



May 17, 2017

Dear Parents/Guardians,

**Re: Bell Schedule**

Earl Marriott first implemented an extended day schedule in 2011 as a temporary measure. This was done to help address the over capacity at the school and to accommodate projections of increased enrolment in the future. Adding a block and extending the day by starting earlier and ending later, effectively increased the school's capacity. After implementation, the school continued to grow in enrolment for a few years. However, over the past three years the school's enrolment has declined. After a comprehensive review of enrolment projections and school capacity, we are currently exploring the possibility of returning to a four-block, rotating schedule at Earl Marriott Secondary.

Earl Marriott Secondary's enrolment is now at approximately the same level as it was in 2011. We are projected for 1865 students in September and continued stability through 2020. With this enrolment stability, we believe we now have the capacity to remove the additional fifth period from our timetable, and transition back to a traditional bell schedule. This type of bell schedule would have all students starting and ending their day at the same times and sharing a common lunch break. Students would attend four classes per day. The block order would rotate every day with classes occurring across all four periods each week. The start time would be later than our current junior start time (8:00am). End of school day would be earlier than our current senior end time (3:33pm). Note: Most four-block schedules in Surrey secondary schools begin at approximately 8:30am and end at approximately 2:40pm.

At this point no decision has been made, however, we have clearly heard from our staff that they are supportive of this review for many reasons. Although there are advantages to our current extended day schedule as a result of the divided junior/senior schedules, and we have worked very hard over the past seven years to build strong and positive programming for our students, there are many advantages of a unified four-block, rotating bell schedule.

**Students:**

- Senior students would not have holes in the middle of their day with extended down times.
- The school day would not be required to start at such an early start time (8:00am) for our junior students.
- Increased focus and attendance with positive impact on learning in first period for junior students due to their later start.
- The school day would not be required to end at a late finish time (3:34pm) for our senior students.
- Increased focus with positive influence on learning in last period for senior students due to their earlier start.
- Junior and senior siblings would be on the same schedule.
- Student athletic practices and games would be aligned with end of school day.
- Student athletes would be able to attend practices and games without missing class time during last period of the day.
- Improved attendance of senior students due to decreased conflicts with last period of the day and other commitments (i.e., part-time work, extra-curricular activities).
- Lunch break would be separated from class time resulting in fewer distractions and greater focus for student learning.
- Students would have much better opportunities to meet with teachers outside of classroom time (before school, lunch, after school) for increased communication and tutorial support.
- Student clubs would be able to form with multi-aged groupings of students, with seniors providing mentorship for juniors.

- After school programming of curricular and extracurricular activities would be possible for art studio, theatre, computer lab, and technology rooms.
- Increased access to elective classrooms after school would support learning.
- Rotating schedule would support increased focus, better attendance and improved learning across the periods (i.e., equivalent attendance, punctuality across all classes).

**Staff:**

- Staff would have the opportunity to form a unified team, with all staff on the same schedule. They would be able to meet to share resources, collaborate and support colleagues.
- Teachers would be able to attend unified staff meetings and department head meetings with all their colleagues, and benefit from a consistent and unified team structure, communication and planning of coordinated departmental initiatives.

**School:**

- A strong, positive, united culture of caring and learning would be supported with all members of the community working together.
- The school as a whole would benefit from a greater sense of calm and order throughout the day, with students in class at the same times, with reduced unstructured distractions in the hallways and common areas.

There would also be challenges to a four-block, rotating bell schedule that would need to be considered.

- At a school-wide level, with 1865 students in the building, the lunch break would be very busy. There would not be enough room in our cafeteria to accommodate all of our students. Students would be required to eat their lunch across the school in hallways, classrooms and courtyards. This is already occurring at EMS.
- Students would not have the option of requesting a 9<sup>th</sup> class as one of their elective choices. All courses would be within the regular timetable (eight blocks over two semesters) and require students to be more selective in their elective choices. This would impact a small number of students.
- Increased challenges of scheduling for Hockey Academy off-campus activities and part-time student/staff schedules due to rotating structure of the timetable.
- Senior students would be required to adjust to an earlier start to their school day and junior students would be required to adjust to a later finish to their school day.
- Increased traffic volume for pick-up and drop-off at beginning and end of school day.
- Adjustment to bussing schedules in order to align with a single start time.

This is a significant decision for the school, our students, families and staff. The bell schedule review process has directly involved the EMS administration and staff and has our common support. We now seek your feedback. We invite your participation at a parent forum on Tuesday, May 23<sup>rd</sup> at 7:00pm at the school. You may also contact us via email at [EMSBellSchedule@SurreySchools.ca](mailto:EMSBellSchedule@SurreySchools.ca). We look forward to your input.

Sincerely,



Mr. Ken Hignett  
Principal



Mr. Chris Trevelyan  
Staff Committee Chair