

Area High Schools Recommend Longer Class Times in 2007-08

by Bend Weekly News Sources

Three area high schools propose retention of semester format and extension of classes

Three area high schools are recommending maintaining the current semester format with increased class time beginning in the 2007-08 school year. The recommendations from Bend, Summit and Mountain View high schools were submitted to Bend-La Pine Schools Superintendent Doug Nelson Friday afternoon. "We've asked our three largest high schools to review their daily schedules to ensure students are able to fulfill their personal education goals and to look for opportunities to reduce class sizes," said Nelson. The recommendations come following a Bend-La Pine School Board review of the Comprehensive Plan and Board request that schools look for opportunities to reduce class sizes and increase instructional time at the high school level. School Board Chair Scott Reynolds says that while the Board initially asked the schools to look at schedules to address class sizes, "We've found that there are great benefits to students when they have an opportunity to spend more time each day with their teachers." And students seem to agree. Mountain View Principal Bob Jones said a recent survey of students showed students rate availability of classes and variety of class offerings over class size. Jones worked with students, staff and community members to develop their recommendation for the next school year. "The Mountain View High School staff has a good understanding of the benefits of the current schedule and though no schedule is perfect, they feel that this schedule offers the most opportunities for students," Jones adds. Nelson said all schedules considered had strengths and weaknesses. "Our high school staff, working with their community, have considered many alternatives and recommended they maintain current schedules that best meet the educational goals of their students." "It's been a very well thought out process -- the schools have done a great job of involving students, staff and community members," said Reynolds, "They've talked to a lot of constituents in the last several months." Nelson will review the recommendations against the parameters established by the Bend-La Pine Schools and follow up with principals in the weeks to come. Nelson is expected to share the final recommendations at the January 23 meeting of the Board.

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