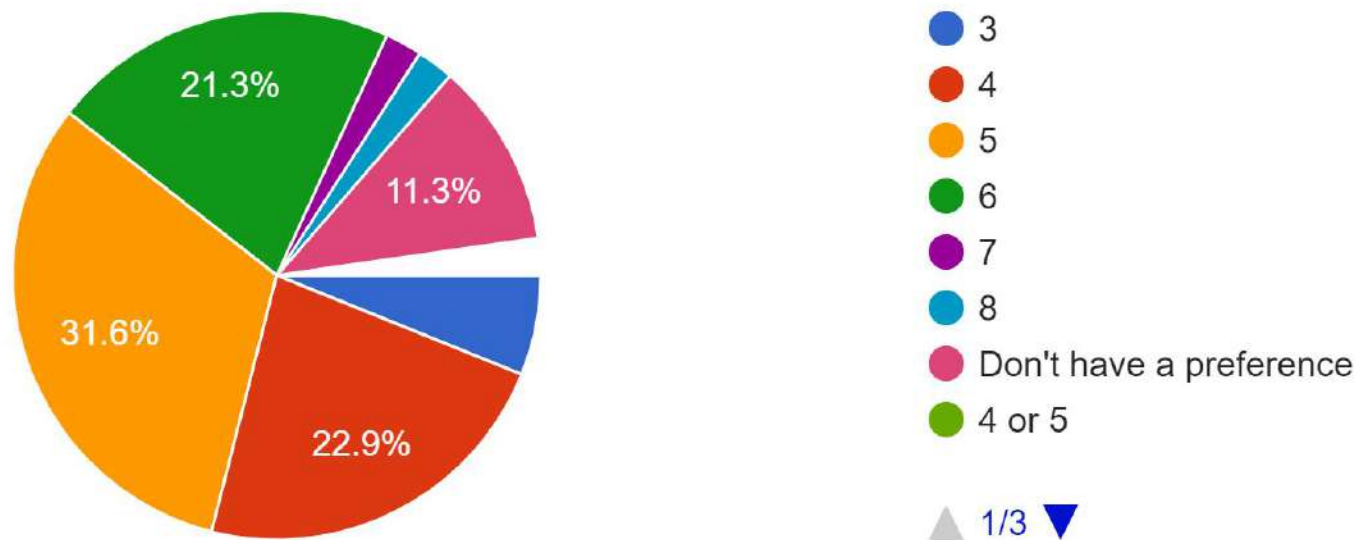
563 responses



- Attend fewer classes each day that meet for longer periods (80-90 minutes)
- Attend more classes each day that meet for shorter periods (50-60 minutes)

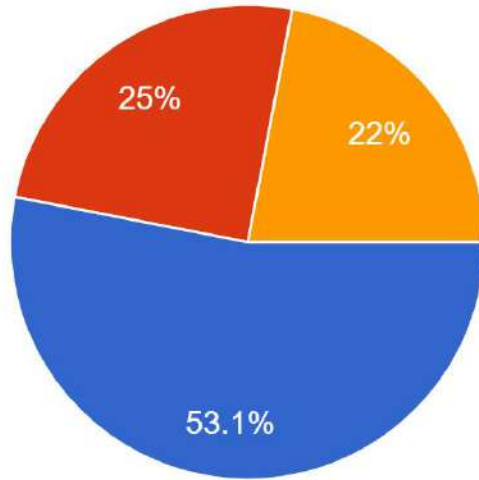
How many classes a day seems reasonable for you to manage?

573 responses



Finish the following statement: The total number of classes I currently have to manage is...

573 responses



- is just right for me.
- is overwhelming and too much for me.
- is fine but I would like the opportunity to take more electives.

I know exactly what I want to take and I can fit everything into my schedule

I have to make tough decisions because there are so many classes that I want to take

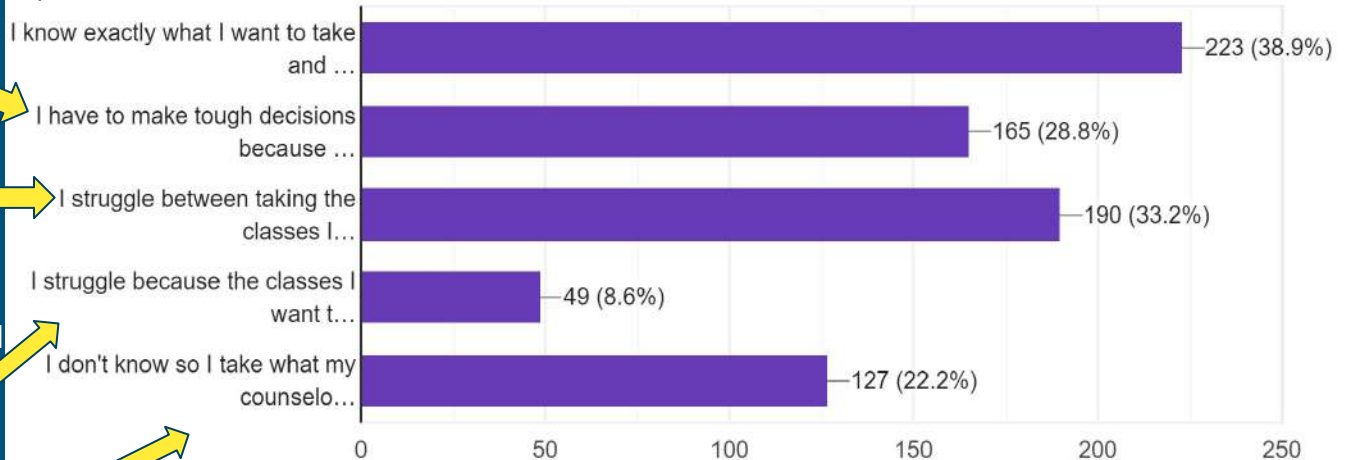
I struggle between taking the classes I want to take and the classes I am required to take

I struggle because the classes I want to take are not offered

I don't know so I take what my counselor recommends

Finish the following statement: When I am choosing my classes for the next school year,... (Check all that apply)

573 responses



Student Focus Group Feedback

Benefits

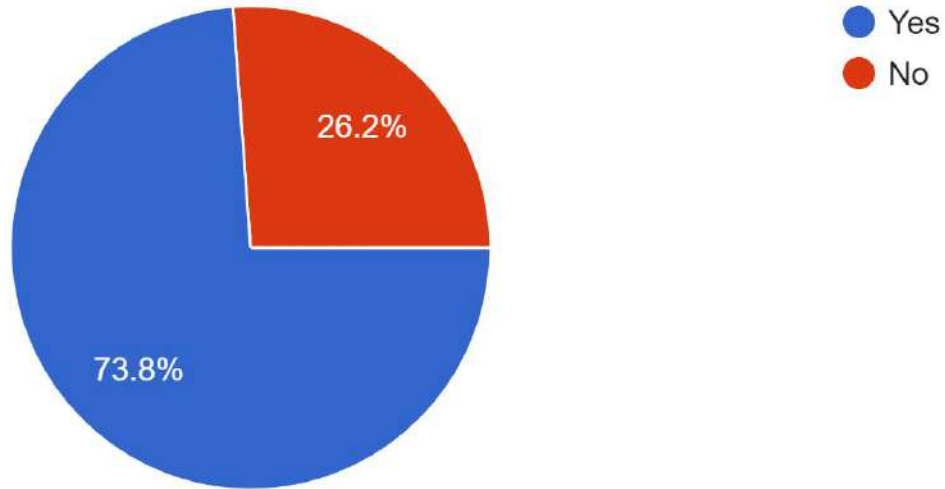
- WIN Block is a win
- Mon-Fri Schedule
- 5-6 classes a day
- Rotating classes
- Independent work time
- Like flexibility in their day

Challenges

- Elective choices are limited
- Feel forced to take a study hall rather than another elective.
- Feel “stuck” in a certain type of elective based on what they took the previous year
- Some feel forced to choose extra core classes over electives.
- Not enough elective choices for underclassmen

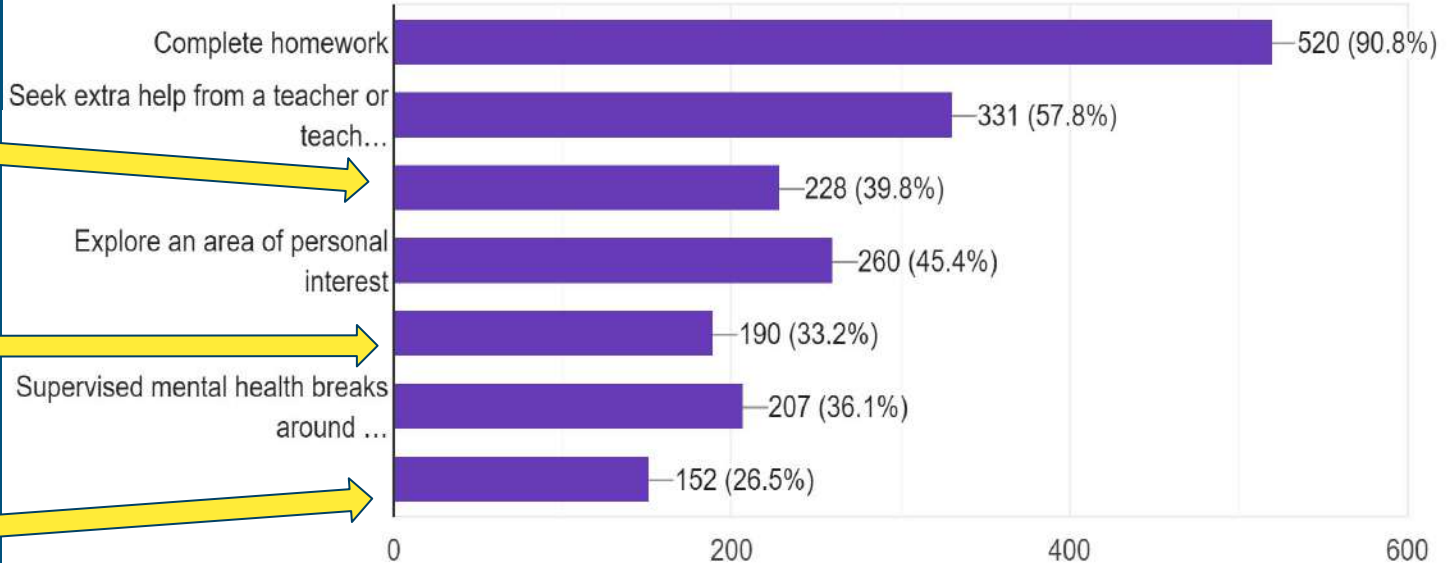
Would you like the opportunity to take minor courses (classes that meet less frequently for less credit) Example: classes that meet for 1 semester (f...classes that meet all year but for 2/3 days a week.

573 responses



How would you like to use WIN block? Check all that apply.

573 responses



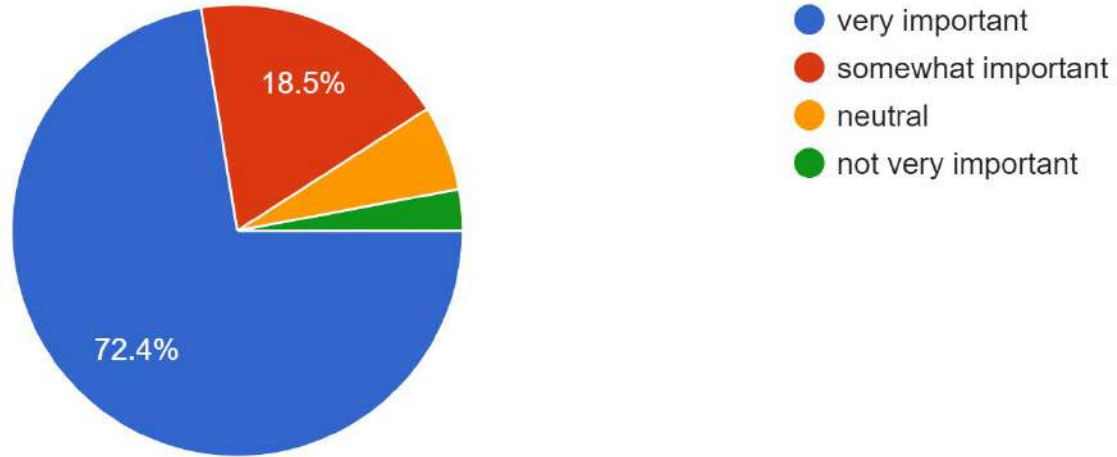
Make an appointment with a school counselor, dean, or administrator

Participate in a club or extracurricular activity

Take advantage of special programs or opportunities (listen to a guest speaker, participate in a workshop series, etc)

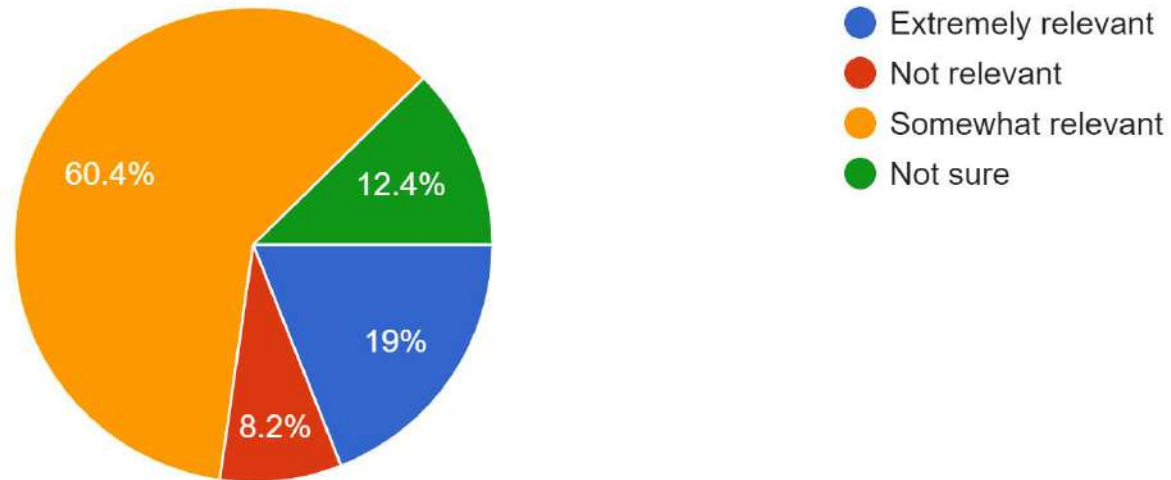
How important to you is it to have flexible time (like a WIN block) built into your schedule ?

573 responses



To what extent do you feel the courses at the high school prepare you for your college or career.

573 responses



Recommendations from the Schedule Study Committee

- In February, the NHS Schedule Study Committee voted 13-1 to recommend implementation of a new schedule for the 2021-22 school year.
- The proposed schedule combines the elements that staff and students have found to be the most effective, relative to meeting student needs and school improvement goals, from the NHS schedules 2011-20 and 2020-21.
- The proposal is housed under six recommendations.

Recommendation #1:

Increase Student Voice and Choice

Modify Structure of Introductory Electives

Move all introductory electives from 5.0 credits to 2.5 credits, allowing students to gain more exposure and awareness in the early grades (Accounting, Marketing, Management, Engineering, Computer Science, Art, Music, Wellness, Academic Support).

- This allows all students to take an additional 2.5 credits of electives each year.
- This allows all special education students to take electives at NHS.
- This allows students to identify interests early on, and “specialize” later in the high school career, rather than being locked into a certain type of elective for four years.

Recommendation #2:

Implement Flexible Time into Schedule

Maintain WIN (What I Need) Block

Implement a minimum of two periods each week of flexible learning time to be used for extra help, intervention, student work time, or enrichment.

In addition, utilize this time for teacher collaboration time when it cannot be built into the teaching schedule.

Recommendation #3:

Make Schedule Friendly for College and Career Preparation

Create Structure to Strengthen Career Preparation Programs

Freeze a certain period or group of periods at end of day multiple times each week

Follow a Monday through Friday schedule to align with the schedules our external partners follow (college and career partners).

Recommendation #4:

Enhance Graduation Requirements

Masscore is a state recommended, rigorous program of study that aligns high school coursework with college and workforce expectations.

Currently at NHS, approximately 50% of our graduates achieve MassCore. By creating space and supports to achieve these modified graduation requirements, this number will be much closer to 100% by 2025.

Currently 9/11 DART schools have a four year math requirement

Currently 8/11 DART schools have a two year world language requirement

Currently 9/11 DART schools have an arts requirement

Dart Districts = Agawam, Attleboro, Beverly, Falmouth, Ludlow, Montachusett Regional Tech, Quincy/North Quincy, Saugus, Stoughton, Weymouth

Recommendation #4:

Enhance Graduation Requirements

MassCore

- 4 years English
- 4 years Math
- 3 years lab-based Science
- 3 years History/Social Science
- 2 years the same foreign language
- 1 year the Arts
- 4 years PE required by state law

Norwood High School (Current)

- 4 years English
- 3 years Math
- 3 years Science
- 3 years History/Social Science
- 4 years Health
- 4 Years PE

Recommendation #4:

Enhance Graduation Requirements

Align NHS graduation requirements more closely with MassCore, beginning with the following changes for the NHS class of 2025.

1. Four years (20 credits) of Mathematics
2. Two years (10 credits) of a World Language
3. One year (5 credits) of the Arts (fine, performing, visual, graphic, industrial)
4. Four years (10 credits) of Wellness (PE and Health)

Note: This specific recommendation needs school committee approval. It has already been endorsed by the NHS Leadership Team, School Council, and Schedule Study Committee.

Recommendation #5:

Improve Schedule Structure

Adopt the 30 Block Schedule in September 2021

The 30 Block Schedule combines the most appreciated and beneficial elements of the 2011-2020 schedule with the most appreciated and beneficial elements of the 2020-21 schedule:

- 7 period base, 6 periods meet each day.
- Approximate 60 minute learning blocks (minus passing time)
- 5 day Monday-Friday cycle
- 5.0 credit courses meet 4x/week; 2.5 credit courses meet 2x/week
- Rotation with one “frozen” block at end of day for work based learning
- Flexible learning time 2x/week
- Increased teacher collaboration time

Recommendation #6:

Designate Teacher Common Planning Time

Use time created in this schedule for teacher collaboration time.

Incorporate teacher common planning time (CPT) and teacher professional learning communities (PLCs) into the schedule structure.

Utilize teacher preparation periods of like teachers, WIN Blocks when appropriate, and after school meeting time for CPT and PLC purposes focused on improving teaching and learning.

NHS Schedule Committee Members

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