

Students' Schedule & Use of Time

- Revise school schedules (including late start days, modified block, full block, or trimester schedules).
- Revise homework policies to ensure purpose and volume of homework is appropriate.
- Schedule quarterly “no homework” nights.
- Create test and project calendars to reduce overlapping major assignments.
- Provide tutorials or free periods to give students more time to interact with faculty and more time for academic support.
- Create guidelines for extracurricular activities.
- Move finals and/or cumulative projects to before winter break.
- Modify final exam schedule to create longer breaks between exams and earlier dismissal after exams.
- Schedule “dead week” each quarter where no testing is allowed.
- Eliminate summer and vacation assignments.
- Implement a “student-for-a-day” program where teachers follow a student’s schedule for an entire school day to get a sense of the cumulative effect of the daily schedule.

Project and Problem-Based Learning

- Diversify your teaching strategies to include rigorous project/problem-based learning as part of each unit.
- Modify curriculum and school assignments to make them more relevant to students’ lives.
- Develop “plagiarism-proof” assignments that allow for more student choice and personalization.
- Add a service learning component to an existing unit to increase student engagement and understanding of the topic.
- Assign a final project in lieu of a final exam.

Alternative and Authentic Assessments

- Use multiple forms of assessments in each unit that are aligned with the learning goals.
- Consider eliminating mid-terms and/or final exams.
- Allow students to self-assess and engage in peer review and revision when possible.
- Revise late work and “zero” policies.
- Allow students to do test corrections to show they understand their mistakes.
- Modify the grading system, such as using narrative assessments, creating unweighted GPA’s, or eliminating student rankings.
- Refrain from grading the first assignment(s) each semester; write comments, mark incorrect answers, and allow for revisions, so that students focus on the learning instead of just the grade.

Climate of Care

- Implement an advisory system to focus on social and emotional learning and to help students find faculty advocates.
- Support a broader definition of success by revising award assemblies and valedictorian choices, and by not publishing college acceptance lists.
- Encourage more positive student/faculty relationships so faculty members are more approachable and accessible.
- Develop time management, stress reduction, and relaxation techniques.
- Conduct exit surveys with graduates to glean information about aspects of school that worked well and ways to improve.
- Create Honor Codes, “Declaration of Integrity,” and revised cheating policies. Consider student-led judicial councils to handle academic integrity infractions.

Educate Parents, Students, and Faculty

- Develop parent education programs and host student assemblies to highlight the latest research on student well-being and address the pressures students face.
- Host “dialogue nights” in which students share their day-to-day demands with parents and/or faculty.
- Have students write anonymous letters to their parents explaining how adults can best support them academically and emotionally. Read these aloud at PTA meetings or parent nights.
- Sponsor professional development workshops for faculty on student stress and coping strategies.
- Hold education nights for parents of students in Advanced Placement and Honors courses to share information about the expectations and homework load.
- Create planning tools for students as they determine their academic and extracurricular schedule for the coming year. Focus on the amount of out-of-school time each class and activity will take, and be sure to make time for adequate sleep.
- Educate students on finding the right “fit” college or post-secondary path. De-bunk the myth that there is only one path to success.