A.4 WEEKLY SCHEDULE & SCHOOL CALENDAR

This section will demonstrate compliance with the hours and minutes of instruction required for each grade level served for Focus' proposed school calendar, it will provide a rationale for the weekly schedule that clearly supports improving pupil achievement in Focus' target population, and it will include the length of day and approximate start and dismissal times for each course--including how many minutes will be designated for each core academic subject. It will also identify professional development opportunities consistent with the information provided in Area IV of the Academic Systems Plan. All proposed schedules and calendars will meet or exceed AZ state minimum standards.[1]

PROPOSED CALENDAR AND SCHEDULE COMPLIANT WITH INSTRUCTIONAL REQUIREMENTS

FES will operate under a standard one hundred and eighty day calendar (180 days): [2]

Days	Description
210	08/10/2016 – 5/24/2017 (see 2016/2017 calendar)
(30)	Less Holidays and breaks (see 2016/2017 calendar)
180	Total Instructional Days

Table A.4.1 – FHS 180 Day Calendar

Pursuant to §ASRS 15-901, Focus High students[3] will receive at least seven hundred twenty (720) total hours of instruction for a one hundred eighty (180) day school year and will be enrolled in a minimum of four or more subjects that count toward graduation as defined by the state board of education. Each subject that counts toward graduation will exceed the state minimum requirement of 123 hours per subject per school year. The following table shows FES' proposed instructional minutes per week, instructional hours per year, and core instructional minutes per day in relation to the AZ state minimum requirements. In each category, FES meets or exceeds AZ state minimums.

[1] See A.R.S. §15-341.01 and §ASRS 15-901
[2] In Compliance with A.R.S. §15-341.01
[3] To be eligible to attend FHS, students must be at least 14 years of age by Sep 1.

	Instructional Minutes/Week		Instructional Hours/Year		Core Instructional Minutes/Day	
Grade	FES	*State Minimum*	FES	*State Minimum*	FES	*State Minimum*
9	1350	*1200*	810	*720*	180	*164*
10	1350	*1200*	810	*720*	180	*164*
11	1350	*1200*	810	*720*	180	*164*
12	1350	*1200*	810	*720*	180	*164*

Table A.4.2 - FHS Weekly Instructional Hours

In order to meet the diverse needs of our target population and to maximize efficiency of available resources, FES' proposed schedule will include two shifts per day. Each shift includes six (6) subjects taught per year which count towards graduation. This exceeds the AZ state minimum requirement which states that a full-time high school student must be enrolled in a minimum of four subjects that count toward graduation[4]. Each shift will include three (3) 90 minute classes plus a homeroom. Two (2) classes will be core instructional content and the third will be an elective. Two 90-minute core instructional classes (180 minutes) exceeds the AZ state minimum requirement of 164 core instructional minutes per day. Each subject includes 135 instructional hours per year. This exceeds the state minimum requirement of 123 hours per subject per year.[5] FES' proposed schedule will meet or exceed all daily, weekly, and yearly state instructional requirements.

The primary reason for FES' block-like schedule is that it allows students to focus on fewer classes for extended instructional periods of time. As a result, FES students will complete 3 full credits each semester rather than the more traditional 6 half credits. While the rationale for this schedule will be discussed in more detail later in this section, we believe--and research supports--that focusing on fewer classes for extended periods of time will better serve our target population and increase academic performance.[6, 7]

The following table shows FES' proposed daily schedule and the corresponding credit(s) earned per school year. Afternoon shifts will be available based on campus need.

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[4] §ASRS 15-901 The average daily membership of a full-time high school student shall be 1.0 if the student is enrolled in at least four subjects that meet at least 720 hours for a 180 day school year, *or the equivalent instructional hours*." [emphasis added]

[5] A student [must be] enrolled in at least an instructional program of four or more subjects that count toward graduation, each of which, if taught each school day for the minimum number of days required in a school year, would meet a minimum of 123 hours a year, *or the equivalent*, that meets for a total of at least 720 hours for a 180 school year, *or the instructional hours prescribed in this section in a recognized high school*. [emphasis added]

[6] Logan, R., & Geltner, P. (2000). The influence of session length on student success. Report for Santa Monica College

[7] BLOCK SCHEDULING HAS MANY BENEFITS. (1998, Nov 07). Buffalo News Retrieved from http://search.proquest.com/docview/381380405?accountid=458

DAILY SCHEDULE AND YEARLY CREDITS

SHIFT A (MORNING)

Start	Q1 (M-F)		Q2 (M-F)		Q3 (M-F)		Q4 (M-F)
7:40	Homeroom		Homeroom		Homeroom		Homeroom
8:00	Math		Math		Science		Science
9:30	break	Fall Break	break	Winter Break	break	Spring Break	break
9:35	English		English		So. Studies		So. Studies
11:05	break		break		break		break
11:10	Elective A		Elective A		Elective B		Elective B
12:40	End/lunch		End/lunch		End/lunch		End/lunch
	----Semester 1----				----Semester 2----		

Year Total

Subject	Credit
Math	1.0
Science	1.0
English	1.0
S.S.	1.0
Elective A	1.0
Elective B	1.0
TOTAL	6.0

SHIFT B (AFTERNOON)

Start	Q1 (M-F)		Q2 (M-F)		Q3 (M-F)		Q4 (M-F)
1:20	Math		Math		Science		Science
2:50	break	Fall Break	break	Winter Break	break	Spring Break	break
2:55	English		English		So. Studies		So. Studies
4:25	break		break		break		break
4:30	Elective A		Elective A		Elective B		Elective B
6:00	Homeroom		Homeroom		Homeroom		Homeroom
6:20	End		End		End		End
	----Semester 1----				----Semester 2----		

Year Total

Subject	Credit
Math	1.0
Science	1.0
English	1.0
S.S.	1.0
Elective A	1.0
Elective B	1.0
TOTAL	6.0

Table A.4.3 - FHS Recommended Daily Schedule

As this table shows, FES' proposed schedule will use a block schedule that incorporates three 90 minute classes per day in lieu of the more traditional six 45 minute classes. The proposed schedule includes six (6) subjects taught each year (3 each semester) that count towards graduation. This exceeds the AZ state minimum requirements of four subjects that count toward graduation[8]. The following table shows a proposed daily schedule for an FHS 9th grade student.

Q1 - 8/10 – 10/14 (47 days)

Q1	Start	End	Credit
Homeroom	7:40	8:00	
Algebra 1	8:00	9:30	0.50
break	9:30	9:35	
9 English	9:35	11:05	0.50
break	11:05	11:10	
Elective A	11:10	12:40	0.50
lunch	12:40	1:20	

Fall Break (10/17 - 10/21/2016)

Q2 - 10/24 – 12/23 (43 days)

Q2	Start	End	Credit	Semester Credit
Homeroom	7:40	8:00		
Algebra 1	8:00	9:30	0.50	1.0
break	9:30	9:35		
9 English	9:35	11:05	0.50	1.0
break	11:05	11:10		
Elective A	11:10	12:40	0.50	1.0
lunch	12:40	1:20		

Winter Break (12/26 - 1/6/2017)

Q3 - 1/9 – 3/10 (43 days)

Q3	Start	End	Credit
Homeroom	7:40	8:00	
Science	8:00	9:30	0.50
break	9:30	9:35	
Soc. Stud.	9:35	11:05	0.50
break	11:05	11:10	
Elective B	11:10	12:40	0.50
lunch	12:40	1:20	

Spring Break (3/13 - 3/17)

Q4 - 3/20 – 5/24 (47 days)

Q4	Start	End	Credit	Semester Credit
Homeroom	7:40	8:00		
Science	8:00	9:30	0.50	1.0
break	9:30	9:35		
Soc. Stud.	9:35	11:05	0.50	1.0
break	11:05	11:10		
Elective B	11:10	12:40	0.50	1.0
lunch	12:40	1:20		
				6.0

Summer Break (5/25/17)

Table A.4.3 – FHS 9th Grade Sample Schedule

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

[8] §ASRS 15-901 - A student [must be] enrolled in at least an instructional program of four or more subjects that count toward graduation, each of which, if taught each school day for the minimum number of days required in a school year, would meet a minimum of 123 hours a year, *or the equivalent*, that meets for a total of at least 720 hours for a 180 school year, or the instructional hours prescribed in this section in a recognized high school [emphasis added]. The average daily membership of a full-time high school student shall be 1.0 if the student is enrolled in at least four subjects that meet at least 720 hours for a 180 day school year, *or the equivalent instructional hours*." [emphasis added]

Prior to the start of the school year, FES will conduct 7 full days of professional development training. Thereafter, unless otherwise indicated, Professional Development Hours will be completed online[9] and must be completed within the months specified:

Date	Hours
8/1 – 8/9	56 (In person)
8/28	4
9/28	4
10/28	4
11/28	4
1/28	4
2/28	4
3/28	4
4/28	4
Total	88

Table A.4.5 – FHS Professional Development

RATIONALE

FES' weekly schedule offers students a choice between AM or PM classes. Afternoon classes can help students in our target demographic that need flexibility such as working students, teenage mothers, and entrepreneurs. The schedule also provides 1,350 instructional minutes per week in addition to a homeroom. That is 810 instructional hours per year, or 12.5% more instructional time than the state minimum requirement of 720 hours. The rationale to offer more instructional time is to provide students with increased exposure to the curriculum and an opportunity to apply lessons learned. Studies show that increasing instructional and application time positively impacts student achievement.[10] The schedule also uses double periods. This helps students focus on a particular type of curriculum for a longer period of time before transitioning to something new. It also allows student to take fewer classes at a time enabling them to focus more on each subject instead of attempting to manage multiple classes, projects, and homework assignment simultaneously. A growing body of studies have reported improved achievement resulting from such schedules as indicated by honor roll, grade point average, and numbers of A's and F's earned.[11] Research shows many benefits to block style

[9] Courses offered through PearsonEd: http://www.pearsonpd.com/index.cfm?locator=PS279p or similar web-based professional development provider

[10] Berends, M., Goldring, E., Stein, M., & Cravens, X. (2010). Instructional Conditions in Charter Schools and Students' Mathematics Achievement Gains. American Journal Of Education, 116(3), 303-335.

[11] Hottenstein and Malatesta, 1993; Hart, 1994; Buckman, King, and Ryan, 1995; Edwards, 199j; Schoenstein, 1997

scheduling such as longer blocks of instructional time, fewer interruptions per class, fewer starts and stops throughout the day, and more time for in depth focus on specific topics[12]. In one study, students at Bennett High School in Buffalo, NY cited the following benefits:[13]

> "[Block classes] have allowed us to spend more time in class discussing the material presented without being disrupted by a bell after only 40 minutes.
>
> Because of the double periods, and semester courses, we actually take less courses at any one time, thus enabling us to concentrate more on each subject without juggling too many classes or managing overlapping projects and homework assignments.
>
> There is less passing time (wasted) throughout the day, therefore less noise in our hallways.
>
> It has helped prepare us for college, where most classes are longer than 40 minutes.
>
> Our success rate, i.e.: passing the Regents exams, has gone up. We attribute this to the amount of time we spend in class."[14]

This schedule also includes daily homeroom time. Homeroom will be used to help students focus on and develop their SMART goals under the supervision of a teacher or administrator. Studies show that structured homeroom activities positively impact student achievement.[15]

The FHS school calendar also offers a clear, succinct, and easy to follow schedule that benefits students, teachers, and staff. The 180 day school year is divided into four 9-week quarters. Each quarter consists of three 90 minute blocks. Each class within a block focuses on subject material specific to that block (See Tables A.4.3 and A.4.5). This schedule exceeds the AZ state minimum requirements for full-time high school students as outlined in §ASRS 15-901.[16]

The following image (A.4.1) shows how FHS' yearly instruction will be divided into four 9-week quarters with each quarter focusing on three separate subject blocks.

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[12] Day, T. (1995). New class on the block. *The Science Teacher, 62*(4), 28. Retrieved from http://search.proquest.com/docview/214634053?accountid=458

[13] BLOCK SCHEDULING HAS MANY BENEFITS. (1998, Nov 07). Buffalo News Retrieved from http://search.proquest.com/docview/381380405?accountid=458

[14] BLOCK SCHEDULING HAS MANY BENEFITS. (1998, Nov 07). Buffalo News Retrieved from http://search.proquest.com/docview/381380405?accountid=458

[15] Smerdon, B. A. (2002). Students' perceptions of membership in their high schools. *Sociology of Education, 75*(4), 287-305. Retrieved from http://search.proquest.com/docview/216485153?accountid=4

[16] "A student [must be] enrolled in at least an instructional program of four or more subjects that count toward graduation, each of which, if taught each school day for the minimum number of days required in a school year, would meet a minimum of 123 hours a year, *or the equivalent*, that meets for a total of at least 720 hours for a 180 school year, *or the instructional hours prescribed in this section in a recognized high school*. The average daily membership of a full-time high school student shall be 1.0 if the student is enrolled in at least four subjects that meet at least 720 hours for a 180 day school year, *or the equivalent instructional hours*." [emphasis added]

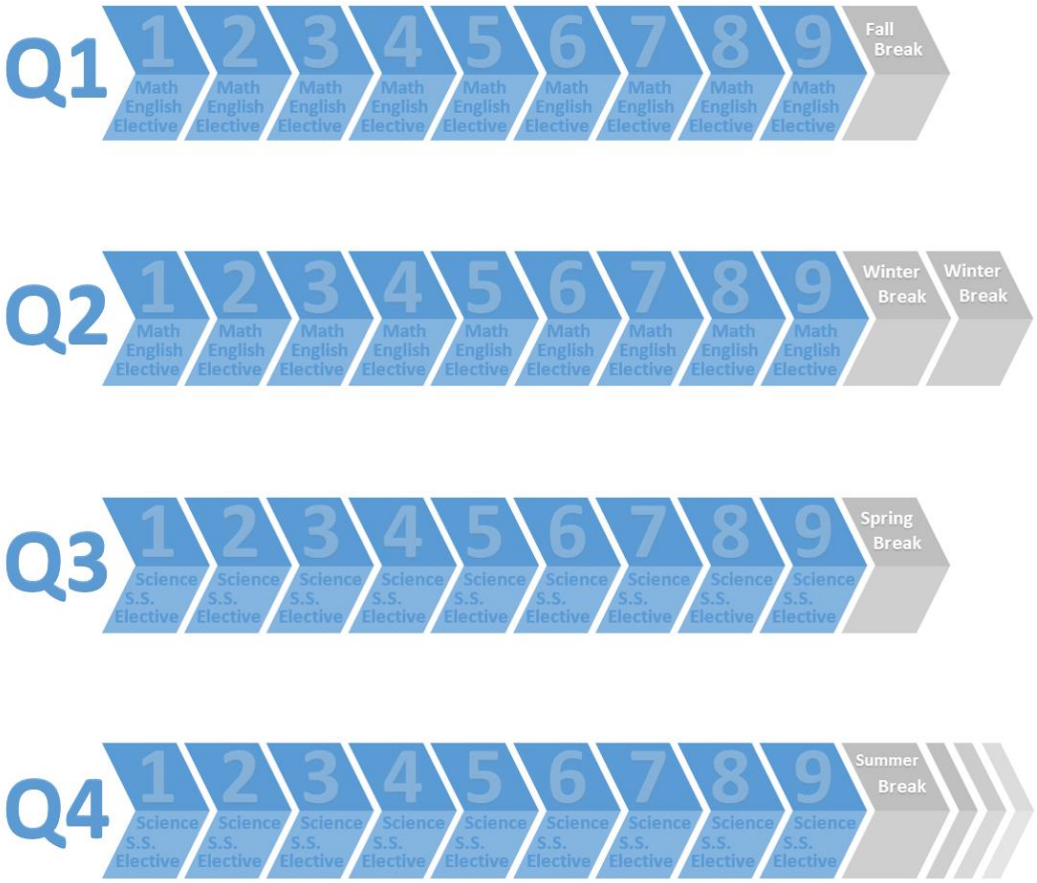

Image A.4.1 - FHS Quarterly Calendar Sequence

The rationale for breaking the year into quarters and arranging classes in this manner is (A) a quarterly schedule mirrors the schedules used by most businesses and professional work environments. Part of Focus High's vision and mission is to better prepare students for life beyond high school. Helping students think and act in terms of quarterly goals with clearly defined objectives and deadlines helps achieve this end. (B) Studies show that students taking fewer classes over a shorter period of time perform better than students taking many classes over an extended period of time. A study by Santa Monica College reviewed the GPA and course completion status of 446,000 students to determine the impact of course length on student achievement. The study found that students enrolled in shorter, 8-week courses with extended class periods outperformed those enrolled in identical[17] courses taught over a longer, 16-week period in both GPA and course completion percentage. The same results held true across all subjects and all demographics. [18]

[17] In terms of content, subject material, assignments, and total instructional time

[18] Logan, R., & Geltner, P. (2000). The influence of session length on student success. Report for Santa Monica College