Dear Parent/Guardian,

In June, 2016, the Salem School Board established a goal of examining the current high school schedule to determine if another way to structure the students’ classes would better serve them. I brought together a committee of teachers, administrators and students to consider support opportunities, how to coordinate pathways of instruction, supporting greater extra-curricular opportunities, and creating stronger student supports. Our goal was to enhance and improve opportunities for student achievement.

Over a two year period, our committee administered student and staff surveys, facilitated group discussions and organized two activities designed to provide insights into the current student experience. These activities included a student shadowing day and student forum. In addition, we gathered information from other New Hampshire high schools about their master schedules.

The committee focused on trends that emerged from all the information gathered while we remained committed to the original goals. We wanted to be sure we could provide students with additional and improved academic opportunities to personalize each student’s experience, implement an advisory for the purpose of relationship building, consider a later start time, and to improve school culture.

Specifically, the committee focused on course restrictions such as prerequisites, placement in schedule, and gaps in sequencing; school spirit; a different schedule for freshmen; time for students to complete important responsibilities such as to seek remedial help, schedule appointments with counselors; attend class assemblies; and to schedule time during the day to build relationships and connect with an adult in the building. We also considered a later start to the school day, but we had to forego our recommendation for now due to related expenses.

Our committee made the following recommendations that were recently adopted by the School Board and will be implemented for the 2019-2020 school year:

- **Adopt an A/B schedule for all students.** This schedule allows us to maintain the timeframe of a long class period while scheduling courses over a full year. It will help to reduce gaps in learning for sequential courses. Career and Technical Education (CTE) courses will be scheduled every day, not every other day. With this every other day format all students will follow the same schedule, even freshmen.

- **Change graduation credits from 28 to 24.** New Hampshire requires all high school graduates to earn at least 20 credits, 14 subject credits and 6 elective credits. Salem High School students will be required to earn 16.5 subject credits and 7.5 elective credits. Salem High students will have the opportunity to earn as many as 32 credits. The transition from 28 to 24 graduation credits will be phased over three years.

  Students will be required to take seven credits minimally each year, with the potential of taking eight credits per year with approval. For students taking seven classes, the eighth block in their schedule will be called Managed Time. Managed Time will provide the student support time for them to access help in content subjects or work on organization and studies skills, or complete online courses.
• **Create an Advisory.** Our goal is to ensure that students have a purposeful connection to at least one adult in the building. Our advisory will be scheduled Monday through Friday for twenty-six minutes per day and each advisory will be grade level specific. This allows students with similar interests and needs to collaborate on activities. Advisors will remain with the same group of ten to twelve students throughout high school. A committee of teachers and students is working to establish all the parameters.

Reviewing and ultimately recommending changes to our master schedule was a thoughtful and comprehensive process. We will work with students, especially upperclassmen, to accommodate as many of their schedule requests as possible as we adjust to the new schedule. The scheduling process will work as it has in past years with students receiving information and making course selections mid-year.

Sincerely,
Tracy Collyer
Principal, Salem High School