



Acton-Boxborough Regional School District

District Goals- Update on Progress: June 2018

Goal #1: Understand and respond to our students' social-emotional needs

Strategic Goal Actions:	Responsible:	Evidence/Measures:	Timeline:
Use information from Challenge Success surveys and research to develop strategies to address concerns that impact learning, wellness, and engagement (i.e. sleep, homework, assessment practices, etc.).	Superintendent, Athletic Director, Principals/Asst. Principals	Final report showing research, consideration of alternative start time options and recommendations to School Committee (COMPLETED)	2016-17
	Superintendent, Assistant Superintendents, Principals	Written review of current district-wide academic workload and homework practices and set of recommendations (COMPLETED)	2016-17
	Assistant Superintendents	Family education program that promotes wellness and balance (COMPLETED)	2016-18

Goal #2: Our students will have equitable opportunities and tools to learn.

Strategic Goal Actions:	Responsible:	Evidence/Measures:	Timeline:
Review funding structures at each level.	Superintendent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completed outline of funding structures, mechanisms at each level. (COMPLETED) 	2016-17
	Superintendent, Principals, Community Ed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement recommendations to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Centralize before/after school programs under Community Education Combine funding sources and re-distribute across schools. (COMPLETED) 	2017-18
Conduct an equity audit of the district, looking mindfully at equitable access for historically underserved populations.	Superintendent, Assistant Superintendents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Determine data inquiry cycle tool (COMPLETED) 	2017-18



Acton-Boxborough Regional School District

District Goals- Update on Progress: June 2018

Goal #3: Our students will have access to safe and effective learning environments.			
Strategic Goal Actions	Responsible:	Evidence/Measures:	Timeline:
Develop a comprehensive capital and infrastructure improvement plan that spans short, medium and long-term goals.	Superintendent, Deputy Superintendent, Director of School Operations, Building Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Short-term capital prioritization list to inform the FY18 budget, including high-value/low-cost items for district-wide infrastructure improvements (COMPLETED) 	2016-17
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Medium-term capital prioritization list that considers the Existing Conditions Report, District Master Plan (COMPLETED) 	2016-17
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Committee to utilize the District Master Plan to produce a report to identify building options (COMPLETED) 	2016-17
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Final report presented to School Committee related to building renovation and construction (COMPLETED) 	Spring 2018
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> School Building Committee formed. Significant community outreach related to proposed building project. Proposals for design funds brought to town meetings in both towns. MSBA deadlines will be met. Feasibility and design process began. (COMPLETED) 	2017-18
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Capital Improvement plan (CIP) list for all facilities will be developed into scope projects with funding timelines. Capital plan will be formalized with annual operating budget funding and medium term project timelines. (COMPLETED) 	2017-18



Acton-Boxborough Regional School District

2017-18 District Goals: Progress Update

Goal #1: Understand and respond to our students' social-emotional needs

Strategic Action: Use information from Challenge Success surveys and research to develop strategies to address concerns that impact learning, wellness, and engagement (i.e. sleep, homework, assessment practices, etc.).

Start Times and Single-Tier Busing: The Start Time Committee reported to School Committee June 2017 with a recommendation to review start time options that would provide a later start for high school and junior high students that would begin in September 2018. The Administration reviewed options throughout the fall with a recommendation of options to the School Committee and the community in October ([Start Times Report, 10-2017](#)). After further review and input from the School Committee and the community, a final recommendation was made and adopted in January 2018. The recommendation moves the start of school for ABRHS from 7:23 am to 8:07 (44 minutes later). R. J. Grey Jr. High will move from a 7:30 am start to 8:00 am (30 minutes later). The elementary schools will move to a single-tier busing schedule. All elementary schools will start at 8:50 and end at 3:20. This provides the added benefit of avoiding elementary schedules that alternate from early to late or late to early each year. Altogether, later schedules for adolescents and a single schedule for elementary students will provide significant wellness benefits, better schedules for working families, and more opportunities across the district for shared professional learning. All schools have planned for implementation in September 2018. Each school will collect qualitative and quantitative data over the next three years related to attendance, tardiness, performance, and social emotional wellness.

Homework Policy and Implementation: Throughout the 2016-2017 school year, the principals and central office leaders worked through changes to the homework policy that would be consistent with recommendations from Challenge Success and current research. Updating ABRSD's homework policies and practices was one of three major recommendations based on the student data from the 2016 Challenge Success Survey. The School Committee Policy Subcommittee and the School Committee considered several policy updates during the Spring of 2017. The School Committee held a public feedback period, summarized the feedback, and reported it publicly during these meetings before voting to accept the policy in July 2017. Each principal provided school-specific information at a public homework information night on October 24, 2017 ([10-24-18 HW Info Night Flyer](#) [10-24-17 Presentation](#)). Throughout the 2017-18 school year, each building implemented the new homework policy. In May 2018, each building leader provided a written update about their school's implementation ([Building HW Updates](#)).

Family Education Program: The [2017-18 ABRSD Family Learning Series](#) offered eight evenings for families and community members to learn about Building Resilience with connections to mindset, mindfulness and movement. Parent and Community Engagement was the second of three major recommendations from Challenge Success based on 2016 student survey data. Six [Expanding Our Notion of Success newsletters](#) also focused on ways to build resilience, as well as other topics aligned with our mission, vision, and values. Newsletters were shared with the entire district community. The high school received a [Healthy Teen Initiative grant](#) from the Acton-Boxborough United Way that allowed the high school to create and provide each student with a customized Wellness Planner with tools, strategies, reflection questions, and quotes to encourage wellness and balance, along with a wellness bag that included items that can be used to encourage wellness and balance. Through this generous grant, the high school also facilitated two monthly wellness workshops, one on mindfulness and the second on life balance, and also provided four lesson plans to advisory teachers related to wellness ([ABUW Midyear Report](#)).

School Schedules: The third and final significant recommendation from Challenge Success based on our 2016 student survey data was to examine the high school and the junior high schedules. Since 2016, R. J. Grey and ABRHS have had gone through extensive processes to review and consider updates to their schedules. The junior high and high school have also offered staff various professional learning opportunities in preparation for possible schedule changes, and these opportunities will continue in 2018-2019. The high school piloted some components of a modified block schedule change for two weeks in March of 2018, followed with student and staff surveys. The high school will review feedback and consider options going forward. The junior high has considered several small and large changes to the schedule within the context of their teaming model. Updates on this work from both schools are included in the attached document summarizing homework, workload, and schedules ([May 2018 School Schedule Updates](#)).



Acton-Boxborough Regional School District

2017-18 District Goals: Progress Update

Goal #2: Our students will have equitable opportunities and tools to learn.

Strategic Action: Conduct an equity audit of the district, looking mindfully at equitable access for historically underserved populations; Lay groundwork to implement the Massachusetts Tiered System of Support framework for school improvement that focuses on system level change across the classroom, school and district.

Data Inquiry Work with Mid-Atlantic Equity Consortium (MAEC): During the 2017-18 school year, the District engaged in a partnership with MAEC (<https://maec.org/>) to begin examining equity in the district. We are piloting WestEd's Data Inquiry Toolkit entitled *Powerful Outcomes for All Students: A Toolkit for Exploring Equity Issues and Solutions* as part of our process. The focus of this project will be to explore - with an equity lens - how practices or procedures starting from elementary school may lead to disparate outcomes for students in junior high or high school. Possible outcomes may include academic achievement, access to advanced courses or participation in extracurricular activities, to name a few. For this work, the AB data inquiry team generated specific questions about the problem statement, identified data needed to answer the questions, and engaged in multiple data inquiry cycles. This will be a complex, multi-year project ([Data Inquiry Team Calendar](#)).

DCAP Revision: This year, a group of educators from every building across the district met to help revise our existing Districtwide Curriculum Accommodation Plan (DCAP). A DCAP is intended to ensure that teachers make every effort to meet students' needs in general education by analyzing and accommodating diverse learning styles and needs.

Senior Leadership Team Cultural Proficiency Workshop with SEED: The National SEED (Seeking Educational Equity & Diversity) ProjectSM is professional learning that creates conversations to drive change toward greater equity and diversity. In July 2017, two teachers attended the weeklong SEED train-the-trainer seminar, which prepared them to return and facilitate ongoing SEED sessions within the District. Throughout the 2017-18 school year, our two SEED trainers led 18 hours of professional learning with our School Leadership Team (SLT) and also at the junior high school that included personal reflection, listening to others' voices, and learning that supported SLT members in understanding and acknowledging systems of oppression, power, and privilege. With this collective knowledge, SLT began to examine structures within the district through an equity lens.

Professional Learning: During the 2017-2018 school year, all elementary schools had an early release each Thursday. On these Thursdays, elementary educators across the system held parent conferences and engaged in a variety of building-based learning opportunities as well as district-wide elementary [professional learning opportunities](#) which aligned with the District's core values of wellness, equity and engagement.

Strategic Action: Review funding structures at each level.

Centralize Before/After School Programs and Funding: During the 2017-18 school year, Principals and Central Office Administrators collaborated to implement plans to centralize before/after school programs under Community Education in an effort to provide more equity in staffing and instructional services across all elementary schools. Presentations and recommendations were made to the School Committee in June 2017 and December 2017 ([5-31-17 Report](#), [6-22-17 Presentation](#)). Beginning in September 2018, each elementary school will receive district-budgeted funding for 12 hours of classroom assistants in each classroom. All Extended Day programs will be folded under the central administration of Community Education, which will pay for utilities. Funds currently earmarked in the district budget for utilities will be moved to the district budget for classroom assistants, which will provide a cost-neutral solution for equal funding of classroom assistants across all six elementary schools.



Acton-Boxborough Regional School District

2017-18 District Goals: Progress Update

Goal #3: Our students will have access to safe and effective learning environments.

Strategic Action: Develop a comprehensive capital and infrastructure improvement plan that spans short, medium and long-term goals.

Five Year Capital Plan: The Dore and Whittier phase I Capital Improvement plan (CIP) was reviewed and developed into a \$14.4 million [priority list of capital projects in April 2017](#). In 2017-2018, the capital list was further reviewed and developed into priority capital projects to be included in the FY19 budget. The school district capital budget has increased from \$150,000 to \$1,000,000 annually over the last three years. The remaining items in the \$14.4 million priority list will be further developed into a five year capital plan, which we will present at the June 21, 2018 School Committee meeting.

Building Project: We formed a [Building Committee](#) in the summer of 2017 and finalized recommendations for a preferred project to bring to Acton and Boxborough for the December 4, 2017 special Town Meetings. The committee submitted enrollment data, educational program information, and maintenance reports to the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) in July 2017. School leaders and MSBA engaged in an extensive process to review enrollment based on significant increases in housing turnover and enrollment projections. This process resulted in the approval of a design enrollment for a single school (650 students), or a double elementary school of up to 1,015 students. The district held twelve community forums throughout the fall of 2017, with the process culminating in near unanimous votes in both towns to fund the feasibility design phase of a new elementary school. Skanska has been hired as the Project Manager, and a Request for Design Services Proposal has been distributed to hire an architect. The district is scheduled to meet with the MSBA to review proposals in July 2018.

May 2018 Update on ABRSD Homework and Workload

Blanchard

As Blanchard has implemented the new homework policy guidelines, we reached out to samples of students, teachers, and families to gather the feedback below. Our implementation phase has involved a natural progression toward more meaningful 'flipped classroom' opportunities to create, evaluate, analyze and apply *in class* while supporting understanding and recall *outside of class* with the use of Google classroom and other creative resources. In a survey, teachers reported satisfaction with the updated HW policy 14 to 2. They responded that it appears that time students used to spend doing homework may have been replaced with gaming and social media based on student conversations. Overall, the policy has created more balance, reasonable expectations, and homework is more meaningful.

In kindergarten through second grade, homework options range from none to special assignments at home. In grades 3-4, teachers have shifted to occasional projects and also offered 'un-homework' opportunities that encourage hands-on activities as ideas at home. In grades 5-6, students finish work they didn't complete in class (i.e. practice problems, journaling, etc.). Reading is encouraged in all grades.

The following are specifics for each grade:

K: No formal homework assigned. Teachers encourage play, reading together, counting and rhyming games, storytelling.

1: There are three special projects throughout the year: Special Person, Family Traditions, Time Capsule.

2: There are three special projects; including the Money Project (which includes several options for choice), recycled instrument for the sound unit, and a V.I.P. project with an emphasis on a special interest or expertise. Optional mathematics games are occasionally offered.

3: There is a biography project in third grade. In addition to occasional reading across the curriculum, there is a weekly 'un-homework' offering that encourages hands-on, family oriented, outdoor activities and includes five options.

4: Work students don't complete in school may occasionally be assigned for homework. There is also a take-home Polygon project and optional science challenges that are provided but not required to complete.

5: Since fifth grade is departmentalized now, teachers coordinate assignments. There are two research projects each term. Students contribute to a class blog weekly, complete assigned reading, and respond to content-specific videos.

6: Sixth grade remains departmentalized. Students extend their learning to Google Classroom where they regularly comment and edit online assignments. Students are assigned regular practice in mathematics, as well as reading and note-taking in social studies. If students don't complete assignments in class, they are expected to finish them at home.

We surveyed a sample of families, and overall they support the revised homework policy. One parent noted, "The current homework policy has been beneficial for our family. While certain special projects have required work from home, the general absence of "busy work" has been most welcome. We currently spend any extra time reading, drawing and preparing for the next day. We have not seen any evidence of a decline in our children(s) preparedness for school due to this policy. However, if daily homework came back into play we would adjust and make the policy work best for our child." Another parent shared, "We love the policy. While my daughter loves "work" and doesn't mind doing it, it has been nice for our family to have free time in the afternoons, and not have to worry about getting stuff done after working all day. We have time to read together and play outside. There is plenty of time for work when they are older and no evidence that homework at this age has any benefit. Instead, the focused projects are great and enough time for work during school hours." However, many parents still express concerns about feeling disconnected from their child's progress, success or struggles, despite our teachers' use of a variety of communication apps (i.e. Blooms, Twitter, SeeSaw, etc.). There were also a number of families who voiced worry about students receiving increased homework at the junior high and high school.

Students reported having less stress and more time to study in areas they felt they needed to. They also noted they were more productive at school because they were on the 'same page' with their peers and because they want to make the most of in-class time. Some students had no opinion about the revised policy. One student comment of note: "Why do we go to school for six hours a day just to get homework?"

Conant

There is no homework assigned in grades K - 2, and parents and students are encouraged to read with each other nightly. There may also be an occasional activity like collecting leaves for a class project or discussing an important topic. We also encourage nightly reading in grades 3 - 6, but is not required unless students need to read material necessary for class the next day. Grade 3 does not assign regular homework, but has had occasional projects that required additional time at home to complete (i.e. creating a costume for Biography Day). In grade 4, students occasionally study for an assessment and work on long term projects if more time is needed outside of class. In grade 5, we assign short mathematics check-in activities several times per week, and students have occasional readings to prepare for an activity the following day. In grade 6, students receive several assignments per week consisting of a mathematics checks, writing, and/or current events. Students study for assessments and complete projects at home if they need additional time. Grade-level teachers collaborate to ensure that assessments and projects have different due dates. Sixth graders typically have 20-30 minutes of homework three nights per week.

Douglas

This is the fourth year of reflections about homework at Douglas. Implementing a districtwide homework policy has been very helpful. In kindergarten through grade two, there is no regular homework except for occasional family projects. In kindergarten students may collect objects of different shapes or parents read a book to their child created by the kindergarten class. Similarly, in second grade, children have been asked to keep a list of family activities that can be completed during a screen-free week at home. In third and fourth grade, students have occasional homework, usually focused on exhibition work. It may be to interview family members, reflect on work completed at school, or prepare a draft of writing for an exhibition piece. In fifth or sixth grade, homework is assigned two to three nights per week. Students may study for a quiz, complete a mathematics assignment, or read to prepare for a class discussion the following day. Also, classwork not completed may be assigned as homework. We continue to work on calibrating assigned work between grade-level classrooms.

Using various research, teachers at Douglas created the following guidelines to use when assigning homework:

Purpose:

1. Students need to read or complete something in order to be prepared for the next day's activity.
2. The assignment extends learning that can ONLY be done outside of school - interviews, family input, surveys from local businesses, pictures from your yard, etc.
3. It is part of a larger project or responsibility to a group.
4. Teachers want to assess how students are progressing independently from work completed in class.
5. Homework should not be optional - all work assigned must be an integral part of student learning.
6. Reading for pleasure - while not homework, is encouraged.

Characteristics:

1. The students understand directions and have the skills to complete the homework independently (unless directions ask for parental assistance).
2. Students understand the goal of an assignment and how it is connected to in-class work.
3. Equitable access for families - All student have access to tools or family support required.
4. Differentiated - assignment based on student need - students may have different assignments.
5. All accommodations for students with IEPs must be in place.
6. Students will be given several days to complete the assignment if needed.

Gates

During the 2016-17 school year, Gates reviewed and reduced the amount of homework assigned. The changes we made aligned well with the new district homework policy, which was adopted in July 2017. Teachers do not assign homework in kindergarten through second grade. There are occasional family activities that complement grade level curriculum such as as gathering seeds, interviewing relatives, and completing passports for international trips. Reading is

encouraged, not assigned. In third grade, students are encouraged to read every day and students are asked to engage in seasonal activities such as making salt dough in the fall and preparing costumes and artifacts in the spring wax museum. In fourth grade, students study for social studies assessments by making flash cards and completing regional maps. Students in fifth and sixth grades have twenty minutes of homework per night Monday through Thursday. Fifth graders are assigned mathematics practice or reading in preparation for class the following day. Examples of sixth grade homework include reading within the curriculum and studying for assessments. Given the concerns our fifth and sixth graders shared about homework in 2016, this has been the area with the greatest shifts in practice.

McCarthy-Towne

At McCarthy-Towne, we encourage independent reading at home for all grades. We particularly encourage families at the primary level grades, kindergarten through second grade, to read to their children, have children read along with a family member, or share a book they may be currently reading.

Over the past three years, we have modified the homework expectation for all grades, particularly the upper grades. Using the 2017 revised School Committee homework policy, we are developing clearly articulated school guidelines that align with School Committee policy. Literacy remains a critical component of all of the work that we do as a school, regardless of the content area. We constantly re-examine the daily schedule as we seek to maximize the amount of instructional time spent on reading and writing. Our work examining the instructional day is an ongoing priority, and striking an effective balance between the classroom and home is and will continue to be a work in progress.

In kindergarten through second grade, teachers do not assign homework, and reading to, and/or listening to your child read is encouraged. Teachers in grades three and four do not currently assign homework within the guidelines, but both of these grade level teams will be taking a closer look at what they may assign in the year to come. They encourage parents to read to and/or listen to their child read. In fifth grade, students are assigned a mathematics worksheet with ten to fifteen problems Monday through Thursday. Families are encouraged to read to, and/or listen to their child read. Finally, in sixth grade, teachers assign mathematics homework Monday through Thursday and English language arts homework twice a week (i.e. preparing notes/stickies for their small group discussion and Book Club). All writing instruction takes place within the school day and in all content areas.

Merriam

In the fall of 2017, Merriam staff met several times to create a first version of homework guidelines that would be consistent with the district policy. Grade level teams met with specialists to design the guidelines for each grade level. Over the course of the year, they tracked feedback they received, along with their own perceptions of what works well and what might need to be adjusted.

At our School Council meetings in the winter and early spring, we discussed how to collect feedback from parents and staff, as a way to inform on any changes to our guidelines. Parents responded to a short survey for each of their children to ensure we would have feedback specific to each grade level. Two of the themes we heard most frequently were with the lack of homework, parents feel less connected to what their child is learning and how they are progressing, and that they are also concerned about how prepared their children will be for the junior high school.

This spring, faculty reviewed the results of the parent survey and asked each staff member to also complete the survey. In late May, we analyzed the results of the staff survey and identified themes for improvement across all grades and themes specific to individual grade levels. Each team began reworking their grade level homework expectations, and we expect to have this work completed in early fall.

R. J. Grey Jr. High

At the junior high, our efforts around our homework and workload continued through a number of different practices and gathering of student feedback. This year, all eight teams maintained online homework calendars (using Google Calendar) that are available to students and families on the school website. Staff also reviewed plans to adjust our schedule next year to include a 20-minute study period to work on homework. In early May, students completed a Homework Survey and provided feedback about their experiences this year with homework and overall workload. Fifty-three percent of eighth graders report that, on average, they have <60 minutes of nightly homework, with another 20% reporting an average of 75-90 minutes each night. Sixty-five percent of eighth grade students believe that the

amount of homework they are assigned is “just right,” while 8% expressed that it’s “too little.” In seventh grade, 66% report that, on average, they have <60 minutes of nightly homework, while 11% report an average of 75 minutes each night. Sixty-eight percent of seventh graders believe that the amount of homework they are assigned is “just right,” while 7% expressed that it’s “too little.”

Acton-Boxborough Regional High School

The Acton-Boxborough Regional High School began looking at homework five years ago. Below is a description of the review and adjustments to homework and workload over the last five years.

Year 1 (2013-2014): Our objective related to workload was born out the question, “How do staff, students, and parents support health and well-being within a rich learning environment that provides opportunities for all students to experience success?” This prompted us to examine mental health, the supports we currently offer, and the possible addition of supports to meet the changing needs of our students and families. We used professional learning and staff meeting time to educate staff about our current programs and services, the impact of depression, anxiety, and/or trauma on learning, mental health awareness, and suicide prevention.

Year 2 (2014-2015): We shifted the focus of our work to our school practices and their potential impact on student stress and balance, and reviewed our schedule, assessment practices, workload expectations, and homework. We piloted a homework-free weekend, soliciting feedback from both staff and students about its impact. We utilized department and staff meeting time to identify department philosophies about homework, to discuss expectations across curricula, to share 30-minute homework assignments with a comparative lens, and to discuss student survey data regarding homework and workload.

Year 3 (2015-2016): We continued examining our guidelines and practices related to homework and workload. We piloted a Midyear Week and began a year long investigation of assessment practices with the Leadership Team, including the team shadowing students for a school day. We also worked with staff around assessment practice and expanded our homework-free weekend guidelines. Over the summer, we formed an Assessment, Instruction, and Workload committee to analyze staff and student data related to assessment, to review literature related to assessment, and to plan for professional learning related to assessment for the 2016-2017 school year.

Year 4 (2016-2017): Using student survey data gathered from prior years, we used cross-disciplinary groups to discuss what it might look like if we were successful in reducing student stress related to assessment. Throughout the school year, the Assessment, Instruction, and Workload committee, in conjunction with the Leadership Team, led professional learning about student assessment. We worked to create common understandings, expectations, and procedures in relation to alternative, authentic, and formative assessment. We used data and resources from Challenge Success to inform this work.

Year 5 (2017-2018): Led by the Assessment, Instruction and Workload committee and Leadership Team, we focused our professional learning work to use longer blocks of time effectively and to utilize formative, authentic, and alternative assessments. Departments also engaged in substantial work in this area. For example, the English department focused on student engagement, the world language department engaged in proficiency work, and the mathematics department reviewed alternative assessment measures. Our two-week pilot schedule allowed us to experience how an alternating block schedule might balance the amount and type of work students do in class, as well as homework assigned.

ABRHS and RJGJHS May 2018 School Schedule Updates

Acton-Boxborough Regional School District High School Schedule Update

During the 2015-2016 school year, the high school began a self-study of the [current daily schedule](#). Much of this work coincided with the school district's partnership with Challenge Success. During the first year of the self-study we asked faculty to think about what they valued in a daily schedule and received qualitative feedback regarding: start and end times, length of periods, number of instructional periods per day, number of courses that can be taken, order of periods, length of lunch periods, common planning time for staff, and academic support time for students. In the spring of 2016 we developed a survey to quantify student and staff values around a daily schedule. We received 1,170 student responses, 687 parent/guardian community responses, and 108 faculty responses. We then began to research dozens of high school bell schedule examples that aligned with reported values. Finally, we also reviewed student data from the 2016 Challenge Success Survey.

At the start of the 2016-2017 school year we recruited a second scheduling committee to discuss next steps for the self study. We narrowed down a selection of bell schedules that fit the criteria and presented them to the high school Leadership Team for consideration. The Leadership Team initially intended the 2017-2018 school year would result in a final decision to either replace, modify, or keep our current schedule. Over the summer, the Leadership Team determined that we needed to push the process out to the 2019-2020 school year and that we would follow our existing eight-period schedule in the 2018-2019 school year.

In March 2018, the high school conducted a two-week pilot of a modified block schedule. As of early spring, we have collected survey responses from over 1600 students and 200 faculty and staff and are currently reviewing this data and determining next steps for the fall of 2018.

R. J. Grey Junior High School Schedule Update

During the 2017-18 school year, the junior high school reviewed our [current daily schedule](#) and focused on ways to make adjustments to our Grey Block period to better utilize the time, along with identifying options for providing a study period that could be available to more students. Starting next year, we will eliminate Study Hall as an option during Grey Block and instead providing all students with a daily study period that will replace our current 20-minute Silent Reading period. While we acknowledge the loss of the Silent Reading period and the loss of Study as a Grey Block choice for some students, we see the benefits outweighing the costs.

As for the Grey Block period, all students will now participate in an elective during Grey Block throughout the entire school year (unless scheduled at this time for specialized services). Students will either choose Band, Chorus or String Ensemble, or they will participate in three of twelve trimester-length electives over the course of the school year. The elective options reflect the interest and expertise of our off-team staff, and activities include options focused on physical movement, stress management, visual and digital arts, and engineering. Next October we will devote staff professional learning time to assess the 20-minute Study Period and explore additional usage for that time to potentially include options for interventions, movement time for students, and team-based activities.