

# Lowell High School Schedule Report

Lowell High School has a current projected enrollment of 3268 students for 2018-2019. The enrollment at the end of 2016-2017 was 3118. There will be fluctuation in the 2018-2019 enrollment numbers as new students register in September and students that are currently enrolled are removed from the school due to families moving or students attending out of district schools.

Lowell High School utilizes a school within a school philosophy where each of the “schools” must be scheduled as if the other schools do not exist while each shares an elective pool (physical education, health, world languages, fine arts and business) that is accessible by “all schools”. These “schools” consist of Freshman Academy Cluster 7, Freshman Academy Cluster 8, Freshman Academy Cluster 9, Special Education Job Prep, Special Education CSA, Special Education Special Programs, Special Education Adjustment and the Latin Lyceum.

The 2018-2019 LHS schedule consists of approximately 2200 classes and 53,000 classroom seats.

Each year, the schedule is developed from scratch based on student requests and needs for graduation. No 2 years are alike.

## Standard Time Line

Dec15	Course Catalog Due to Scheduler
Jan 15	Department Heads/Guidance Counselors Course Offerings Meeting
Jan 15-30	Teacher Recommendations
Feb 1-15	Student Requests
Feb 15 - Mar 30	Guidance Counselors Meet with Students
April 15	Grids (courses being offered and teacher assignment) Due to Scheduler
May 25	Schedule Completed
June 15	Guidance Counselors Adjust Requests/Classes Due to Failures

## Staffing

Although the staffing positions for the following year are not officially known in April, a general sense of what they will be is. This year a significant number of positions were being possibly cut from LHS, and it was unknown what positions would make up the final decision.

The early sense was that LHS would lose 4 teachers, maybe more.

Final staffing levels were set in early June with changes in staffing positions not finalized until early August to accommodate changes in Special Education enrollment numbers.

## **Student Enrollment**

Projections of student enrollment coming from Central Office projected LHS at lower than 2017-2018 enrollment numbers. LHS Projections had LHS at being flat or slightly higher enrollment than 2017-2018. Currently LHS is showing an incoming student body of 3268 after the District Rollover on August 7, 2018.

Enrollment is expected to settle in at 3200-3225 students after all things settle by September 15<sup>th</sup>.

## **Issues with the LHS 2018-2019 Schedule**

- Timelines and Deadlines
  - The above timeline has served us well over the past 8 years. This year tweaks to the schedule fractured the overall timeline.
  - The building of the schedule is a 12 week process.
  - The meeting of deadlines is imperative to producing a schedule before the end of school
  
- Weather/No School
  - While the number of days the district was closed had an impact on deadlines was significant, the impact was on pre-April 15<sup>th</sup> deadlines in regards to developing a schedule.
  - The extending of school until June 27<sup>th</sup> provided no time for Guidance Counselors to address 2017-2018 student failures.
    - Student failures will be addressed when Guidance Counselors return and in the opening weeks of school.
      - This may result in changes to the 2018-2019 schedule.
  
- Staffing Levels
  - Significant questions about staffing levels until June delayed teacher assignments (grids) from being prepared and provided to the Scheduler until late June.
  - Final positions were not provided until early August as a position was changed to address Special Education needs.
  - Initial plans had LHS reducing a core area teacher from the Freshman Academy.
    - Freshman Academy Grids were completed and a schedule was built mid-May.
    - Increases to incoming Freshman Academy enrollment forced the addition of the eliminated teaching position to a 60 percent Freshman Academy/40 percent main building position forcing the rewrite of grids and reassigned teaching sections to core area grids.
    - In late June, further increases in Freshman Academy enrollment returned the originally cut position to the Freshman Academy as full time and the reduced position came from the Main Building forcing Grids to be changed.

- Student Enrollment
  - Changes in the acceptance process at Greater Lowell Vocational Technical High School has impacted when we know which students are accepted and which students will be attending Lowell High School.
    - This resulted in the changing numbers that led us to believe less students were attending Lowell High School.
  
- Communication
  - Communication between the Scheduler and various interests had broken down over the previous several years.
  - Lowell High School went through an administrative transition at various levels in 2017-2018. Misunderstanding of our process by new and transitioning members was not always fluid.
  - Breakdown in communications between Lowell High School and the middle schools.
  
- Staff Teaching Assignments
  - Department Heads provide teachers with projected courses.
    - Communication of changes through email during summer.
  
- Student Schedules
  - Students are mailed their schedules approximately Aug 15<sup>th</sup>.
    - Time has taught us that providing schedules to students prior to the end of school only creates issues as the schedule does have some changes during the summer months making early schedules inaccurate.

## **Moving Forward**

- The Scheduler
  - The Scheduler needs to lead the scheduling process and be the point person.
  
- Communication
  - Increased communication by all parties involved in the process.
  - Better communication with LHS, Central Office and The School Committee early in the budgeting process in regards to the direction to staffing.
  - Better communication with middle schools to facilitate more accurate attendees and recommendations.
  
- Deadlines
  - A new focus on the meeting of deadlines and their effect on producing a timely schedule.

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Submitted August 8, 2018