

Minute by Minute

How Real Schools Improved Their Use of Time



Lessons Learned from NYC's School Time Lab

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Message from Vanda Belusic-Vollor

Dear Educators,

A recurring motif among the schools participating in School Time Lab’s School Reprogramming pilot, often referred to as the Living Lab, is the idea of a road map: a clear path to a clear destination. The time with students is too precious a commodity to leave school-based decisions up to chance.

This document celebrates the courage of school leaders. The participating school leaders set goals, mapped backwards, took calculated risks, piloted changes, tried different approaches, and experimented with out-of-the-box thinking, which led to bigger, bolder changes.

This document also honors the work of teams and communities of educators. To bring their goals to fruition, teams of educators paused, examined and reflected on decisions, and consistently asked themselves, “Have we created the space to do something even more effective than before? How are we ensuring that all students have access to supports and opportunities to graduate college and career ready? How can we do this better?”

The other critical part of this document’s findings is balancing trade-offs. The idea of trade-offs is a key part of utilizing time because that is the heart and most challenging piece of the work of Living Lab schools. It’s impossible to have it all. Time is finite, and that is why goals are essential; because those goals (daily, weekly, monthly, and yearly) drive the decisions required to put structures in place, to identify what has to be sacrificed or put on a back burner in order to make those shared goals a reality.

The realization of the goals would never have happened without the teachers. This document highlights this shift in the potential roles of teachers. For these schools, they became emissaries and part of a larger team with a larger mission. And, of course, leaders and administrators had to find the balance between pushing on priorities while creating a supportive structure of a shared vision.

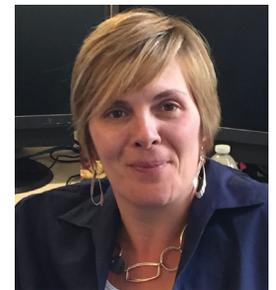
When hard decisions had to be made, it was with the consensus of the community of stakeholders. In fact, all of the outcomes from any of the changes belong to the entire school-based constituency and their collective efforts at assessing their needs, playing to their strengths, and delving into the process of redesign with a thoughtful basis in meaning and grounded in agreed upon goals.

The more we study and cast a laser-sharp focus on examining time in the school day, the deeper we delve into conditions that make for successful and effective schools. Change shouldn’t be implemented for the mere novelty of it. Change should be a thoughtful, strategic process driven by our expectations for all of our students when they graduate. This is what schools have done: they have taken the courageous steps to change how they use time both in the short and long term so students have an increased access to rigorous courses and valuable experiences that prepare them to succeed in their postsecondary pursuits.

So, when you pick this document up to share at your professional learning or to adapt the content to create a workshop, I hope your school’s vision manifests itself through your team’s conviction and your school community’s courage to make the best choices for students, choices that will embrace the roadmap to success you have carefully constructed so all of your students graduate prepared for the next phase in their lives.

Sincerely,

Vanda Belusic-Vollor
*Senior Executive Director,
 Office of Postsecondary
 Readiness,
 New York City
 Department of Education*



APPROACHING A SCHEDULE CHANGE LESSONS LEARNED FROM SCHOOL TIME LAB

School Time Lab (STL) is a two-year New York City initiative implemented by the [Office of Postsecondary Readiness](#) and evaluated by the Research and Policy Support Group. STL aims to provide professional learning and document the process on how high schools improve academic programming and use of time in order to better prepare their students for college and career. A cohort of nine schools, referred to as the Living Lab schools, applied and was selected to participate in professional learning and on-site coaching from the STL team. Professional learning consisted of workshops, on-site coaching, and technical assistance over the course of two years. Using lessons learned from Living Lab schools, this document provides a guide on how to approach making changes to academic programs and school schedules with the goal of improving student outcomes.

The first section lays out the key steps in the process of change as identified by the Living Lab schools and observed by the STL team. All Living Lab schools successfully implemented changes in their schedules or academic programs; we provide case studies in the second section on three of the schools. Immediately following the case studies are key demographic and performance information on all Living Lab schools and a template and some examples to help create your own Four-Year Program Plan. Finally, the third section provides a list of key resources used by schools during this process as well as new resources created by the STL team.

KEY STEPS TO APPROACHING CHANGE

The process of change varies based on context, needs, and goals, but several key steps emerged that were essential to implement an adjustment to the school schedule or academic program. While policies and rules may change, the steps below reflect guiding principles that pertain to the process of change. All changes to the schedule and academic program stem from specific goals, needs, and desired outcomes. Regardless of whether schools undertook large shifts or small tweaks, they needed to:

KEY
STEP

SET CLEAR, ATTAINABLE GOALS

- Assess the current schedule, academic programs, and data to develop and prioritize goals that are well-defined and reachable in a given time frame. Soliciting input from stakeholders, including students, teachers, and other staff is essential.
- Build knowledge and accurate understanding of academic policy and contractual compliance regulations to set realistic goals.
- Reach out to other schools to get ideas and input or look for examples.
- Create a Four-Year Program Plan that aligns with the school's goals.

FOUR-YEAR PROGRAM PLAN

The program plan maps course sequences over four years. It should include rigorous sequences and opportunities and offerings that address the different skill levels of students.

*Refer to Appendices
Section for Template*

“Anyone trying (this work) I would say first to have a clear set of goals or clear goal. We knew from the first day what we wanted.”

- Principal



Spark the Conversation!

Does your current schedule reflect the goals and priorities of your school?



Resources

Academic Policy Guidelines
Case Studies

KEY
STEP

PICK THE RIGHT TEAM

- Devoting a team allows for programming and scheduling to move from a single staff member's job to a collaborative group effort.
- Team members will likely vary depending on the goals. STL schools focusing on redesigning course sequences wanted representation from all departments, while those interested in implementing supplemental supports like advisory chose to include guidance and college counselors.
- Teams should include administrators with the capacity to make programming decisions. Administrators will also gain an understanding of the complexity and challenges of programming and the resources and decision-making needed to turn theory into practice.
- Team members should support the school's vision and goals. However, STL schools also recommended including a critical voice. One principal suggested, *"Bring your loudest voices that are in opposition into the group."* A critical lens will allow the team to identify and work out solutions to barriers as well as anticipate potential pushback.

KEY
STEP

DEVELOP A PLAN TO ACHIEVE GOALS

- Making changes to a school schedule or program takes time. The foundational work should begin a full school year before the proposed implementation. Time is needed to finalize goals, develop strategies for implementation, communicate with the school community, and plan steps to achieve goals.
- Plans should also keep key deadlines and regulations in mind that affect whether changes to the schedule can be made. For example, changes that affect the teacher contract will need to be approved via [School-Based Option](#). Missing the deadline for this process can delay implementation.
- If schools are co-located and changes depend on flexibilities from schools on campus, connect with school leaders to negotiate. If schools currently share a bell schedule, significant changes that affect the bell may be challenging to implement.

KEY
STEP

BRAINSTORM IDEAS FOR CHANGES THAT ALIGN WITH SCHOOL GOALS AND PRIORITIES

- Consider multiple strategies and schedule or program configurations to achieve your desired schedule change.
- Get familiar with [academic](#) and [contractual](#) policies to understand where there are flexibilities, opportunities, and parameters.
- Engage stakeholders to provide feedback on proposed schedule changes.
- Consider reaching out to programming experts to help generate ideas for different configurations of time. Living Lab schools had the opportunity to work with expert programmers to brainstorm possibilities and found these discussions valuable. Consider reaching out to your superintendent for help.

**Spark the Conversation!**

Who will be impacted by the potential change and are they represented on your team?

**Spark the Conversation!**

How long do you anticipate the process will take?

When should you begin involving key stakeholders?

**Resource**

Calendar Tool

**Spark the Conversation!**

Who can we talk to or what resources can we look for that might help us brainstorm possibilities?

KEY STEP

GENERATE BUY-IN FROM ALL STAKEHOLDERS

- Buy-in from the school community is critical for implementing changes and ensuring their success.
- School leaders need to know their staff and their attitudes toward change. They need to be aware of how staff, students, and other stakeholders will receive proposed changes.
- Some suggestions from STL participants include:
 - Incorporate the conversation into all meetings. *“I think we talked about it at every school leadership team meeting.”* – Principal
 - Identify a liaison who can host “info sessions” with other staff to discuss the work and answer questions.
 - Keep stakeholders in the loop about your ideas and the timeline for rollout. *“Make sure your community knows what you’re thinking and your reasons.”* – Principal
 - Include your UFT liaison as early as possible and be transparent.

KEY STEP

DEVELOP ROLLOUT STRATEGIES

- STL schools recommend starting with small, manageable changes. Success on a small scale helps generate buy-in for something larger in the future.
- Changes can be piloted with certain grades, course sequences, or teams to understand how they work and then scale up. For example, one school implemented additional common planning time with their English department first and then spread the model to other departments. The school identified this particular team since they were open to the proposed change and willing to act as ambassadors on behalf of the new model.

KEY STEP

PUT STRUCTURES IN PLACE TO ENSURE PROGRESS

- In order to keep work moving, clear and comprehensive task lists and deadlines need to be established.
- Regularly set aside time and designate a committee to check on progress and ensure accountability.



Spark the Conversation!

Who are your key stakeholders?

What pushback do you anticipate?



Spark the Conversation!

Who is most excited to engage in this work?

Who needs evidence of success before they're willing to try?



Spark the Conversation!

How will you know if this is working?

What changes do you hope to see?

EXAMPLES OF CHANGES MADE BY LIVING LAB SCHOOLS

School	Goal	Schedule Change	Trade-Offs
Dr. Susan S. McKinney Secondary School of the Arts	Develop skills related to college and career readiness	Implemented a College and Career Readiness Course for grades 9-12 using a three-day/two-day split with physical education class	The three-day/two-day split with physical education. required moving performing arts courses from this time to other periods during the school day
East Bronx Academy for the Future	Improve math performance	Implemented double periods of math for all 9th graders and 10th-12th grade students as needed	Less student choice in earlier grades and potentially reallocating staffing funds to accommodate an additional math teacher
Gaynor McCown Expeditionary Learning School	Improve math performance	Double Algebra 1 periods	Delayed Language Other Than English (LOTE) to later in high school and reallocated staffing funds from the LOTE department to accommodate an additional math teacher
George Washington Carver High School for the Sciences	Implement an advisory course to strategically support students around college and career readiness and personal development	Implemented an advisory course once a week on Wednesdays	Reduced period lengths by a couple of minutes one day a week in order to create a block of time for advisory
Gregorio Luperon High School for Science and Mathematics	More rigorous, in-depth courses	Block schedule with longer periods	Some classes no longer meet every day, which can affect routines and communication with students and teaching style
Health Opportunities High School	College and Career Readiness and Common Planning Time	Implemented advisory for 9th and 11th graders and piloted additional common planning time for ELA department	Less choice for arts elective to accommodate advisory; less flexibility for staff time
PROGRESS High School for Professional Careers	Improve instruction by providing additional professional development time for teachers	Modified Friday schedule to end classes early to give time for professional development in the afternoon and provide additional student supports	Teachers rotate staffing the additional student supports, which adds prep time for these supplemental courses and activities
Queens Vocational and Technical High School	Increase instructional time in math and increase academic supports	Added a math support class for all 9th graders and students who received below an 80 on the Algebra Regents exam; reframed PM school as "Extended Day" and put these periods on student schedules immediately	Ninth graders no longer take Spanish and most students are not taking a fourth year of science
World Journalism Preparatory: A College Board School	Create a schedule that better reflects what students can expect in college	Switched from trimesters to semesters to better align with colleges and avoid having a first semester that ends up being primarily introductory	Benefits of having a trimester system, including more frequent opportunities to accumulate credits

PROGRESS High School for Professional Careers

IN THEIR OWN WORDS

Our mission is to excel in preparing our students for the professional careers of the 21st century. PROGRESS, Inc., our school's sponsoring organization, and our entire school community share an unshakable belief that all children can learn and an unwavering commitment to make it happen. Effective educational instruction is promoted by a climate of high expectations for success, in which the staff believes and demonstrates that all students can attain mastery of the essential school skills. PROGRESS High School insists on an orderly, purposeful, and business-like atmosphere.



PROGRESS AT A GLANCE

Founded
1999

Borough and District
Brooklyn, District 14

Total Students
1,083

Co-located
Yes

Black or Hispanic
98%

Free or Reduced Price Lunch
87%

English Language Learners
16%

Special Education
17%

Average Incoming 8th Grade
ELA & Math Proficiency Level
2.18

Graduation Rate
59%

College and Career Ready
12%

Postsecondary Enrollment Rate
35%

SETTING A GOAL

PROGRESS was initially interested in participating in STL in order to do a large-scale review of their courses and course sequences. As they began participation, the team's focus shifted to improving instruction in order to help students achieve Advanced Regents diplomas. Therefore, they began focusing on how they could reschedule the day in order to provide teachers with professional development needed to increase student outcomes.



PICKING A TEAM

Since PROGRESS was originally planning on looking at course sequences, they put together a team with the goal of a well-rounded group with representation from different departments. The team was teacher based, which allowed participants to feel they had equal voice and weight.

SCHEDULE CHANGES

During the third STL workshop in the first year, the PROGRESS team was inspired by a presentation that provided several sample schedules. One of the schedules had an early release for students one day per week, and the PROGRESS team started to wonder how this might look at their school. They used the time provided at the workshop for working in school teams to draft a modified Friday schedule.

PROGRESS implemented a modified Friday schedule where students end classes at 11:24 am and then move into special Friday programming, which varies by grade level and other factors. Starting at noon, teachers begin a three-hour professional development session. Staff can meet as a whole or break up into departments, grade levels, or other teams, depending on the topic. The professional development is teacher generated and teacher led. A Professional Development Coordinator organizes the sessions by identifying strong teachers in particular areas and asking them to lead sessions.

Students attend the following types of programming during Friday afternoons:

- **9th Grade:** The majority of 9th graders attend Freshmen Academy, which aims to help students transition from middle school to high school. Six facilitators lead the academy using the Organized For Life curriculum. A small group of 9th graders attend an advisory program focused on bolstering attendance. Another small group of English Language Learners attend an English as a Second Language (ESL) project-based learning course.
- **10th Grade:** Students are placed into a project-based learning course in a given subject, depending on their performance in 9th grade. PROGRESS offers Algebra, Geometry, Life Science, Physical Science, World History, and American History. These courses are either designed to provide additional support or acceleration and enrichment. Those in the accelerated courses prepare to take the Regents exams on a shorter time frame. In addition, small groups of students attend an advisory focused on bolstering attendance rates or an ESL or Native Language Arts class.
- **11th Grade:** The majority of 11th graders receive SAT preparation. A group of students concentrating in pre-med do community service and art students take an Art Academy.



“School Time Lab has transformed our school. In the past 10 years, it has to be the single most, in terms of structure, important decision we’ve made. It has provided us with the beginning of what appears to be a great push towards student supports. Then we had the additional success of building in a professional development component that predates what the Chancellor wanted to do.”

- Principal

- **12th Grade:** Half of the students take a Senior Seminar. Students who need to earn credits take online courses facilitated by a teacher. Pre-med students do community service and art students may take Art Academy. Fourth-year students who are long-term absent are enrolled in the attendance advisory.

GENERATING BUY-IN

Since the principal was unable to attend the workshops, the first step was for the team to present the idea to him. Once the principal was on board, the team presented to the cabinet and began the [School-Based Option](#) process. The staff voted in the spring of 2013 and approved the change. Because the teachers wanted more professional development time, buy-in was generally not a challenge.

Teachers were very excited about the opportunity to do additional professional development. However, there were some growing pains related to the academic interventions and preparing teachers to support these activities on a rotating basis. Teachers divide time between professional development and teaching Friday courses or activities (every other or every third Friday). The preparation for these courses is slightly different and, therefore, requires additional work. To address some pushback from teachers about the added work, the school took extra time during the summer to prepare lessons for Friday courses. While the number of periods teaching is actually less, the content, students, and length of time are different, which requires a different type of planning. The focus over the summer was on developing curricula that are easier for teachers to use. In addition, since the project-based learning courses are a shared responsibility, the level of accountability felt by teachers is often lower than their regular classes. The team is working on shifting this mindset as well.

TRADE-OFFS

By changing the Friday schedule, students attend other types of programming instead of classes during Friday afternoons. However, PROGRESS does not consider the loss of time in academic classes during Friday afternoons to be a trade-off. According to the PROGRESS STL team, the improved instruction that results from the staff professional development more than makes up for the small amount of time lost. In addition, PROGRESS was already providing more than the required amount of time needed in their classes to meet the requirements set by the State. Resources were reallocated to pay community-based organizations to provide some of the Friday student sessions.

SUCCESSSES

The PROGRESS staff is overwhelmingly positive about the additional time for professional development. Everyone has been supportive and contributed to the planning and development of the sessions.

The improved instruction that results from the staff professional development more than makes up for the small amount of time lost.

2012-13 SCHOOL YEAR BELL SCHEDULE

Period	Start of Period	End of Period
0	7:15 am	8:00 am
1	8:04 am	8:50 am
2	8:54 am	9:40 am
3	9:44 am	10:33 am
4	10:37 am	11:24 am
5	11:28 am	12:15 pm
6	12:19 pm	1:06 pm
7	1:10 pm	1:57 pm
8	2:01 pm	2:47 pm
9	2:51 pm	3:37 pm

2013-14 SCHOOL YEAR BELL SCHEDULE - PROGRESS BELL SCHEDULE

Period	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
1 4 minute passing	8:00 - 8:46 8:46 - 8:50				
2 4 minute passing	8:50 - 9:36 9:36 - 9:40				
3 4 minute passing	9:40 - 10:26 10:26 - 10:30	9:40 - 10:26 10:26-10:30	9:40 - 10:26 10:26-10:30	9:40 - 10:26 10:26-10:30	9:40 - 10:26 10:26-10:30
4 4 minute passing	10:30 - 11:16 11:16 - 11:20				
5 4 minute passing	11:20 - 12:06 12:06 - 12:10				
6 4 minute passing	12:10 - 12:54 12:54 - 1:00				
7 4 minute passing	1:00 - 1:46 1:46 - 1:50				
8	1:50 - 2:36	1:50 - 2:36	1:50 - 2:36	1:50 - 2:36	1:50 - 2:36
Activities	2:36 - 2:50	2:36 - 2:50	2:36 - 2:50	2:36 - 2:50	2:36 - 2:50

5th & 6th Period: Students participate in year-long single credit course depending on their individual needs. Teachers are assigned to cover two of six marking periods for each of these courses. During marking periods that they do not teach, they will participate in targeted professional development.

7th & 8th Period: Students who qualify for credit recovery will work with the designated teacher from each department to complete their credit recovery work. Students who need to make up science labs will work with rotating science teachers during this time. All other teachers will participate in large group professional development during this time.

Health Opportunities High School

IN THEIR OWN WORDS

At Health Opportunities High School (HOP), we are dedicated to providing rigorous and stimulating instruction as well as establishing a nurturing and supportive environment that will enable our students to achieve their graduation requirements. Our graduates will be prepared for higher education and the world of work. We are committed to seeing our students attain academic excellence, global awareness, and leadership skills.

Our standards-driven instructions, internships, and study opportunities enable all students to acquire career-related skills, explore issues of self-awareness, interpersonal relationships, and respond to demands of global citizenry. We strive to create well-rounded, civic-minded individuals who are involved in local as well as global communities and who are prepared to succeed long after they have graduated from our school.

SETTING A GOAL

HOP applied to participate in STL with the overall goal of improving programming at their school. A team member expressed, *"You look at your stats and numbers and think, 'Wow, we really need to try to do something different.'"* Over the first couple of workshops, the HOP STL team took the approach of making small incremental changes first before implementing a more substantial change. During the 2013-14 school year, they decided to focus on introducing an advisory class, common planning time for departments, and offering differentiated math for 9th graders. During the following school year, the HOP team introduced double periods and redesigned course periods in an effort to improve academic outcomes for their students.



HOP AT A GLANCE

Founded
1996

Borough and District
Bronx, District 7

Total Students
577

Co-located
Yes

Black or Hispanic
95%

Free or Reduced Price Lunch
88%

English Language Learners
11%

Special Education
19%

Average Incoming 8th Grade
ELA & Math Proficiency Level
2.16

Graduation Rate
69%

College and Career Ready
16%

Postsecondary Enrollment Rate
47%

PICKING A TEAM

The HOP principal put together a representative team that included a program chair, a guidance counselor, an academic policy specialist, and administrators from all core subject areas. The goal was to put together a group of staff members who regularly work with academic programs and understand academic policies.

SCHEDULE CHANGES

Common Planning Time*: HOP staff observed benefits from teacher collaboration that were already happening organically and wanted to create designated additional time for department teams to meet. Team members also mentioned that there were new teachers who could benefit from working with veteran teachers, as well as more experienced teachers who could be energized by teachers newer to the profession. HOP piloted additional common planning time (CPT) with the English Language Arts (ELA) department by creating a block where all ELA teachers were free. During this pilot, HOP learned they needed to be more strategic with programming in order to avoid situations where students had no classes during that particular block or classes at maximum capacity. HOP expanded CPT to include math, social studies, science, ELA, and special education departments during the 2013-14 school year. To accommodate time every day for department teams to meet, HOP aligned schedules for departments so that they had free periods during the same time. HOP took advantage of periods where lunch or gym were offered or at the end of the day since seniors often were programmed for class periods 1-7. While the overall goal was clear, there was a lot of time spent going back and forth about various configurations of the schedule until an option worked for all students.

During CPT, teachers are required to meet three days for planning and the other two days can be used for calling parents and related activities. During the pilot with the ELA department, teachers were required to plan together all five days and the administrators attended and led meetings. After the first semester, the team realized that teachers needed more input on what happens during this time. Therefore, HOP switched the model mid-year.

Advisory: HOP implemented an advisory course for 9th and 11th graders and hopes to offer advisory for 10th graders as well next year. Advisory is split three days-two days with Health Careers in 9th grade and with dance in 11th grade.

Math: HOP created three math options for incoming 9th graders. Using middle school scores and a diagnostic exam taken over the summer, HOP 9th graders are programmed for either two-semester Algebra 1, three-semester Algebra 1, or four-semester Algebra 1. Students are also assessed mid-year and moved if needed.

Course Periods and Sequences: In preparation for the 2014-15 school year, HOP redesigned some of their course dosages and sequences based on student



The HOP principal put together a representative team that included a program chair, a guidance counselor, an academic policy specialist, and administrators from all core subject areas. The goal was to put together a group of staff members who regularly work with academic programs and understand academic policies.

* Note: HOP designed and implemented these changes before the new UFT contract took effect in 2014, which carved out time once a week for all staff professional development.

performance and identified areas of need. In 9th grade, all students take a double period of Algebra and a double period of Living Environment for the entire school year. As a result, social studies is delayed until 10th grade when students take double periods of World History and take the Global History Regents exam in June of the same year. Earth Science is also offered as a double period during one semester for 10th graders and then flips with art and dance during the other semester.

GENERATING BUY-IN

Buy-in was generally not a struggle for HOP in any of the three changes they implemented. Staff were already interested in having additional time to meet as small groups, particularly with their content area teachers. In addition, seeing the ELA department pilot piqued curiosity in other departments.

To make advisory successful, HOP recruited staff who were interested in becoming advisors. Staff were consulted during the process and were given support. A guidance counselor and STL team member put together materials during the summer and provided additional resources to lessen the burden on teachers. HOP attended the advisory professional development provided through STL. They also messaged advisory as a way to help students feel they belong and have someone to talk to.

Finally, all changes to the course period length and sequences were collaborative with input from teachers throughout the whole process. Staff were careful to take sufficient time to explain all schedule changes to students. The team also messaged the changes as experimental and not set in stone.

TRADE-OFFS

In order to add advisory, some electives were removed from the schedule and Language Other Than English (LOTE) was delayed to later grades. HOP also needed to reduce the number of electives offered to accommodate Living Environment as a double block for the entire school year. HOP now offers two science electives instead of four (Anatomy and Physical Anthropology are no longer offered).

SUCCESSSES

The HOP team is excited to report that sharing of ideas is happening through the additional CPT. The team will begin to evaluate the success of the changes to the course period length and sequences at the end of the school year when they can analyze student data.

All changes to the course period length and sequences were collaborative with input from teachers throughout the whole process. Staff were careful to take sufficient time to explain all schedule changes to students. The team also messaged the changes as experimental and not set in stone.

2013-14 SCHOOL YEAR BELL SCHEDULE – 9TH GRADE

Period	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
1	Health 9 8:48 - 9:33	College Prep 8:48 - 9:33	Health 9 8:48 - 9:33	College Prep 8:48 - 9:33	Health 9 8:48 - 9:33
2	English 9 9:36 - 10:21	English 9 9:36 - 10:21	English 9 9:36 - 10:21	English 9 9:36 - 10:21	English 9 9:36 - 10:21
3	Lunch 10:24 - 11:09	Lunch 10:24 - 11:09	Lunch 10:24 - 11:09	Lunch 10:24 - 11:09	Lunch 10:24 - 11:09
4	Algebra 11:12 - 11:57	Algebra 11:12 - 11:57	Algebra 11:12 - 11:57	Algebra 11:12 - 11:57	Algebra 11:12 - 11:57
5	Spanish 1 12:00 - 12:45	Spanish 1 12:00 - 12:45	Spanish 1 12:00 - 12:45	Spanish 1 12:00 - 12:45	Spanish 1 12:00 - 12:45
6	US History 12:48 - 1:33	US History 12:48 - 1:33	US History 12:48 - 1:33	US History 12:48 - 1:33	US History 12:48 - 1:33
7	Physical Education 1:36 - 2:21	Physical Education 1:36 - 2:21	Physical Education 1:36 - 2:21	Living Environment Lab 1:36 - 2:21	Physical Education 1:36 - 2:21
8	Living Environment 2:24 - 3:09	Living Environment 2:24 - 3:09	Living Environment 2:24 - 3:09	Living Environment 2:24 - 3:09	Living Environment 2:24 - 3:09
9		International Services 3:12 - 3:57		International Services 3:12 - 3:57	

2014-15 SCHOOL YEAR BELL SCHEDULE – 9TH GRADE

Period	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
1	Physical Education 8:15 - 8:57				
2	English 9 9:00 - 10:02				
3	Common Core Algebra 10:24 - 11:09				
4	Common Core Algebra 11:12 - 11:57				
5	Lunch 12:00 - 12:45				
6	Living Environment 12:48 - 1:33				
7	Living Environment 1:36 - 2:21				
8	College Prep 2:24 - 3:09	Health 2:24 - 3:09	College Prep 2:24 - 3:09	Health 2:24 - 3:09	College Prep 2:24 - 3:09

Gregorio Luperon High School for Science and Mathematics

SETTING A GOAL

The team at Gregorio Luperon High School for Science and Mathematics was primarily interested in switching from a traditional schedule to a block schedule with longer periods that allowed for more depth and time for application and practice.

They had several goals:

- Change the bell schedule in a way that reflects the experience of students in college.
- Provide additional course depth.
- Provide teachers with an opportunity to do more project-based lessons and expose students to a more rigorous instructional experience.

Another goal was to create an environment where teachers know and connect with students on a different level. Therefore, Luperon was also interested in implementing an advisory course.



LUPERON AT A GLANCE

Founded
1992

Borough and District
Manhattan, District 6

Total Students
491

Co-located
Yes

Black or Hispanic
100%

Free or Reduced Price Lunch
93%

English Language Learners
84%

Special Education
1%

Average Incoming 8th Grade
ELA & Math Proficiency Level
1.91

Graduation Rate
62%

College and Career Ready
11%

Postsecondary Enrollment Rate
45%

PICKING A TEAM

The team at Luperon was organized by the principal who sought out representation from a variety of departments. He also chose staff members who showed a particular interest in the topic since these individuals were very committed and motivated.

SCHEDULE CHANGES

In the 2014-15 school year, Luperon switched all students to an A/B block schedule with mostly double periods (90 minutes) and some single periods (45 minutes). Double-period courses meet every other day and single-period courses meet every day. Luperon hoped to convert all the periods to double blocks; however, they were unable to meet the [School-Based Option](#) deadline to get approval from teachers for teaching more periods in a row than is currently outlined in their contracts. The team prepared multiple schedule layouts with ongoing input from the teachers. The first draft was completed in the spring of 2014 and finalized over the summer. As they created successive drafts of their plan, they always considered alternate options and made sure there would be enough time to reassess and re-implement if needed. The team reported that teachers were instrumental in the process.

Luperon also implemented an advisory for 9th and 10th graders during the 2013-14 school year. Since most of the students at Luperon are immigrants, there is a need to provide support as they make the transition to living in a new country. The team stressed the importance of creating connections with adults and building trust in the school community. They only implemented advisory in these two grades in order to keep the ratio of advisor to students small (approximately 1:13) and due to space constraints. Advisory was offered on Mondays for 45 minutes at the end of the shortened day, before teacher professional development. This way, Luperon did not have to remove anything else from the schedule in order to accommodate the advisory course.



As they created successive drafts of their plan, they always considered alternate options and made sure there would be enough time to reassess and re-implement if needed.

GENERATING BUY-IN

Luperon used the strategy of maintaining full transparency in their decision-making in order to ensure the staff was on board with the schedule changes. Teachers were involved in the planning from the beginning and changes were presented by teachers. Luperon had also been discussing these ideas for several years, so most were aware of the goals of the team and understood the reasoning behind them.

TRADE-OFFS

Switching to a block schedule with mostly longer periods required some transition. Teachers needed to get used to a new type of course preparation and no longer saw all their students every day. Teachers needed to be more mindful of communication and keep track of which students they see on what days. One teacher mentioned relying more heavily on email and an online system to keep in touch with students. A team attended the STL workshop series on Teaching in Extended Periods. As mentioned previously, in order to keep the advisor-student ratio low, Luperon provided advisory for 9th and 10th graders only.

SUCCESSSES

Teachers reported anecdotal benefits from longer periods. They shared that there was more time to dissect the subject, increase student engagement, and more time to apply concepts. Because some classes were still taught in a single period, teachers could easily compare their single and double-block classes and see the benefits of longer periods. Longer periods also allowed for the Global History curriculum to be completed in one year instead of two. This opened up time later in high school to take AP classes.

Teachers responded positively to advisory and reported more conversations with students. The course created an “early detection” system that allowed issues to surface more quickly, given the designated time and space to connect with students.

“In the last five years, we have so many initiatives come and go. I think this one will remain because it really touched on issues that affect (us) directly. So long as the School Time Lab is around, we will be trying to take advantage of it.”

- Principal

2013-14 SCHOOL YEAR BELL SCHEDULE

Period	Times
1	8:05 am - 8:53 am
2	8:55 am - 9:43 am
3 Announcements	9:45 am - 10:33 am 10:33 am - 10:37 am
4	10:39 am - 11:27 am
5	11:29 am - 12:17 pm
6	12:19 pm - 1:07 pm
7	1:09 pm - 1:57 pm
8	1:59 pm - 2:47 pm
9	2:49 pm - 3:37 pm

2013-14 School Year

First Session: 8:00 am - 2:50 pm
 Second Session: 8:50 am - 3:40 pm

2014-15 School Year

Monday

8:00 am - 3:35 pm (PD)
 8:00 am - 2:50 pm (Common Prep/Parents Phone Calls)

Tuesday - Friday

First Session: 8:00 am - 2:50 pm
 Second Session: 9:00 am - 3:50 pm

2014-15 SCHOOL YEAR BELL SCHEDULE

Monday (Special Schedule)		Tuesday thru Friday	
Period	Times	Period	Times
1	8:05 am - 8:32 am	1	8:05 am - 8:50 am
2 Announcements	8:32 am - 8:59 am 8:59 am - 9:03 am	2 Announcements	8:50 am - 9:35 am 9:35 am - 9:39 am
3	9:04 am - 9:31 am	3	9:40 am - 10:25 am
4	9:32 am - 9:59 am	4	10:25 am - 11:10 am
5	10:00 am - 10:27 am	5	11:11 am - 11:56 am
6	10:28 am - 10:55 am	6	11:57 am - 12:42 pm
7	10:56 am - 11:23 am	7	12:43 pm - 1:28 pm
8	11:24 am - 11:51 am	8	1:29 pm - 2:14 pm
9	11:52 am - 12:19 pm	9	2:15 pm - 3:00 pm
10	12:20 pm - 12:47 pm	10	3:00 pm - 3:45 pm
11	12:48 pm - 1:35 pm		
Professional Development	*1:40 pm - 3:35 pm		
Common Prep & Contacting Parents	*1:40 pm - 2:50 pm		

* Every other week

APPENDICES

The Living Lab schools were chosen because they were performing well in most of the key areas that determine school success. However, these were schools that needed support in getting to the next level – preparing students for college and career. The table below presents some demographic and performance information from the Living Lab schools.

DEMOGRAPHIC AND PERFORMANCE INFORMATION ABOUT THE LIVING LAB SCHOOLS						
SCHOOL	LOCATION	TOTAL STUDENTS	CO-LOCATED	% BLACK OR HISPANIC	% RECEIVING FREE OR REDUCED-PRICE LUNCH	% ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS
Dr. Susan S. McKinney Secondary School of the Arts	Brooklyn	503	Yes	95%	84%	4%
East Bronx Academy for the Future	Bronx	609	No	98%	92%	11%
Gaynor McCown Expeditionary Learning School	Staten Island	467	Yes	29%	50%	0%
George Washington Carver High School for the Sciences	Queens	498	Yes	84%	74%	2%
Gregorio Luperon High School for Science and Mathematics	Manhattan	491	No	100%	93%	84%
Health Opportunities High School	Bronx	577	Yes	95%	88%	11%
PROGRESS High School for Professional Careers	Brooklyn	1,083	Yes	98%	87%	16%
Queens Vocational and Technical High School	Queens	1,514	No	82%	85%	5%
World Journalism Preparatory: A College Board School	Queens	609	Yes	29%	49%	0%



DEMOGRAPHIC AND PERFORMANCE INFORMATION ABOUT THE LIVING LAB SCHOOLS

SCHOOL	% SPECIAL EDUCATION	INCOMING 8TH GRADE ELA/MATH PROFICIENCY	FOUR-YEAR GRAD RATE	% COLLEGE & CAREER READY	POSTSECONDARY ENROLLMENT RATE
Dr. Susan S. McKinney Secondary School of the Arts	19%	2.22	63%	14%	36%
East Bronx Academy for the Future	3%	2.14	69%	18%	45%
Gaynor McCown Expeditionary Learning School	23%	2.53	80%	16%	62%
George Washington Carver High School for the Sciences	10%	2.49	80%	19%	56%
Gregorio Luperon High School for Science and Mathematics	1%	1.91	62%	11%	45%
Health Opportunities High School	19%	2.16	69%	16%	47%
PROGRESS High School for Professional Careers	17%	2.18	59%	12%	35%
Queens Vocational and Technical High School	13%	2.57	81%	29%	62%
World Journalism Preparatory: A College Board School	21%	2.72	91%	51%	80%

As part of its overall vision and goals, high schools generally have a clear idea of what it means for their students to graduate college and career ready. A student’s daily schedule and overall program is an illustration of the expectations the school has for that student. A well-developed four-year map shows how the school strategically plans for all students to reach the established [college and career ready benchmarks](#). This comprehensive approach to academic programming shows the trajectory or sequences of courses across all areas, and allows for variation based on student strengths and needs.



At every stage, starting with ninth grade, the four-year map should include clear evidence of how the school provides all students with the resources and supports needed to access higher-level coursework and developmental experiences. The four-year map illustrates how the school has planned for equity and access for all its students, culminating in graduating young adults who all have the skills and experience necessary for postsecondary success.

FOUR-YEAR PROGRAM PLAN TEMPLATE						
Grade	ELA Sequences	Social Studies Sequences	Math Sequences	Science Sequences	LOTE Sequences	Other Sequences
9th						
10th						
11th						
12th						

EXAMPLE 1. QUEENS VOCATIONAL AND TECHNICAL HIGH SCHOOL FOUR-YEAR PROGRAM PLAN

Grade	ELA		Social Studies		Math			Science	LOTE	CCR Activities (CTE)
9th	English 1 & 2 Double period for levels 1 & 2	English 1 & 2 Single period for levels 3 & 4	US History 1 & 2		Integrated Algebra 1 & 2 Double period for levels 1 & 2	Integrated Algebra 1 & 2 Single period for levels 3 & 4 + College Ready Math 1 & 2	Geometry 1 & 2 + College-Ready Math 3 & 4 if student scored below 80 on Regents	Living Environment 1 & 2	Spanish 1 & 2 or Spanish 1 & 2 Heritage (for level 3 & 4 students in ELA)	Exploratory Shop Rotation or Graphic Arts 1 & 2 or Cosmetology 1 & 2 or Computer Tech 1 & 2 At the end of the year, students choose a CTE major.
10th	English 3 & 4	English 3 & 4 Honors	Global History 1 & 2	Global History 1 & 2 Honors	Geometry 1 & 2 + College-Ready Math 3 & 4 if student scored 65-79 on Regents Integrated Algebra 3 & 4 if student scored below 65 on Regents		Algebra 2/Trig Honors 1 & 2	Earth Science 1 & 2 (SSBT/SES) Chemistry 1 & 2 (SCEET) or Chemistry 1 & 2 Honors	Spanish 1 & 2 or Spanish 1 & 2 Heritage (for level 1 & 2 students in ELA)	We offer six CTE choices including Graphic Arts, Electrical Installation, and Plumbing.
11th	English 5 & 6	English 5 & 6 Honors + College Now course	Global History 3 & 4	Global History 3 & 4 Honors or AP European History 1 & 2	Algebra 2/Trig 1 & 2 of 3	Algebra 2/Trig Honors 1 & 2	Intro Calculus 1 & 2	Physics 1 & 2 Chemistry 1 & 2		We offer eight CTE choices including Cosmetology, Accounting, and Entrepreneurship.
12th	English 7 & 8 + College Now course	English 7 & 8 Honors Journalism or English 7 & 8 Honors + College Now course	US Govt 1/ Economics 1	US Govt 1 Honors/ Economics 1 Honors	Algebra 2/Trig 3 of 3 Intro Calculus 1	Intro Calculus 1 & 2 or AP Calculus AB 1 & 2	AP Calculus AB 1 & 2	Photonics 1 & 2 AP Physics 1 & 2 Life Science 1 & 2		We offer eight CTE choices including: Virtual Enterprise, Financial Planning, and Computer Tech. ALL STUDENTS TAKE CFM AND WORK-BASED LEARNING.

EXAMPLE 2. GAYNOR McCOWN EXPEDITIONARY LEARNING SCHOOL FOUR-YEAR PROGRAM PLAN

Grade	ELA			Social Studies		Math		
8th*							Math 8	Integrated Algebra (June Regents)
9th	ELA 9 (Struggling students will be addressed through AIS during the day/extended day.)			Global I (Identified students will go into pre-AP World History for second term)		Integrated Algebra (June Regents) (Double period) (ICT track included)	Integrated Algebra (June Regents)	Geometry (June Regents)
10th	ELA 10 (Struggling students will be addressed through AIS during the day/extended day.)			Global II (June Regents)	AP World History (June Regents)	Geometry (June Regents) (Double period for students with math deficiency)	Geometry (June Regents)	Algebra 2/ Trig (June Regents)
11th	ELA 11 (Double Block) (January Regents; retake in June for college readiness score)	ELA 11 (January Regents; second-term SAT Prep)	ELA 11 (January Regents; second-term Pre-AP/SAT Prep)	US History (June Regents) (AIS intervention for students needing to pass Global Regents)	AP US History (June Regents)	College Math (Course preps students for taking the SAT)	Algebra 2/ Trig (June Regents)	Pre-Calculus
12th	ELA 12 College Readiness Writing Course	ELA 12 College English Seminar (partnership with local college)	ELA 12 (AP English Literature)	Econ/Gov (Special section for students needing to pass January US History Regents)	Econ/Gov (June Regents)	Math Elective	Pre-Calculus	AP Calculus or Math Elective

* Use 8th-grade scores for assessment and placement.

Science			LOTE			CCR Activities including Advisory
Science 8		Living Environment (June Regents)	Some LOTE, but no HS credit			
Living Environment (June Regents) (Struggling students will be addressed through LE Support class in Spring Term. These students will also take zero period physical education)		Earth Science (June Regents)	Spanish I (Except students who are receiving double-period Algebra)			Focus on school culture, expectations, personal and community goals, and responsibilities (Possible grouping of struggling English students and paired with English Crew Advisor)
Earth Science (June Regents)		Chemistry (June Regents)	Spanish I (Except students who are receiving double-period Geometry)	Spanish II		Focus on successful academic behaviors (Possible grouping of struggling English/Science students and paired with English/Science Crew Advisor)
Environmental Science	Forensics	Physics (June Regents)	Spanish I (Students exiting double-period Geometry)	Spanish II	Spanish III (June LOTE)	Focus on college advising and SAT Prep
Forensics	Environmental Science (partnership with local college)	AP Biology or Environmental Science (partnership with local college)		Spanish III (June LOTE)	AP Spanish	Focus on transition to postsecondary

RESOURCES

The School Time Lab team has created the following resources around use of school time.

- School Time Lab Online Modules: Academic Policy, Compliance and Contracts as They Relate to Use of School Time:
<http://www.learndoe.org/stlsessions/>
- Minute by Minute: School Strategies for Optimizing Time: Case Studies of Promising Practices:
http://schools.nyc.gov/NR/rdonlyres/91050DE3-5F14-4A0A-A28A-A39E24CC1027/0/STLCaseStudiescomplete_toc_links.pdf
- School Time Lab Calendar Tool – *Coming Soon!*
- Video – Leading Through Change: A Conversation about Academic Programming with School Time Lab Principals – *Coming Soon!*

Check out the Office of Postsecondary Readiness web page for forthcoming resources:

<http://schools.nyc.gov/Offices/OPSR>



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Sincerely,

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