

Changes Within Schedule Cause Complaint

The start of the year has seen several changes within the school schedule. Upper School Meeting has replaced Club Block 1, shifting the club block to Tuesday. Advisory Wednesdays have stayed the same, causing Club Block 2 to combine with Thursday Extra Help sessions.

Last spring, Academic Dean Heather Sugrue gathered a committee of class deans, department chairs, and other members of staff to discuss the 2022-2023 schedule. “People were really missing the chance to gather on a regular basis,” Sugrue said, explaining the reason behind the addition of Upper School Meetings. Associate Dean of Students André Heard added that frequent long weekends prevented Monday clubs from meeting consistently. “If you had a club on Monday, your club would basically never meet,” he said. “By shifting Club Block 1 to Tuesday, the clubs meet way more often: 29 times a year.”

Some clubs that took place on Mondays last year had found alternatives to skipping meetings. Asian Society Faculty Advisor Vivian WuWong said that Asian Society, which had previously been a Monday event, hadn’t lost many meetings despite frequent long weekends. Any week when Monday was a holiday, the affinity group would hold joint meetings with other clubs on days that weren’t Monday. She said the students “really liked [the joint discussions]” and didn’t have to worry about losing meeting times.

Sugrue said the idea of combining Club Block 2 with Extra Help “wasn’t a huge debate” during the committee meeting. With Advisory taking up Wednesday and Class Meeting filling in Friday, only Thursday’s slot remained open for students to hold their clubs. She and the committee decided not to remove Extra Help, as the sessions were “a useful benefit” to the students. Throughout the entire process, the committee did not inquire students about their take on the schedule.

Following this year’s schedule adjustments, students voiced how they felt. In an Upper School poll, 79% of the participants disliked the mergence of Club Block 2 and Extra Help. Erin Breva ‘27 said she couldn’t seek Mandarin help without skipping Science Olympiad, a club she joined consistently. Tang Club Board member Jennifer Li ‘26 called the combination a “sudden jump,” saying that club leaders didn’t even have the option of choosing—they were mandated to head their respective clubs at every meeting. She also said that, as someone who had frequently attended Extra Help last year, she hadn’t had the opportunity to join a single session these past several weeks.

If a student skips an Extra Help session, they must either schedule a separate meeting with their teacher or wait for the next Thursday to come. “It’s easy for teachers to ignore your messages because so many students are reaching out,” Li said, who had previously sought help via email. In the same poll, more than half the participants found it challenging to independently meet with teachers or preferred finding teachers during Extra Help.

In replacement of Club Block 1, Upper School Meeting has taken up Monday's second period. Li said she already had "enough school meetings" and "didn't need more." Aleena Fu '27 said people would be more engaged during the meetings if the announcements were shorter. She said, "it's great that there's time for us all to be together, but people's attention spans are only so long."

Jason Louie '25 added that last year's schedule was better because the clubs were spaced out across the week. "[Before,] the fun was all spread out...there are now so many club announcements on Thursdays, and it's too much." Li echoed this opinion by calling the clubs "crammed and overwhelming." "If you didn't go to extra help, you just had a thirty-minute free block, you know?" She said, referring to last year's schedule. "That was really nice, but it isn't possible anymore."

Sugrue also said she wished for a set time when everyone had freedom to do what they wanted—a time for people to "recharge and practice self-care"—but the number of events that occurred across the week made little time for such moments. She described the adjustment process as working on a puzzle of what worked and what didn't. "Making changes requires landing on a compromise of asking who's where during which club block," she said. "Not only are there few slots available, but also a long list of things that need to fit into those spaces."

The daily schedule evolved many times in the past, and Sugrue said "acknowledging that things weren't perfect" was important. She learned from the committee gathering that much data collection was needed this year. Looking forward, she hopes to ask the entire student body—including club and affinity heads—for feedback on the year so far.