



SCHEDULES

TUFOLD - Time Utilization for Optimum Learning Development

When Granada moved to its own campus, the school opened with a traditional 6/8 period day for students. But this was a new school with progressive teachers who were looking for a new and better way of teaching students. The world had changed in this era after Sputnik, and the school was reflective of this spirit of change. This led to a search for a new class schedule.

The seeds of the schedule came from Brookhast School in Southern California, a middle school with a much smaller student population and limited course offerings. Principal Jack Lee sent several Granada faculty to visit this school and observe “flexible scheduling” as practiced there. From this beginning, the TUFOLD schedule for Granada evolved.

In the spring of 1967, Granada practiced what would become the Granada model, and by the fall of 1968 Granada was operating a daily demand schedule of 160 course offerings for 1,075 students.¹¹⁴

TUFOLD or “flexible scheduling”, was “a personalized program of daily course work tailored to meet not only the students’ intellectual demands but the teachers’ needs as well.” This flexible approach puts “the responsibility for learning squarely on the shoulders of the student.”¹¹⁵ And as part of this responsibility, there were no bells to announce the beginning or end of a class or mod.

The school day was divided into twenty-four 20-minute modules (mods). There were no breaks between mods. The teacher would plan a week’s lessons, deciding what the activity would be for each day and determining the appropriate number of mods needed to complete the lesson. In addition the teacher would identify the optimum class size for each lesson, and this in turn would determine how many times a specific class would meet each day. This allowed teachers to plan labs that could be completed in a longer period and in one day to provide lectures to large groups of students, or to plan small group instruction. It also allowed PE to run events such as softball tournaments or group students by skill level (i.e.: beginning tennis). An activity might run 20-40 minutes or last longer than an hour. A field trip in a class like Mr. Carlson’s Field Biology could be planned, or there might be an open lab in a class such as Woods. The students could make schedules which allowed them to take advantage of these educational opportunities while not missing a required class.

Each morning at the beginning of the day, the students would meet in an **AD** period. (Later, this Ad period was moved to the middle of the day and students would plan the next day’s

¹¹⁴ *Herald News*. September 26, 1968

¹¹⁵ Jack Lee. *Herald News*. December 28, 1967

schedule.) There they would be given the Daily Master Schedule. Students were required to attend those classes in which they were enrolled. There were three types of classes. “**OFFICE SCHEDULE**” classes were offered only once on a given day, and students were required to attend at that time. The student would enter these classes first on his schedule card. Next were the classes that were “**MUST**” – these were the courses in which the student was enrolled but often there was a choice as to when he could attend. The third group was the “**MAY**” classes. This could include additional work on a project or lab, working in a Resource Center where there might to an assignment to complete, a chance to receive additional help from the teacher, or a chance to make up work from an absence. When the required class time was complete, students had the opportunity attend another class of one’s particular interest. A student might also attend a class, for example Geometry, a second time if he did not understand something the first time.¹¹⁶ Every class was open to any student who wanted to attend if room was available.

After the student had completed a schedule, his locator card was filed in the office, and the day began. If a conflict arose between classes, the student would complete a conflict form that was filed in the office. He still had the responsibility to meet with his teacher to explain the conflict and to get any work needed.

By February 1969, a high percentage of students reported that they liked the responsibility of deciding how to spend at least part of their day, they had less homework, they took more than six classes, they were able to get individual help from teachers in the Resource centers, and they had better use of their time. A high percentage of teachers reported that they were not able to give more individual attention to those who needed it, but were able to give more to those who asked for it.¹¹⁷ But Jack Lee acknowledged that cutting class was a problem and that a small percentage of students were unable to handle the responsibility of flexible scheduling.¹¹⁸

Some had concerns about the schedule:

- Many younger students did not yet have the ability or maturity to cope with the freedom available in the TUFOLD schedule. These “reluctant learners” were able to find ways to “slip through the cracks.”
- Parents complained that they were unable to find out where their students were during the day. They stated that there was a lack of attendance control.
- Others felt that students had too much free time and that classes were too short.
- There was insufficient counseling and guidance.
- In a 1970 survey, one-fourth of parents were opposed to TUFOLD one fourth was very much in favor of the schedule, and the other half pointed to some faults in the schedule.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁶ Robert Custodia. *Herald News*. September 22, 1970

¹¹⁷ *Herald News*. February 28, 1969

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

¹¹⁹ *Herald & News*. March 20, 1970

Transferring this idea to education meant looking at a century old way of establishing the relationship between time and learning. Between 1893 and 1907, the time per course came to be known as the Carnegie Unit, and was defined as 45 minutes per day for five days a week for the entire year.¹²⁹ Over the years the curriculum to be “covered” usually was based on a textbook. There was no correlation of time required to cover a textbook. It was assumed that time in the classroom equated to learning.

The Copernican Plan, through the Block Schedule, challenged this way of thinking and replaced it with “time on task” rather than seat time. It was emphasized that changing a schedule was not an end in itself but rather a means for achieving several important ends. Among these were: increased student time on task, improvement of student and teacher relationships, more manageable workloads for both students and teachers, and greater in-depth learning opportunities for the student.

Thus, with the Block Schedule, the student took fewer classes at a time than under the traditional six or seven period, 55 minute schedule. All students were required to take three classes, and some chose to take four. These classes were 90 minutes long and lasted for nine weeks. Nine weeks equaled one traditional semester; thus a student completed an entire course in eighteen weeks and then changed to another set of courses for the next “term.”

In the fall of 1992, Granada, under the leadership of Principal Joe Medeiros, adopted a block schedule. The day was divided into four 90-minute blocks or periods. Students took three classes. The fourth block, lasting one hour, was time when students could meet with teachers and complete work. A teacher could also mandate this time. Class time was to be free of interruptions. Students had only three classes on which to concentrate per term. One semester was 9 weeks, and a two semester class, such as US History, would be completed in half the calendar year. The longer class period allowed for a variety of activities and provided teachers more time with each student. A teacher had only 90 students at a time and so reduced some of their work load, particularly papers to grade.

The results showed that more students were on the honor roll, standardized test schools improved, attendance of students and staff improved, and there was a more relaxed atmosphere on campus that promoted learning.

But this new schedule faced a hurdle. Because Block 4 was not mandated for every student every day, the students did not meet the daily instructional time set by the state. Students were attending 270 minutes rather than 330 minutes required by law. This necessitated getting a time waiver from the State Department of Education.

Some parents were concerned by the shorten time that students were in class. There were also concerns about the pace of teaching, particularly in math classes. Two other concerns were whether the students were receiving the complete class curriculum and students’ lack of use of fourth block. Math and foreign language presented the greatest problem for a student was only

¹²⁹ Ibid. p. 78

enrolled in classes one half the year and that meant that they it might be nine months before he/she was enrolled in those classes again.

Although 85% of parents reported that they favored the block schedule, the school was required to spend time each year preparing for and defending the need for a time waiver from the state. Not all parents were in favor of the schedule. They were mostly opposed to the time waiver. They challenged the school's numbers on the number of students using Block 4. Parents walked through the hallways during Block 4 counting the number of students who were present. In 1996 Principal Kevin Drake asked the faculty if they wanted to continue to spend the time required for the waiver requests, or make a modification to the schedule. The staff supported modifying the schedule.

The school then moved to a four-by-four block schedule, meaning that the day was divided into four 90 minute periods. Student took 3, often 4 classes. Teachers continued to teach three classes, this maintaining smaller class size. The state's instructional minute requirement was met due to the number of students who took four classes.

Kevin Drake commented on his ten years as principal of GHS under this schedule:

"I think it was one of the best decisions made at Granada in the past 50 years. For one, it enabled teachers to concentrate on instruction, on how to teach rather than what to teach. From the start that was one of our biggest challenges. Teachers were not used to teaching in longer blocks of time. They soon learned that they could not take two lessons and combine them into one. They learned they needed to change activities periodically to keep the students' interest high. I kept preaching to them that "I don't want Granada to be a place where students come to watch you work." We adopted our mission "Every Student, An Active Learner." This required many professional development opportunities for all our staff, and it was a challenge yearly as new staff were hired and needed to be brought up to speed on the teaching expectations at Granada.

Our critics focused on the issue of time, as if time equated to achievement. But the century old 6-7 period day where students spend 55 minutes in a class, have 5 minutes to move to the next class and do this repeatedly through the year just doesn't make sense to me. Speaking of time, a little known fact in that system is that students spend approximately 80 to 90 hours per year changing classes.

During my ten years at Granada I felt there was a calm, a tranquility in both students and teachers. They were not rushing from class to class. And student achievement, as measured by the traditional means of GPA, college entrance exams, and AP results all increased. "

The school remained on this schedule until the fall of 2008 when Principal Chris VanSchaack facilitated the move to the trimester system.

TRIMESTER SCHEDULE

Granada and Livermore High Schools continued to operate on a block schedule until the fall of 2008, each with its own variation, and each with its own bell schedule. For some of the same reasons Granada had initially embraced the TUFOLD schedule and then later launched the 4x4 Block schedule, Granada continued to look for ways to increase student success and opportunity. When Granada Principal Chris VanSchaack introduced the concept of the trimester schedule to the District, the potential shift was seen as an opportunity to synchronize the schedules of the two comprehensive high schools. As Granada celebrates its 50th anniversary, both Granada and Livermore High Schools structure their days and year around the trimester schedule.

Under the trimester, students take semester (5-unit) courses during 70-minute periods that span a 12-week trimester. Courses that are traditionally taught every day, all year, in neighboring high schools, are taught over 24 weeks of extended length classes. Students, for example, take English 10A during one trimester and English 10B during a subsequent trimester. In addition, elective courses that had previously been one 10-unit course were split so that students could take “half” of a Foods class, for example, and follow with the other half later in the year, or in a different year, or even choose to take the 5-unit Foods class because that was all the student had room for in his schedule. With 5 classes per day, students are able to enroll in the equivalent of 7.5 courses. The Block system required that students take 3 90-minute courses a day; under the trimester students must take at least four 70-minute courses.

In addition to having the option to take more courses and fit more electives in during a year, the trimester schedule has several additional advantages for students. Students who need more time to learn material have the option of enrolling in 3-trimester math, for example, allowing the same college-prep material to be learned at a pace that fosters student success. Students who need additional support in English can enroll in a third trimester of English, called English Workshop. In comparison to the Block, Advanced Placement courses now end in March, much closer to the May exam date than January, and the trimester allows for an optional Seminar that provides students with the opportunity of additional study and exam preparation. Having an extra period beyond the required four allows students to flex their start or end time, taking period 1 or period 5 off to allow them to schedule their courses around jobs, athletic practice time, and study needs.

The schedule also offered advantages for teachers that, in turn, have led to increased student achievement. With the adoption of the trimester, teachers gained a prep period during the school day, and they gained schoolwide collaboration time during the early-release Wednesday. Especially as teachers shift to the new Common Core State Standards, this collaboration time has afforded them the ability to plan lessons together, create common assessments, and work together to develop strategies and systems that support student learning. A recent outgrowth of teacher collaboration is the new A.S.E. (Academic Support and Enrichment) period that meets on Wednesdays. Students are assigned to A.S.E. for targeted support in key areas so that they do not fall behind in their courses.