

THE SHERMAN SCHOOL



Master Schedule 2017-2018

Our school's Master Schedule has been designed to manifest our vision and reflect our instructional priorities. We believe that the 2017-2018 Master Schedule provides our faculty with incredible opportunities to enable our students to become the best possible version of themselves while developing into empathetic, self-directed and critical thinkers.

Although a large portion of what is presented in these pages refers to minutes spent in a classroom, before a teacher -- as educators we understand that the learning process is much more qualitative than quantitative. Therefore, we believe that it is the quality of the relationships between a student and his or her teacher, and the strength of the partnerships between parent, school and community which determine the overall quality of our programs and the success of our students.

STRUCTURAL ENHANCEMENTS

Five-Day and Six-Day Rotations

As it currently exists, components of our school schedule operate on a six-day rotation which certainly provides tangible benefits. However, we have found that operating on a six-day rotation in the elementary school also presents a number of challenges pertaining to organization and the delivery of support services.

Our new Master Schedule for 2017-2018 will allow our students in grades PK-5 to operate on a five-day schedule. Doing so will provide students, families and faculty with a highly predictable schedule. Because the needs of our Middle School differs from that of our elementary school, the Middle School will now operate on a six-day rotation for both core academic subjects and specials. This schedule is preferable for students who are not seen each day by particular teachers and will address the inconsistency of holiday schedules, expanded weekends, and snow days by allowing for contiguous instruction.

Transition Time

Our current schedule does not identify time for students in the Middle School to pass from one class to the next. Bells are scheduled to ring once, which delineates the simultaneous end of one subject and the beginning of another. Furthermore, since there are no defined time limits for movement between classes, teachers must wait for all students to enter the room and become situated before they begin teaching.

Our New Master Schedule for 2017-2018 will provide students with three minutes to transition between classes. Bells will be coordinated to ring once at the end of a class, and again three minutes later to signal the beginning of the next. Students will be held accountable for their preparation and on-time arrival.

PERIODS WITH TRANSITION TIME									
Get Ready	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
8:25 - 8:30	8:30 - 9:12	9:15 - 9:57	10:00 - 10:42	10:45 - 11:27	11:30 - 12:12	12:15 - 12:57	1:00 - 1:42	1:45 - 2:27	2:30 - 3:15

Lunch and Recess

Our current schedule affords students 40 minutes for a combined lunch and recess. However, this period is technically shorter due to the lack of transition time as described previously.

Because we believe that students should be afforded time during the day to decompress, eat a nutritious lunch, expend energy and enjoy fellowship with schoolmates, our new Master Schedule for 2017-2018 provides a 20% daily increase in lunch/recess time for students in grades K-5 as well as a 5% increase for students in grades 6-8. In addition, we are considering modifications to increase the efficiency of our lunch purchasing procedures.

LUNCH AND RECESS SCHEDULE				
Grades 3-5		Grades K-2		Grades 6-8
Recess: 10:42 - 11:06		Recess: 11:27 - 11:51		Recess: 11:51 - 12:15
Recess: 12:15 - 12:36		Recess: 12:35 - 12:56		
3A	K1	2A	7A	6A
3B	K2	2B	7B	6B
4A	1A		8A	
5A	1B		8B	
5B				
Lunch: 11:06 - 11:30		Lunch: 11:27 - 11:51		Lunch: 11:51 - 12:15
Lunch: 12:15 - 12:36		Lunch: 12:35 - 12:56		
3A	2A	K1	6A	7A
3B	2B	K2	6B	7B
4A		1A		8A
5A		1B		8B
5B				

ACADEMIC ENHANCEMENTS

Exploration Period (XP)

Our current schedule provides students in grades 6-8 with two 40 minute Project Based Learning periods every six-days. This period allows Middle School students the opportunity to participate in collaborative projects.

For 2017-2018, we have not only changed the name to Exploration Period (or XP), but we have completely reimagined how our students will be engaged. XP will be offered to all students in grades 4-8, three days per week for 45 minutes. Our Exploration Period has been designed to allow students to become the best possible version of themselves by exploring a wide-variety of interests and passions.

Because we have engineered time for both classroom and special area faculty to be available to teach simultaneously during XP, students will have the opportunity to engage in Project Based Learning experiences which are also interdisciplinary. Students will be given a choice, and their learning will be increasingly more self-directed as they progress from 4th through 8th grade. Students will work collaboratively on trimester-long projects and will demonstrate the cumulative effect of their learning via public exhibitions.

Band, Chorus, Advanced Art, and ELT

Because our Exploration Period (XP) will take place on Monday, Wednesday and Friday, we have dedicated Tuesday and Thursday for a variety of other offerings. On Tuesday and Thursday, students will choose between participating in Band, Chorus, or an elective small-group Advanced Art class.

Those students in grades 4-8 who do not participate in one or more of these selected activities, or who require additional academic support, will have access to their teachers for Extended Learning Time (ELT) where they will receive small-group, targeted instruction to address any needs.

XP, BAND, CHORUS, ADVANCED ART and ELT

Time	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
2:30 - 3:15	Exploration Period (XP)	6-8 Band 4-5 Chorus Advanced Art ELT	Exploration Period (XP)	4-5 Band 6-8 Chorus Advanced Art ELT	Exploration Period (XP)

Executive Functioning

We acknowledge that a student's overall success in school, and in life, requires more than just “book smarts.” Indeed a student must be organized and well-prepared, as well as have strategies for coping with challenges. Our new Master Schedule for 2017-2018 will include one 42 minute class dedicated to Executive Functioning every six-days for students in grades 6-8. We will utilize a curriculum which is specific to this topic to teach students skills such as time management, goal setting, cognitive flexibility and self-monitoring. We anticipate that the application of these skills will have tremendous benefit for our Middle School students and will have a catalytic effect on learning across all disciplines.

Co-Taught Math and ELA

Our new Master Schedule for 2017-2018 has been designed to provide students in grades 6-8 with the additional reinforcement of a general education teacher for both Math and ELA instruction one or two times per six-day cycle. Co-taught periods offer great benefit by reducing the faculty to student ratio by making two highly-qualified teachers available during one class. Having two teachers will also permit greater degrees of support and challenge.

NUMBER OF CO-TAUGHT PERIODS PER SIX-DAY CYCLE						
Grade	6A	6B	7A	7B	8A	8B
Math	1	2	2	1	1	1
ELA	2	1	1	2	1	1

Special Area Instruction

We believe in taking a holistic approach to child development, ensuring that each student is exposed to the Fine Arts, Music, Physical Education, Educational Technology and other subjects beyond the core academic curricula.

Our 2017-2018 Master Schedule places a specific emphasis on providing students with time to explore all of the traditional special area subjects and affords several new offerings such as Technology Education and Spanish in grades 4-5.

SPECIAL AREA INSTRUCTIONAL TIME (MIN PER WEEK)							
Grade	Art	Music	Phys Ed	Tech Ed	Health	Chorus	Band
PK	20	20	20				
K	84	84	84	42	42		
1	84	84	84	42	42		
2	84	84	42	42	42		

3	84	84	42	42	42		
4	42	42	42	87	42	45	45
5	42	42	42	87	42	45	45
6	35	70	35	35	35	45	45
7	35	70	35	35	35	45	45
8	35	70	35	35	35	45	45

Art

Our Fine Arts program provides students with the opportunities to create, explore and develop fine motor skills while appreciating beauty through a wide variety of media and contexts. In an effort to expand upon our student's exposure to this subject, we have increased our explicitly taught Art program in grades K-3 and have provided multiple opportunities for students in grades 4-8 to pursue their passion in Art by electing into our small-group Advanced Art course and/or by engaging in Art during our Exploration Period (XP) which takes place three days per week for 45 minutes. Overall, in 2017-2018, our Art teacher will work directly with students 20% more than in the past.

Music

We believe music plays an integral role in the development of a child's intellect and can ignite a passion like no other subject. As with our Fine Arts program, we have increased the time allocated to music instruction significantly in grades K-3 and have restructured the way we engage students in the middle school to increase instructional time. Those students in the Middle School who participate in Band will receive two periods of music instruction every six-days whereas those students who are not in Band will receive two periods of General Music.

In addition to traditional music class, our 2017-2018 Master Schedule will provide us with the opportunity to experiment with a new offering entitled, Music Technology. Music Technology, which will be taught by our music faculty, will expose students to the world of composition and digital music media. Students will have the opportunity to score music for videos and use MIDI keyboards to generate their own expressions.

Physical Education

Our 2017-2018 Master Schedule redefines how we engage students in physical activity and exercise. While we have increased Physical Education class time in grades K and 1 by over 20% to help students acquire fundamental gross and fine motor skills, we have chosen to incorporate physical education into our students daily activity for grades 2-8 during recess rather than within a traditional Physical Education setting.

In order to do this, we have increased our lunch and recess period by 20% each day for grades K-5 and by 5% each day for grades 6-8. In addition, we have scheduled our Physical Educator to facilitate structured games and organized activities in the gym and on the field when weather permits each day. Students will, of course, have the option of engaging in free play on some days and will be required to participate at least once per week, although we anticipate students will opt into instructional games and fun tournaments more often than not. Finally, having a professional educator at recess each day will also mitigate conflicts which often arise when students are engaged in unstructured, loosely supervised settings.

Intramurals

In an effort to ensure that all students in grades 4-8 have the ability to pursue their passions in athletics, we are developing an Intramural program for the 2017-2018 school year. This program will also serve our Middle School students who are not yet ready for the competitive aspects of Interscholastic Athletics while helping them to improve their skills in Basketball and Soccer. In addition, we will offer students Golf and Tennis instruction for recreation in the Spring. Our program capitalizes on the enjoyment associated with physical exercise and activity by offering Fun Friday activities which include Ultimate Frisbee, Flag Football, Floor Hockey, Yard Games, etc. Intramurals are provided at no cost to families.

INTRAMURALS		
Grade	Fall	Spring
4-8	Boys Basketball (M, W) Girls Basketball (T, Th) Coed Fun Friday (F)	Coed Soccer (M, W) Coed Golf (T) Coed Tennis (Th) Coed Fun Friday (F)

Library

As we endeavor to prepare our students to work in industries which are not yet fully developed and to accept jobs which do not yet exist, we must think differently about the content that we teach. Toward this end, our 2017-2018 Master Schedule includes the redesign of our current Library as a special that students visit once per week into a resource that is available all day. In 2017-2018, the Library will be staffed with a paraprofessional who will assist teachers in finding books and other resources of particular interest. Students will continue to enjoy coming to library to browse our vast collection and take out books as often as classroom teachers wish.

Educational Technology

In 2017-2018, and in lieu of a Library special, we will establish a new course entitled Ed Tech. This special will be designed to expose all students in grades K-8 to digital literacy, engineering, and MakerSpace activities. Students will acquire the skills and dispositions necessary to become producers of technology rather than just consumers by learning to write code and program using a variety of technical languages.

Health

Our 2017-2018 Master Schedule provides for slight increases in Health instruction for students in grades K-3 and 6-8. Through this curricula, students will learn about a wide variety of topics including hygiene, germ prevention, nutrition, conflict resolution, substance abuse and decision making.

Spanish

In addition to our Middle School Spanish instruction, our 2017-2018 Master Schedule will provide opportunities for students in grades 4-5 to receive one period of explicit Spanish instruction per week. We believe that exposing students to a foreign language at a younger age will have a positive impact on their acquisition of vocabulary and grammar which will have a compounded effect as students progress through our Middle School curriculum.

In an effort to ensure our 8th grade students are prepared for a rigorous High School Spanish program, we have prioritized this cohort of students to receive an additional 35 minutes per week of Spanish than their 6th and 7th grade counterparts.

Chorus

Our 2017-2018 Master Schedule provides students in grades 4-8 who elect to participate in our Choral program with the opportunity to develop the most primal instrument, their voices. These students will have opportunities to participate in Chorus on Tuesday or Thursday for 45 minutes, and may have other options during our Exploration Period (XP). Students in second grade also have the opportunity to perform in our Holiday Concert.

Band

The 2017-2018 Master Schedule provides students with the opportunities to acquire and refine their skills as they play an instrument as part of our highly-regarded Band program. Because we have increased our Music Special time in grades 6-8, students who participate in Band will meet for large group rehearsals twice every six-day cycle. We believe that the increased continuity, along with our small-group pull-out instrument lessons will provide students with the skills and confidence they need to perform to their potential.

Those Middle School students who are not members of our Band will participate in our General Music program, twice per six-day cycle. In this program, students will be exposed to a wide variety of instruments, will learn to read music and will have opportunities to compose using technology such as MIDI keyboards and programs like GarageBand.

Special Education, Support Services and Enrichment

At the Sherman School, we desire for all students to become the best possible version of themselves. In order to manifest this vision, we are committed to ensuring that our students, whether they are identified as having special needs or not, receive the necessary supports to help them reach their potential. Similarly, we believe that our students who excel in our general

education curricula should be thoughtfully engaged in work that is challenging, rigorous and rewarding.

Instructional Planning

Because we believe that great instruction requires the dedication of time to the process of planning and preparing for high-quality, differentiated lessons, our Master Schedule affords each faculty member with a total of 5 forty-two minute periods each week for this purpose. In addition, Faculty also receive an additional 3 forty-two minute periods each week for ongoing professional development, SRBI meetings, and additional planning. Realizing that faculty will desire to work with grade level colleagues for planning purposes, our schedule allows each grade level team common planning each day.

Academic Instruction in Grades PK-3

The Master Schedule for the 2017-2018 school year continues to provide students in our primary grades with favorable class sizes and academically and socially balanced classes. Our teachers teach all of the core academic subjects, with ample time dedicated to the fundamentals of reading, writing and mathematics. Students also learn to observe and appreciate the world around them, with time dedicated to the study of Social Studies and Science. In addition to the core academic subjects, students will participate in eight special area classes per week, allowing them to develop competence in Art, Music, Physical Education, Health and Educational Technology.

Academic Instruction in Grades 4-5

Students in our 4th and 5th grades enjoy departmentalized instruction which provides a developmentally appropriate transition from the elementary to our Middle School. Our 2017-2018 Master Schedule allows students to work with teachers who have content specializations in the areas of Reading and Social Studies, Science and Writing and Mathematics.

Academic Instruction in Grades 6-8

Our new 2017-2018 Master Schedule provides students with the opportunity to experience curricula that is both rigorous and engaging. In addition to the instructional minutes indicated below, our students will also benefit from co-taught ELA and Math classes 1-2 times per six-day cycle which will provide opportunities for support and enrichment by having two certified teachers working with the class at once, thereby reducing the student-teacher ratio to approximately 10:1. In addition, we have allocated more time to Science instruction in grades 6-8 and have blocked the schedule so that students can engage in extended laboratory periods.

ACADEMIC INSTRUCTIONAL TIME IN GRADES 4-8 (MIN PER WEEK)

Grade	ELA	Math	Science	SS	Spanish	Exec. Func.
4	525	330	225	135	42	
5	562	345	180	135	42	
6	360	360	261	216	140	35
7	360	360	261	216	140	35
8	342	342	261	216	175	35

We realize that the 2017-2018 Master Schedule requires some significant changes to the way the Sherman School has operated in the past, and that change is particularly difficult. We share this final table to reassure teachers, students, families and our community that we will continue to devote ample time in our schedule to the basics of reading, writing and mathematics because we realize that standardized tests, public and private high schools, the SAT and ACT and ultimately college admissions boards will measure our students by their performance in these areas.

Although we are confident that the structural and academic enhancements we have made for the 2017-2018 school year will give our students the opportunities to become the best possible version of themselves and will help them to develop into empathetic, self-directed critical thinkers who don't give up when faced with challenges, we have fundamental assurances that they will learn the basics as well through explicit instruction.

COMPARISON OF MIDDLE SCHOOL INSTRUCTIONAL MINUTES

School District	ELA (average daily minutes)	Math (average daily minutes)
CT SDE Recommendations	45-60	45-60
Sherman	70	70
Greenwich	65	43
Weston	49	49
New Canaan	46	46
Easton	43	43
Darien	41	41
Ridgefield	41	41

We hope that you realize the tangible benefits afforded by our new 2017-2018 Master Schedule and we invite you to inquire should you have any questions or concerns.

