

THE CHARGER

WHS to switch from block to 7-hour schedule

Hannah Mumpower
@Hmump01

WHS will have a new schedule format next school year.

The current schedule format at WHS is an 8-hour block schedule. Students have four classes each A day, and four different classes the next day with a 45 minute Adviser Base period between 1st and 2nd block every day.

The new schedule beginning next school year will be a standard 7-hour schedule with an Adviser Base period every day.

"The primary driving factor in my mind and I think in the staff's mind is ultimately 'What is the best

case scenario for the success of kids academically?" principal Jan Hutley said. "That is the number one thing we're looking at, it's what's best for the kids. I want you guys to do well."

The suggested new schedules included an 8-hour standard schedule, blended block schedules that included both block and standard days and the 7-hour standard schedule.

"The schedule has been looked at in the past," Hutley said. "I don't think anything prompted it with me. I think that conversation had already started before I got here."

With the 7-hour standard schedule, there will be an increase in stu-

dent time in each class by about one hour every week. Currently, students have about 3.5 hours of each class a week, not counting classes missed for any absences. With the new 7 hour schedule, that time will increase to 4.5 hours in each class per week.

"I think it will improve the students academically as they will retain information better when they see the subject every day instead of the current every other day," math teacher Roger Alderman said.

Along with the core classes hoping to benefit from the change in the schedule format, classes such as weights are looking forward to seeing students more consistently.

"Weight class will be able to have more of a routine," physical education teacher Garrett Eck said. "The shorter class times will allow workouts to be more intense as there won't be a need for long break times."

With the schedule change, students will have one less elective class each semester. The loss of a class each year requires a change in graduation requirements, which the school board approved last week.

Along with one less elective, senior hour will no longer be an option for eligible seniors and changes will also be made to the way teacher aides are assigned.

However, despite having one less

class offered each day, there are no foreseeable changes in classes offered at WHS.

"I don't feel like in the long run, if students do an appropriate job of planning, that the loss of elective opportunities is going to be an issue," Hutley said.

Students are doing preliminary enrollment this week, which will allow the school to build a 7-hour schedule before the end of the year. Possibilities include moving adviser base to the end of the day and moving band and choir to the end of the day.

BRIEFS

BARBER WINS POWERLIFTING COMPETITION

Junior Laurel Barber out-lifted the state powerlifting competition.

This was Barber's third year competing at 1A state powerlifting where she competed in bench, clean and squat. Barber placed 1st in clean and bench, 2nd in squat, and 1st overall. Due to the meet being a new powerlifting competition, Barber holds the record for clean and bench in 1A state along with the overall weight record of 515 pounds.

"I think I started the day off strong, then throughout the day I started to lose energy, but I'm still proud of my overall performance," Barber said.

Barber created a personal goal this year to finish each lift five pounds from her max lift.

"Although I was a little farther away from my personal goal I was still proud of how my performance was and how I ended this season,

CHEERLEADING ANNOUNCES ROSTER

With a larger team this year including five newcomers and five returning All-Americans, coach Cheryl Lewis looks forward to an exciting season.

"I'm very excited for our stunt possibilities as well as our continued growth as cheerleaders and dancers," Lewis said.

Along with the growth and possibilities, Lewis said she was looking forward to the new and exciting ideas that will be infused to the team.

The team has fourteen members who are excited to see where the season take it.

"I am excited to see how far the team can grow and improve," junior Kaytlyn Mekese said.

USD 329 APPROVES STAFF CHANGES

The USD 329 school board made several employment decisions at last week's board meeting. The board approved the hiring of current Mission Valley teacher Jamie Rogers as 5-12 choir and band teacher. Rogers will replace the retiring Richard Philbrook. The board also hired current student teacher Cara Flach as preschool teacher and current elementary special education teacher Kolby Harris for 5th grade.

The board accepted the resignation of special education teacher Callie Taylor and assistant football coach Adam Laubert. Both are moving at the end of the year.

SPRING SPORTS PREVIEW

Softball reloads after winning state championship

Emma Frey
@_emmalfrey_

After winning a state championship last season, softball hopes to reload for a return to state this spring.

Coach Brian Henry has high expectations for the team. "It really depends on how they come together as a team," Henry said.

Losing only two players from the state team last year, graduate Hadley Schreiner and injured sophomore Reagan Kelley, the team plans to return strong.

"We only lost one senior and we gained some really good freshman," senior Abby Oliver said. "We have some good underclassmen who are improving and gaining experience."

Freshman joining the team this spring include Kaelyn Conrad, Madisyn Havenstein, Kara Hafenstine and Mayah Mumpower. "There are some underclassmen who will push for playing time. There's some pretty good ones," Henry said.

Wabaunsee still plans to have some competition entering the 2019 season. The girls fell to Rossville last year, and with Rossville dropping to 2A they expect to have competition in their regional this year.

"We still have to play in the tough Mid-East League and there's a possibility of Rossville being in our regional," Henry said, "A lot of the teams we lost to last year are returning the same talent."

The team returns some talent of their own this year, including junior pitcher Autymn Schreiner. Schreiner announced her verbal commitment to Washburn University last week. "I'm super excited about committing to Washburn. I've heard so many good things about Coach Holaday and Washburn's softball program," Schreiner said, "Plus, they are continuing to upgrade their facilities which is awesome. Even though I can't wait to play at the next level, I still have two more state championships to go win with our high school team."

"It should be a good year. As long as we get along, we'll be fine," Henry said. The team hopes to see a lot of the same success they saw last year.

"I'm really excited to get the season started and see what our new group of really talented girls can get

accomplished," Schreiner said.

The team opened the season against Chase County Tuesday.

TRACK RETURNS 7 STATE QUALIFIERS

Eleanor Badeker
@ellybadeker

The WHS track team is set for an exciting season this year. The team includes more than 20 athletes, including seven returning state qualifiers.

Coach Roger Alderman has clear goals for the team. "My goal is for us to be performing at our best when it comes to league, regionals and state," Alderman said.

There are two returning girl throwers that previously qualified for state, junior Laurel Barber and senior Bailey Coon. Coon said that her goal was to return to state. "I'm nervous. I really have to work more to get farther distance, because I'm going to have some competition this year. Especially with some freshmen that are going to be coming in," Coon said.

Other returning state qualifiers are seniors Travis McCall and Sean Dugger, juniors Luke Stuhlsatz and Bryce Tharman and sophomore Jace Reves.

Along with the returning athletes, 10 freshmen and junior Jasmine Boatwright have joined the team. Alderman said that they were all working well to start the season. "As long as we get effort, things usually turn out well for us," Alderman said.

Boatwright and Adam Miller are both dual sporting, taking on track as well as softball for Boatwright and baseball for Miller.

The team opens the season Friday at Lyndon and competes at home April 5.

BASEBALL TEAM RETURNS LOTS OF EXPERIENCE

Brendan Praeger
@bpraeger

If a few plays had gone differently, the Charger baseball team could be looking at three straight state appearances.

The team made the school's only state appearance in 2017, but in both 2016 and 2018, the season ended in the regional championship game — one run short of vic-



Junior Jackson Frank pitches during a varsity baseball game last season. The team returns an experienced roster from last season. "We really need to improve our focus during games and practice," Frank said. The Chargers opened the season Tuesday against Chase County.

tory.

According to senior Logan Brown, that history makes this team hungry for success. The Chargers opened the season Tuesday against Chase County, the team that ended its season last year. "We really want revenge for regionals," Brown said.

The team should have the offensive firepower to be competitive again, returning four of the top five batting averages from last season. "Batting average and runs scored was the highest it has been in my time here," assistant coach Jess Rutledge said.

Despite graduating several seniors, the team is full of experienced players. "We have lots of depth overall. A number of kids can play multiple positions, so we'll be pretty versatile," head coach Jeron Weishaar said.

Rutledge said the versatility could provide a strategic advantage. "Last year we had to adjust a lot for injuries, so we have a lot of guys with varsity experience," Rutledge said. "We have enough depth to potentially play two completely different lineups in a double header without missing a beat."

Pitching will provide more of a challenge, as the team looks to develop a larger roster of talent early in the season. Pitchers include juniors Jackson Frank and Eli Wollenberg, sophomores Tyler Lohmeyer and Isaac Lira and freshman Cade Oliver. "We have several

pitchers, but we graduated about 50 percent of our innings pitched, so gaining experience early in the season will be important," Weishaar said.

Junior Eli Wollenberg said the team's experience playing together will make them more competitive. "Everyone from our old 14 and under team, the Rattlers, is on the team this year. You know how they play and can count on them during a game," Wollenberg said.

"We've been playing together since grade school, so we have good chemistry as a team," junior Chad Chambers said.

Brown said the team is ready to compete, but they need to stay focused throughout the season. "We need to work hard to continue getting better. A lot of younger players are stepping up. We have good leadership too — everyone wants to hold each other accountable."

Chambers also expects the team to play well. "I think we have the athleticism to win lots of games, but we need to make sure we have the mentality of a winning team. We have to work hard during practice. I think we expect to be a team that can go to state."

Results against Chase County were not available at press time, but the team will continue its season Tuesday at home against Mission Valley.