



# **Precision Staffing in Middle & High Schools: How SBOs Can Support Cost-Effective Staffing in a Post-ESSER World**

Southeast ASBO Conference  
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David James



## TEACHER & SCHOOL LEADER

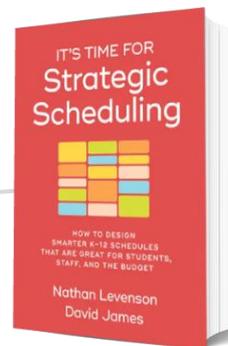
Led the fastest improving middle school in Massachusetts

## CONSULTANT

Served over 70 districts in over 20 states

## AUTHOR

Co-author of forthcoming *It's Time for Strategic Scheduling: Increase Learning and Lower Costs Through Smarter Schedules* (ASCD)



**Theresa Perry**

**FINANCE OFFICER**

Currently Chief Financial Officer at Dalton Public Schools (GA)

Has served two different city school districts in Georgia

Initial career experience in western New York





**New** K12  
**Solutions**

## Committed to cost effectively raising achievement and improving equity

- Social and Behavior Support
- Strategic Budgeting
- Special Education
- Intervention
- Scheduling



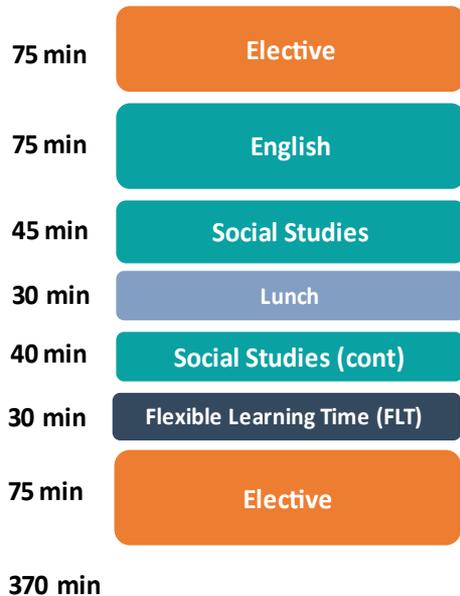


- **Enrollment:** 7,700
- **Operating Budget:** \$110 million
- **Per Pupil Expenditure:** \$14,000
- **Total Staff:** 1,000
- **FRPL Population:** 70%
- **ELL Population:** 27%
- **Special Ed Population:** 14%
- **Graduation Rate:** 85%
- **Schools:** 6 elementary, 1 middle school, 1 junior high, 2 high schools

# ABOUT

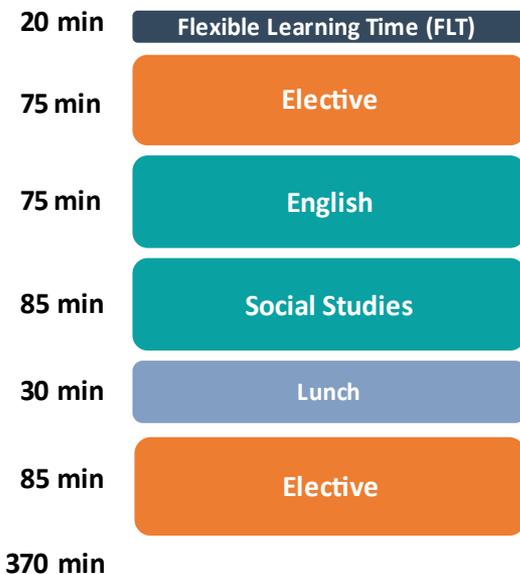
# DALTON SAMPLE SCHOOL SCHEDULES

## Sample Dalton Junior High School 8<sup>th</sup> Grader Schedule\*



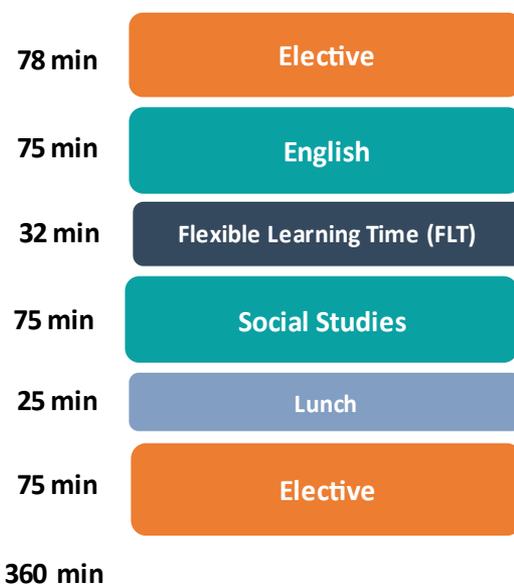
\*Three 5 -minute transition time between periods not shown

## Sample Dalton High School 10<sup>th</sup> Grader Schedule\*

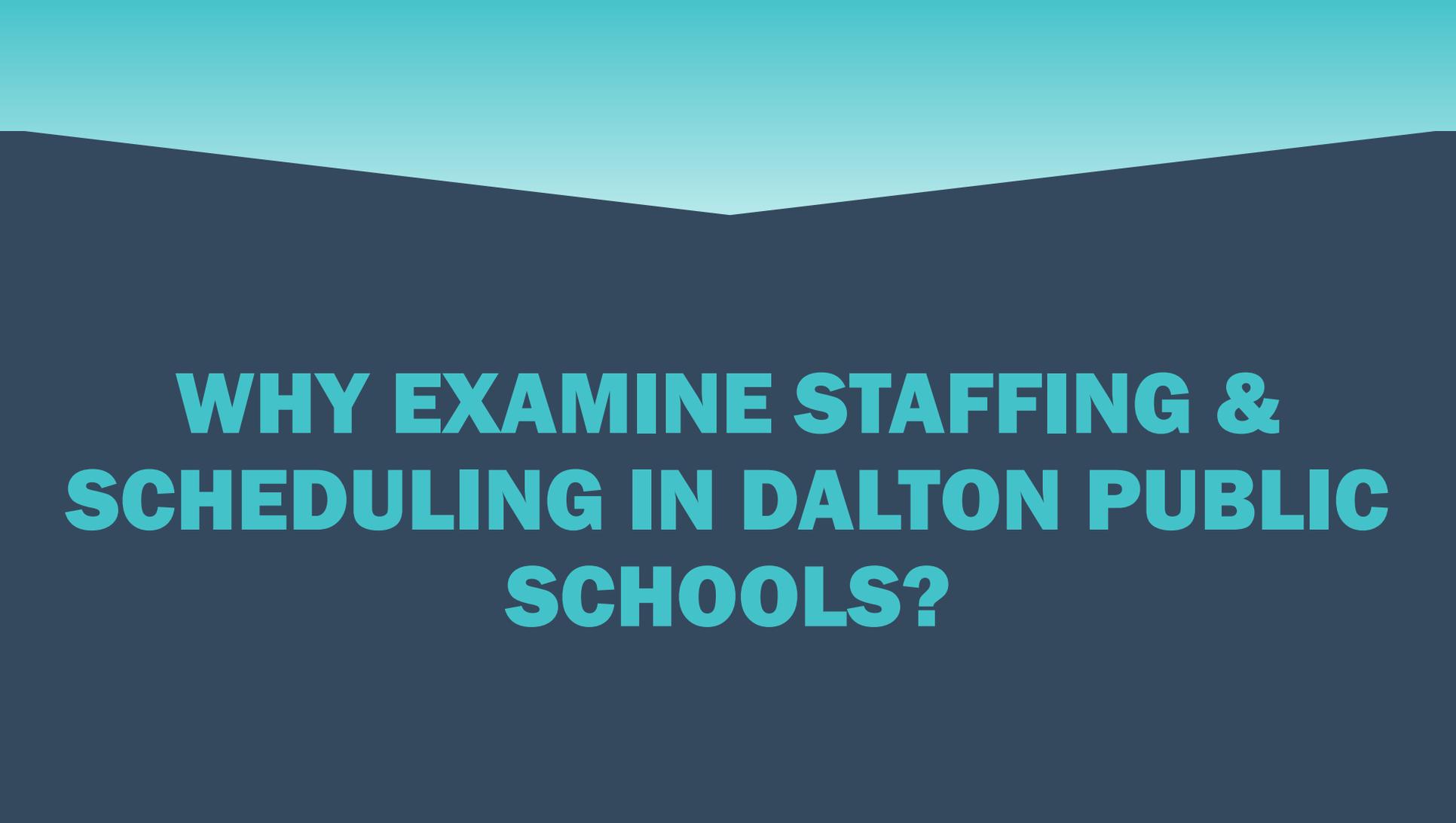


\*Three 5 -minute transition time between periods not shown

## Sample Dalton Academy 10<sup>th</sup> Grader Schedule\*\*

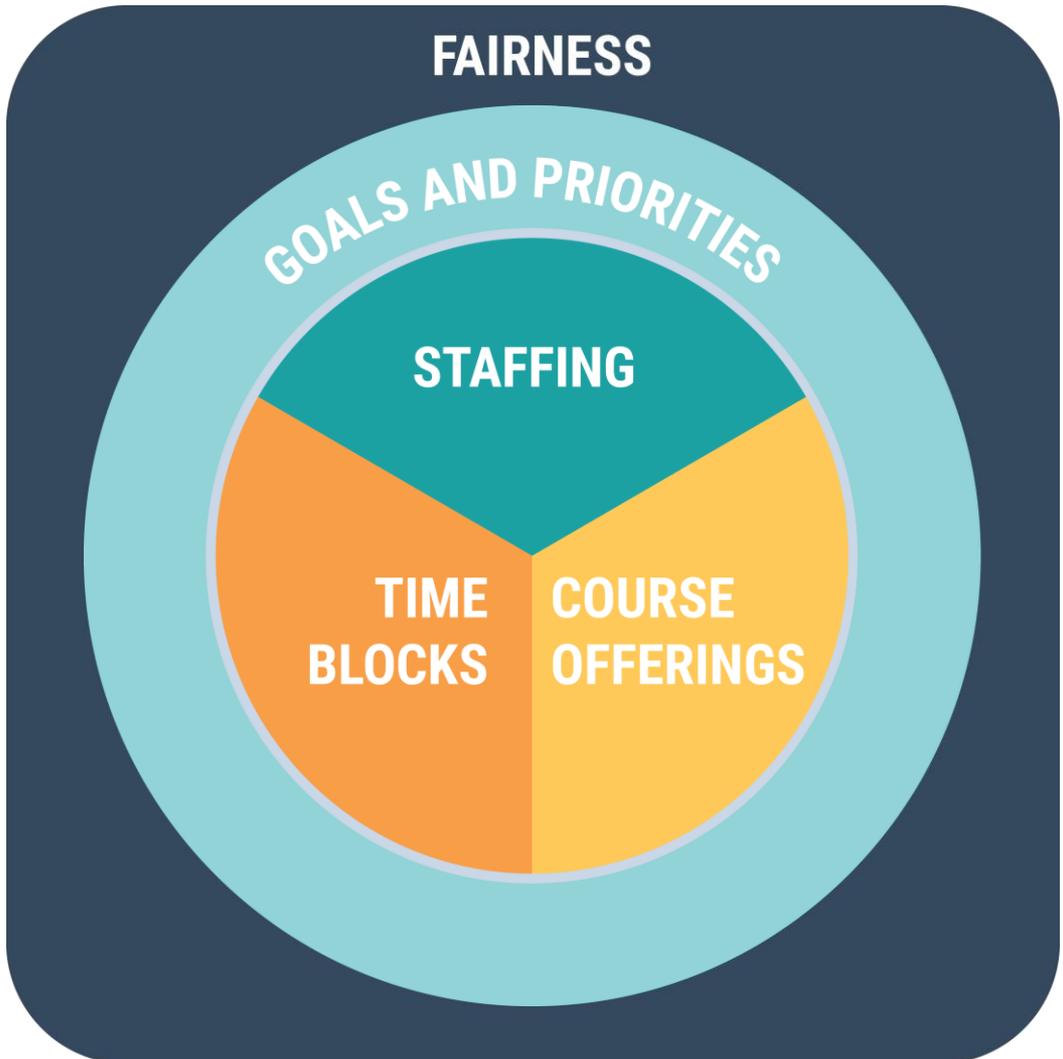


\*\*Five 5 -minute transition time between periods not shown



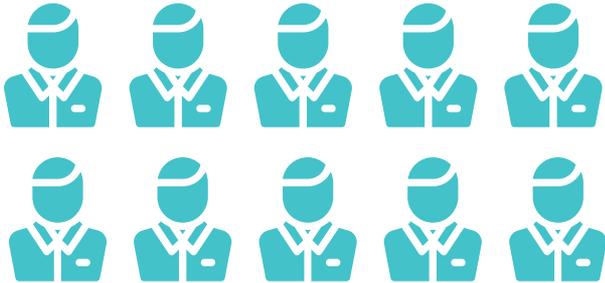
# **WHY EXAMINE STAFFING & SCHEDULING IN DALTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS?**

# STRATEGIC SCHEDULING FRAMEWORK



A more precise approach to secondary staffing can lead to more efficient staffing

### Math Department This Year

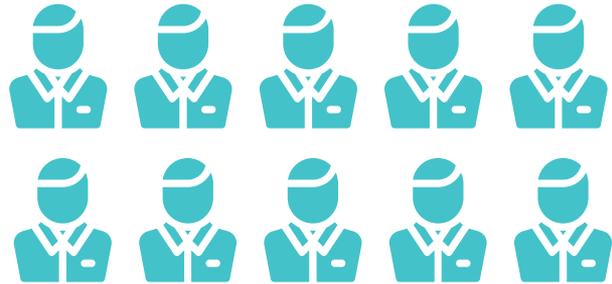


### Math Department Next Year

A more precise approach to secondary staffing can lead to more efficient staffing

### Math Department This Year

### Math Department Next Year



## A more precise approach to secondary staffing can lead to more efficient staffing

Course	Enrollment
Algebra	300
Geometry	100
Algebra 2	240
Pre-Calculus	320
Calculus	112
<b>Total</b>	

## A more precise approach to secondary staffing can lead to more efficient staffing

Course	Enrollment	Target class size
Algebra	300	25
Geometry	100	28
Algebra 2	240	26
Pre-Calculus	320	25
Calculus	112	28
<b>Total</b>		

## A more precise approach to secondary staffing can lead to more efficient staffing

Course	Enrollment	Target class size	Sections needed
Algebra	300	25	12
Geometry	100	28	4
Algebra 2	240	26	10
Pre-Calculus	320	25	13
Calculus	112	28	4
<b>Total</b>			<b>42</b>

# Sample Class Size Guidelines and Targets

Department	Sample Course	Minimum	Target	Maximum Allowable
English	Language Arts 1	15	25	28
	Language Arts 1 Honors	15	25	30
	Language Arts 2	15	25	28
	Language Arts 2 Honors	10*	15	30
	Language Arts 3	15	25	28
	Language Arts 4	15	25	28
	AP Eng Lang and Comp	10*	15	30
	AP Eng Lit and Comp	10*	15	30
	CP Public Speaking: The Power of Words	15	25	30
	Writing Seminar (Intervention)	7	12	15

*\*Select set of courses allowed lower minimum threshold for SY24-25 and SY25-26 to build enrollment and student interest*

A more precise approach to secondary staffing can lead to more efficient staffing

$$\text{FTE Required} = \frac{42 \text{ sections}}{5 \text{ periods per FTE}} = 8.4$$

Often an opportunity to add electives or intervention is hiding in plain sight

**9 FTE**



Often an opportunity to add electives or intervention is hiding in plain sight

**8.4 FTE**



NEW  
ELECTIVE

INTERVENTION

Class size increases slightly, but not above district targets



## Strategies to Staff Precisely

1

Set Nuanced Class Size Guidelines & Thresholds

2

Utilize Shared or Part-Time Staff

3

Combine Small Sections of Related Courses

4

Rotate When Classes Are Offered

5

Create Cross-School Virtual Sections of Select Electives



A growing  
number of  
people seek part  
time work



# MANY LOW ENROLLMENT & SINGLE SECTION COURSES

A low enrollment threshold of **15 students or fewer** was used

- **A total of 135 low-enrollment sections across the three schools**
  - ~53% of low enrollment sections in **core departments**
  - ~47% low enrollment sections in **non-core departments**
- **A total of 125 single section courses across the three schools**
  - ~28% of all low-enrollment courses **also single sections courses**

**OVER 80% OF  
ALL 9<sup>TH</sup>  
GRADERS TOOK  
AT LEAST ONE  
CLASS AT THE  
HIGH SCHOOLS**

## # OF UNIQUE JUNIOR HIGH STUDENTS

# of Courses Taken	Dalton High School	% of Total	The Dalton Academy	% of Total
1	118	34%	28	19%
2	141	40%	69	46%
3	65	18%	42	28%
4	21	6%	8	5%
5	6	2%	3	2%
Total	351	100%	150	100%

The majority of junior high students take **1-2 classes** at either of the high schools

# Staffing Scenarios

	DALTON HIGH SCHOOL		THE DALTON ACADEMY		DALTON JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL	
	FTE Saved	Approx. \$ Equivalent	FTE Saved	Approx. \$ Equivalent	FTE Saved	Approx. \$ Equivalent
Max Of 25 Students	4.2	\$356,000	2.8	\$263,000	3.5	\$232,000
Max Of 28 Students	10.2	\$945,000	5.0	\$465,000	9.3	\$864,000

*Opportunity at all three schools to staff more precisely and free up between 10.5 – 24.5 FTE to provide more intervention or elective opportunities to students. This is the equivalent of ~\$850,000 - \$2,275,000.*

# Links to Resources

- **LINK 1 - Sample staffing analysis summary to assess how closely schools (by department) are staffed to existing class size targets**
- **LINK 2 – Sample staffing analysis Excel tool to calculate how closely schools (by department) are staffed to existing class size targets**

# REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- 1. What other strategies have districts used to staff precisely to create more opportunities for students?**
- 2. What, if any, challenges do you anticipate in your school or district with these strategies?**



# PROJECT TIMELINE

## ESTABLISH INITIAL FACT BASE

### Winter

- Conduct 1:1 interviews with school & district leaders
- Collect & validate school and district data

## ENGAGE & ANALYZE

### Winter/Spring

- Engage teachers, staff, students, and stakeholders
- Conduct analysis of school and district course and staffing data

## SHARE FINDINGS

### Late Spring

- Share progress update and findings preview
- Share full set of findings and prioritize improvements

# Guiding Coalition

- Define district needs and manage project bid process
- Set overall project vision and scope
- Serve as district-level project leads
- Manage and coordinate all communication related to project
- Responsible for project success

# New Solutions K12

- Provide direction for project
- Share best practice research
- Provide project management
- Listen and learn
- Synthesize data and identify targeted recommendations
- Facilitate (sometimes challenging) conversations

# GUIDING COALITION MEMBERS

	Roles
DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION	Superintendent
	Chief Financial Officer
	Chief Human Resources Officer
	Director of School Support
	Director of Student Information
BUILDING LEADERSHIP	Principal (x3)
	Assistant Principal (x3)
SCHOOL-BASED STAFF	General Education Teacher (x3)
	Special Education Teacher (x3)
	Specials Teacher (x3)
	Counselor (x3)
	EL Teacher

Intentional mix of district leadership, school leadership, and school staff

# SAMPLE PRACTICES TO CONSIDER

## Schedule Structure

- 1A. Consider allowing **MIX OF CLASS PERIOD TYPES** to more effectively align class schedules to course content and student need
- 1B. Should a school use **SEMESTER-LONG DAILY BLOCK PERIODS** to help address challenges related to student attendance and engagement, consider creative ways to set students up for success when taking courses with “high stakes” or high-rigor assessments
- 2. Work to **MINIMIZE THE NUMBER OF 9th GRADERS AT DJHS THAT TAKE CLASSES AT DHS** to limit impact of time lost to busing

## Intervention

- 3. Expand **CONTENT-SPECIFIC, CREDIT-BEARING INTERVENTION OFFERINGS** in math and add intervention offerings in literacy, as necessary, to meet student need
- 4A. **RE-ENVISION FLEXIBLE LEARNING TIME** to more effectively provide structured relationship building and enrichment opportunities to students
- 4B. **REPURPOSE MINUTES CURRENTLY DEVOTED TO FLEXIBLE LEARNING TIME** towards academic periods to increase student time on learning

## Precision Staffing/ Enrollment

- 5. **STAFF MORE PRECISELY TO EXISTING ALLOWABLE DISTRICT CLASS SIZE GUIDELINES** with the goal to expand elective and intervention offerings for students
- 6. **MANAGE LOW-ENROLLMENT AND SINGLE SECTION CLASSES DIFFERENTLY** with the goal to expand elective and intervention offerings for students

## Process

- 7. Establish a **CLEAR PROCESS AND DISTRICT-LEVEL POINT PERSON** to guide and support the creation of secondary school schedules on an annual basis

# PRIORITIZATION ACTIVITY

A handwritten prioritization activity on a whiteboard. The items are listed vertically, separated by horizontal lines. Each item has several colored dots (purple, yellow, green, brown, orange) placed around it, likely representing a score or priority level. The items are:

- 1A. Mix of Class Types and Period types (2 yellow dots)
- 1B. Solutions for High Stakes Tests (AP) (1 orange dot)
- 2. Content Specific Intervention Courses (5 dots: 3 purple, 1 yellow, 1 brown)
- 3A. Re-envision FLT By adding more structure (6 dots: 3 purple, 1 green, 2 yellow, 1 orange)
- 3B. Repurpose FLT minutes To Core instruction (No FLT) (7 dots: 1 green, 1 yellow, 5 purple, 1 brown)
- 4. Minimize 9<sup>th</sup> graders busing to DHS (8 dots: 1 green, 7 purple, 1 brown)
- 5. Staff closer to district class size guidelines (0 dots)
- 6. Manage low enrollment & single sections (0 dots)
- 7. Engage in Scheduling Process (10 dots: 4 purple, 3 orange, 1 yellow, 2 brown)

# **ROLE OF SCHOOL BUSINESS OFFICERS IN SCHEDULING**

**1**

**Provide timely data to inform scheduling decisions**

**2**

**Help set class size limits (minimum, target, maximum)**

**3**

**Share objective staffing and class size data**

**4**

**Help align scheduling to budgeting and staffing timeline**

# Five Major Components to Secondary Scheduling

1 Program of Studies

2 Student Course Requests

3 Staffing Allocations & Assignments

4 Schedule Build

5 Schedule Adjustment



# REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- 1. In what way(s) can you contribute to improving the staffing and scheduling process in your school or district?**
- 2. Which stakeholders should be involved in these improvement efforts?**

“

*“Our dilemma is that we hate change and love it at the same time; what we really want is for things to remain the same but get better.”*

*- Sydney J. Harris*

*Former Columnist at the Chicago Sun-Times*

# Staffing and Scheduling Supports Available from New Solutions K12

**Email David James to learn more  
djames@newsolutionsk12.com**

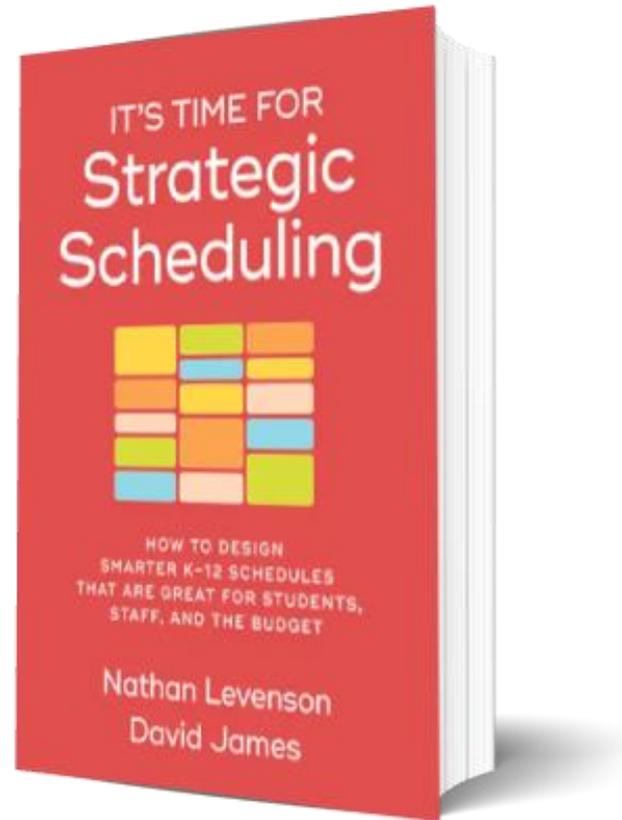
## Supports from the New Solutions K12 to help you design best-in-class staffing and scheduling models (K-12)

- District- or school-specific professional development
- Targeted hands-on support to conducted detailed staffing reviews
- Comprehensive review of existing staffing and scheduling practices and consultation to design improved, cost-effective systems

[Access our Strategic Elementary Schedules: How-To Guide](#)

[Access our Strategic Secondary Schedules: How-To Guide](#)

Many of the ideas shared today are expanded on and shared in more detail in:





Q + A



**THE WORLD  
HAS CHANGED**

**SO MUST SCHEDULES  
AND STAFFING**

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