

# Changing things up

## Next school year to bring some changes

by senior Olivia Griffith.

Three years ago, 8-period scheduling changed life as we knew it at Hudson middle and high schools. Just last year, 1:1 laptops and the Canvas Learning Management System had a huge impact on how we learn at Hudson High. And now it seems the 2015-16 school year is about to have some big changes of its own.

### Changing Times

One decision that will affect both students and teachers alike is the new start date. Based on past start dates, Hudson's school year would have started Thursday, August 13th, but the state legislature's recent decision to change how school start date waivers are approved has pushed the start date back to Monday, August 24th. Students used to being gradually acclimated to the school year by a shortened week will be faced with a full week of school straight off the bat.

In addition, this change forces the superintendent to recommend that the first semester ends after winter break on January 8th, leading to protest from the student body.

A recent poll from The Pirate Press found 90% of incoming sophomores, juniors and seniors disagree with the decision, believing the first semester should end before winter break. If the proposal is approved, students will have from December 23rd to January 3rd off from classes. They will then return to two days of class, one day of review, then semester testing.

"Most students forget a lot of material during break," said junior Abby Bailey, who is against the new end date. "This is a way of setting students up to fail. Students will be given time to study over break, but most families are busy and no one wants to study during a break."

According to high school principal Jeff Dieken, the schedule is this way so that both semesters will have an equal amount of days. If the first semester ended before break, the second semester would be seven days longer than the first. This would lead to an inequality in the amount of material covered for many semester classes, as well as middle school

exploratory classes that only meet for a quarter at a time. He also stated that there is not a lot of data to support that testing after winter break will lower test scores.

Guidance counselor Marcy Baltz, who advocates for the "consistency in instructional days for both semesters" acknowledges the proposed end date for first semester is not ideal. "Although I would not mind if the semester ended on the 8th, I do think we need to assess the date that we give final exams. It has always been difficult for students to take weeks off and then get back in the right mindset for finals. We may need to be creative in the way we finish off the first semester."

### Changing Classes

Another change coming to Hudson is the addition of new classes for high school students.

One of these will be Digital Mass Media, which will be taught by middle school history teacher Wayne Haskovec. The class will involve analyzing popular videos and making student-produced videos using green screens.

"I'm excited to take Digital Mass Media next year," said sophomore Dylan Petersen. "I've heard it's going to be a lot like the TV Showtime Pirate Term so I think it will be fun."

Another new class to be offered is Storytelling Through Film, a course dedicated to watching classic films and assessing why they are such highly regarded movies. High school English teacher Joletta Yoder will lead students into discussing what goes into bringing such stories to life, including everything from camera angles to sound tracks.

Although there will be new classes added to the schedule, students also won't be able to take some courses offered in the past.

With the retirement of family consumer science (FCS) teacher Deb Stanek and the inability of the district to find a replacement after a year-long search, FCS classes will no longer be taught at Hudson. If students still have a strong interest in taking these kind of courses, they would have to

travel to Waterloo West, likely taking up three periods for one class to allow for travel.

"I think it's really going to hurt the education available to students," said senior Kara Nunemaker. "I've taken an FCS class every year, and I've learned so many real-world skills that I can take with me after I graduate."

### Changing Assistants

Another option that will be cut back for students is becoming a teacher's assistant (TA). While in the past, students could be a TA for as many teachers as they could fit in their schedule, students will now only be able to have one TA period per semester. Similarly, even though teachers could have as many TAs as they wanted up until this point, they will now only be allowed one TA per semester unless they appeal for more.

"I liked having multiple TAs because not all of my students can fit art into their schedules, so they could do independent art at the same time as their TA," said high school art teacher Laura Angove, who had three TAs this semester.

While Dieken sees the benefits of TAs for both teachers and students, he has noticed a decline in the effectiveness of the program in recent years. He hopes to improve the system through the new rule.

"The activities TAs should be involved in need to be educationally grounded," said Dieken. "Sitting around doing study hall work probably isn't the best use of their time. By only allowing one TA per teacher or student per semester, we're trying to tighten things up for our TAs and give preference to those who are truly interested in education as a career."

With a new year comes new opportunities, and students are in for plenty next year. From a different start date to brand new class choices, changes are certainly in store for both students and teachers.

And they say nothing ever happens in a small town.



by sophomore Takoda Rhoades.

Pirate Term, 6 days at the end of the school year where students take one, creative class every day, is in its third year. This "mini-mester" is designed to give students the opportunity to study a single topic in-depth.



### "Drama 101

will allow you to experience theater acting in an exciting, new way."

-7-12 music teacher  
Julie Anderson

"I had a blast in **Artrepreneurs** (renamed 'Meet the Masters') because I love doing crafts, like the one we did with old records."

-junior Gabi Petry

"**Pirate Pickers** taught me interesting skills, like how to run a saw and how to repurpose old things into new things."

-senior Kara Nunemaker

