

# Thoughts on Remote School Schedules

This is NOT business as usual.

Here at [Conscious Teaching](#) we **advocate for a less is more (do less, but do it better) approach to remote learning**. Our recommended school schedules reflect that. The schedules we propose may not work for every school or district exactly as written, but they serve as a guide for designing, thoughtful, equitable, and successful remote learning schedules that can meet the academic and emotional needs of everyone involved.

## Our recommendations are based on:

- Hundreds of interviews with teachers, parents, and administrators across the country about what worked and what didn't during the remote-learning that occurred March-June 2020
- Current neuroscience on how the brain learns
- Current research on how trauma and toxic stress affect learning
- Advice from mental health professionals
- Research on equity, poverty, and the achievement gap

**Many school teachers are under extreme stress** as they attempt to transition to remote learning. They have become, for all intents and purposes, 1<sup>st</sup> year teachers again. To make this a successful transition they need support, resources, and most of all, time: time to plan, time to learn, time to collaborate, and time to intervene with kids who aren't initially successful and/or who are falling through the cracks.

Let's combine what we know about best practice with compassion and understanding for what teachers and students are currently experiencing, and choose remote schedules that:

- Allow teachers the time they need to learn about and develop engaging remote lessons based on best practice.
- Allow students an equitable opportunity to become comfortable with remote learning lessons – both synchronous and asynchronous – while also maintaining their mental health.
- Allow families to spend evenings together in non-academic pursuits, and/or have alone time to decompress, rather than spending evenings locked in battles over homework.
- Allow students living in poverty and/or in unsafe, unstructured, chaotic, cramped, or toxic home environments an equitable chance to thrive.
- Allow administrators and/or district-based task forces time to do individual outreach to families that need extra support with getting their children online and/or participating in remote lessons

**Rigorous academic education** is not about quantity of time spent learning or quantity of homework assigned. It is about the quality of the learning being offered and the available supports for those who need it.

In addition, it is a rare person, student or adult, who can stare at a screen for more than 4 hours a day trying to absorb new learning without becoming **utterly overwhelmed**. Overwhelm is bad for physical health, mental health, and learning. An aggressive remote learning schedule will exhaust teachers, students, and families. It will expand the already extreme inequalities that exist among different demographic groups. It will increase mental health crises. From every angle it can be viewed, it will be a lose-lose scenario.

**This is not business as usual** and it cannot be made into business as usual by hammering the square peg of classroom learning into the round hole of online learning. The only way forward now is to forge a path towards a new normal. As we forge, let us all be mindful of the steep hill that students and teachers will be climbing. We don't need to sacrifice high academic expectations. We just need to slowly, steadily, and intelligently build rigorous online learning in a completely different way. If we do this right, we might even strike upon something truly innovative and wonderful that will change the face of education for the better, long after this pandemic passes.

# Sample Elementary School Schedule

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
<b>8:45-9:00</b>	morning meeting	morning meeting	morning meeting	morning meeting	morning meeting
<b>9:00-9:45</b>	Reading	Reading	Reading	Reading	Reading
<b>9:45-10:05</b>	<i>break (20 min)</i>				
<b>10:05-10:50</b>	Math	Math	Math	Math	Math
<b>10:50-11:10</b>	<i>break (20 min)</i>				
<b>11:10-11:55</b>	Writing/ELA	Science/Social Studies	Writing/ELA	Science/Social Studies	Writing/ELA
<b>11:55-12:10</b>	Closing Circle	Closing Circle	Closing Circle	Closing Circle	Closing Circle
<b>12:10-1:00</b>	<i>lunch (50min)</i>				
<b>1:00-1:45</b>	Small Group A with teacher + Asynchronous Specials for rest of class	Small Group B with teacher + Asynchronous Reading for rest of class	Small Group C with teacher + Asynchronous Specials for rest of class	Small Group D with teacher + Asynchronous Reading for rest of class	Small Group E with teacher + Asynchronous Specials for rest of class
<b>1:45-2:05</b>	<i>break (20min)</i>				
<b>2:05-3:15</b>	Teacher Prep and/or Office Hours	Meetings and/or PD Trainings	Teacher Prep and/or Office Hours	Meetings and/or PD Trainings	Teacher Prep and/or Office Hours

- ▶ Classes before lunch are live lessons (i.e. zoom, google meet, etc).
- ▶ Live lessons are generally a combination of interactive guided direct instruction, independent work, and group work.
- ▶ **After Lunch: Rotating small groups meets with teacher. All other students do asynchronous specials or asynchronous reading/literacy.**
- ▶ Teachers use M-W-F afternoons to plan, collaborate, hold office hours, and reach out to families. T-Th afternoons are for meetings and PD
- ▶ No homework is assigned. Time for independent work is built into each lesson, both synchronous and asynchronous.
- ▶ Specials rotate between PE and Visual/Performing Arts. Science & Social Studies alternate each week.

# Sample Secondary School Schedule - 7 Periods

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
<b>9:00-10:15</b>	1st period	4th period	Asynchronous Lessons. Office Hours	1st period	4th period
<b>10:15-10:30</b>	<i>break (15 min)</i>				
<b>10:30-11:45</b>	2nd period	5th period	Asynchronous Lessons. Office Hours	2nd period	5th period
<b>11:45-12:30</b>	<i>Lunch (45 minutes)</i>				
<b>12:30-1:45</b>	3rd period	6th period	Asynchronous Lessons. Teacher collaboration, planning, PD, and meetings	3rd period	6th period
<b>1:45-2:00</b>	<i>break (15 min)</i>				
<b>2:00-3:15</b>	Advisory/Tutorial	7th period	Asynchronous Lessons. Teacher collaboration, planning, PD, and meetings	Advisory/Tutorial	7th period

- ▶ Students have 4 live 75-min classes 4 days a week (i.e. zoom, google meet, etc)
- ▶ Live classes are a combination of interactive direct instruction, guided instruction, group work, and independent work
- ▶ Wednesdays: 30-min asynchronous lessons may be assigned by each teacher (at each teacher's discretion)
- ▶ Wednesdays: Mornings are office hours. Teachers help help individual students and do family and student out reach. Afternoons are for planning, collaboration, and/or participation in PD or other meetings
- ▶ A maximum of 15 minutes of homework per lesson can be assigned for live lessons. Asynchronous lessons include no homework. Time for independent practice is built into the 30-min asynchronous lessons themselves.

# Sample Secondary School Schedule 4x4

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
<b>9:00-10:15</b>	Advisory (9am-9:45) Office Hours (9:45-10:20)	1st period	1st period	1st period	1st period
<b>10:15-10:30</b>	<i>break (15 min)</i>				
<b>10:30-11:45</b>	Asynchronous Lessons. Office Hours	2nd period	2nd period	2nd period	2nd period
<b>11:45-12:30</b>	<i>Lunch (45 minutes)</i>				
<b>12:30-1:45</b>	Asynchronous Lessons. Teacher collaboration, planning, PD, and meetings	3rd period	3rd period	3rd period	3rd period
<b>1:45-2:00</b>	<i>break (15 min)</i>				
<b>2:00-3:15</b>	Asynchronous Lessons. Teacher collaboration, planning, PD, and meetings	4th period	4th period	4th period	4th period

- ▶ Students have 4 live 75-min classes 4 days a week (i.e. zoom, google meet, etc)
- ▶ Live classes are a combination of interactive direct instruction, guided instruction, group work, and independent work
- ▶ Mondays: 40-min asynchronous lessons may be assigned by each teacher (at each teacher's discretion)
- ▶ Mondays: Teachers hold live 45-min advisory meeting in the morning. The rest of the morning is for helping individual students and doing family reach out. Afternoons are for planning, collaboration, and/or participation in PD or other meetings
- ▶ A maximum of 15 minutes of homework per lesson can be assigned for live lessons. Asynchronous lessons include no homework. Time for independent practice is built into the 40-min asynchronous lessons themselves.