

Cascading Daily Schedule

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
7:15-7:45		Study Lab	Study Lab		Study Lab
First Bell 7:50				Late Start First Bell 9:00 - Rotating: Faculty meeting, PLC, Devotion and Prayers, PLC	
Class 1 7:55-8:55	A	A	A 7:55-8:50		A
Class 2 8:55-9:55	B	B	B 8:50-9:45	E 9:05-10:10	B
Class 3 9:55-11:10	MS Break 9:55- 10:10	MS Break 9:55- 10:10	Rotation* 9:45- 10:15	Chapel 10:10-10:55	MS Break 9:55- 10:10
	C	G	F 10:15-11:10		D
HS Class 4 11:10-12:10 MS Lunch 11:10-11:40	D	C	HS Class G 11:10-12:05	HS Class F 10:55-12:00	E
			MS Lunch 11:10- 11:50	MS Lunch 10:55-11:35	
MS Class 4 11:40-12:40 HS Lunch 12:10-12:40	D	C	MS Class G 11:50-12:50	MS Class F 11:35-12:35	E
			HS Lunch 12:05- 12:50	HS Lunch 12:00- 12:40	
Class 5 12:40-1:40	E	D	C 12:50-1:45	G	F
Class 6 1:40-2:40	F	E	D 1:45-2:40	C	G
Study period/Office Hours 2:40-3:10					
2:40-3:45	Study Lab open	Study Lab open		Study Lab open	
			Rotation* Advisory Assembly Clubs		



WESTMINSTER CHRISTIAN ACADEMY

Cascading Daily Schedule

[View Slideshow](#)

Why is WCA changing the Upper School Schedule?

Our current schedule can be stressful and overwhelming for our students. We have too many classes each day. Students have little time to reflect upon what they have learned; teachers have little time to check for students' understanding. Many students just try to "get done" because they have to move on to the next class. The hectic pace is detrimental to effective learning.

We desire to lighten backpacks and reduce the stress of having to prepare for seven or eight classes each night. By cascading many of the classes, students will experience classes at different times of the day; thus allowing learning during peak times for each of them.

With the addition of an *advisory program*, every student will be part of a smaller community with a teacher mentor. These meetings will occur once or twice a month.

We have not reduced instructional time in the new daily schedule. We have altered how time will be used. Many hours of research, training, and consultation with scheduling experts have gone into this year-long process.

Key points about the Cascading Daily Schedule:

- With the new schedule, students will have five core classes, two electives and an end-of-the-day study hall. This study hall is 30 minutes. Students may see teachers during this time if needed.
- Although the students will have seven classes, they will only attend six each day. Each class will meet four days per week. As a result, students will have fewer books to carry home and fewer classes to prepare for each day.
- Research has shown that students need time to reflect on what they have learned in class. With longer class periods, students will have cognitive transition time (time to process what they have learned). Also, teachers can better assess their students' understanding of the material they have covered each day.
- There is no built-in time between classes. Since students, for the most part, will have two classes and then a break, they will need to carry books for only two subjects with them at a time. Middle school teachers and their students will work out a plan for students to go to their lockers in the afternoon with a short break before or between their last two classes.

- On the Cascading Daily Schedule model, where two rows are repeated, one is middle school lunch when the high school is in class four; the other is high school lunch when middle school is in class four.
- Study lab hours have been added before and after school. This is a time when a tutor will be available to students.
- The office hours on the schedule refer to the time during study hall when teachers will be in classrooms with their study hall but also available to students.
- Every Wednesday from 9:45-10:15 a.m., students will have an advisory meeting, a club meeting or an assembly. These activities will be rotated throughout the month.
- We have reduced the number of WCA required graduation credits by one elective unit; we have not reduced the offerings. This has no impact on scholarship or college requirements.
- Thursday Morning: “Late Start Thursday” will allow families and students to have a more relaxed morning. The shuttle will run as normal, and students can arrive as early as 7:00 a.m. Students that arrive before the first bell (9:00 a.m.) will be supervised. This schedule gives students the freedom to arrive later, have family breakfast, meet for Bible Study, or collaborate on a project, while also giving teachers time to collaborate. **Note: Lower School will still begin at 8:00 a.m. on Thursdays.**

We welcome your questions and comments. Please email them to mandy.hiller@wca-hsv.org

Administrators will be available at the State of the School Address to answer questions.



Cascading Daily Schedule FAQ

1. **Why is WCA changing its daily schedule?** Over the last few years, we have received feedback from students and parents about the level of stress that comes with an eight period day. Students have struggled with heavy backpacks, very late nights, finding a time to meet with a teacher when they are not teaching, needing a study hall period at the end of the day, and missing the same class due to co-curricular activities. After an intense year of training, research, consulting with schedule experts, and dozens of drafts, we have arrived at a schedule we believe will benefit our students.
2. **Can I drop my student off at normal time on late start Thursdays?** Yes, we will have supervision for the students. This is intended to be a study time; however, students are free to initiate peer led Bible studies, study groups, club meetings or fellowship with friends.
3. **On Thursdays, will the morning shuttle from south Huntsville still run at the normal time? Will the shuttle between campuses also run at the normal time?** Yes, the shuttle from south Huntsville will continue at its usual time and will complete its normal daily run between the campuses.
4. **Will the “no homework policy” on Wednesday nights remain in place?** We no longer need the policy. Your student may have homework on Wednesday nights, but only three of the classes that meet on Wednesdays will also meet on Thursdays. Students are welcome to come to the school at the usual time on Thursdays to finish assignments.
5. **Will reducing the number of credits required to graduate from 27 to 26 impact my student’s ability to get into college?** No, the state of Alabama requires 24 credits for graduation, and we remain above that. Please refer to the college admissions information and Carnegie Units Chart found at the end of this document.
6. **Why are the first two classes of the day fixed?** Since we share teachers between the Upper and Lower Campus, they need fixed times at the Upper school to insure the best schedule times at Lower. We also have speakers for the Senior Bible Series who must be able to come in the mornings. Band is fixed so that marching band can continue to begin before school and have longer sessions during the marching season.
7. **If we have a Monday holiday, what classes will the students have on Tuesday?** Students will remain on the Tuesday schedule. We will not “shift” the schedule.
8. **What about days that are delayed or dismissed early due to inclement weather?** As in the past, we will have modified schedules that enable the classes for that day to meet for the maximum time that can be accomplished.

9. **Will the students receive color coded schedules?** We will print black and white schedules, and invite the students to color code as they wish. A color coded sample schedule will remain on the website.
10. **What is the Study Lab?** Study Lab is designed for students who are at-risk academically. There will be designated times to implement supports established by Academic Support Services or that are requested by a student or teacher. It will be staffed by the Upper School Academic Support Instructor.
11. **What is involved in the activity rotation time?** Each Wednesday 7th through 12th grade students will participate in a set activity designed to intentionally develop social balance, emotional health, spiritual growth and academic success in our students. Activities include assemblies, clubs, study time and advisory. Sixth grade will follow their own unique activities based on the needs of the class.
12. **What is advisory?** In practice, advisory is made up of student small groups that meet on a regular schedule, where they learn valuable life skills that are not the focus in regular academic classes. A key goal is for your student to have an adult in their school life who knows them beyond the classroom.
13. **Will seniors still have the senior lunch privilege?** Yes. Seniors who are passing all classes, in good attendance standing, and free of behavioral issues, may participate in senior lunch with signed parent permission documentation. Senior lunch will remain on Wednesdays.
14. **Why have a break time?** We all need a break after intense periods of time. Research shows that breaks provide opportunities for students to refocus, process and retain recent information. When students return to work, they are refreshed and can focus.
15. **What can students do during the break time?** Students can go to their lockers, have a snack, get some fresh air, visit with friends, use the restroom, and take a mental break.
16. **What if my student is in middle school, but has a high school class?** Your student will take the break with the high school class.
17. **Can middle school students have a second break in the afternoon since they have three classes in a row?** Once the school year has begun, middle school teachers will collaborate and determine when an afternoon break is best. The intention is to allow teachers to keep the time fairly flexible as to the various needs of the classes throughout the week.
18. **Why is there no break built into Wednesdays and Thursdays?** Students have that cognitive transition time built into the schedule through Wednesday rotation and Thursday chapel time.
19. **Why has chapel moved to Thursdays?** Since many of our students also attend Wednesday evening church activities, having Thursday chapel begins to prepare us for the weekend.
20. **Will there be teacher training on the new schedule?** Upper school teachers will receive professional development training on how to use their time in this new format. Many of the teachers have already begun working on new pacing and have integrated the new class times into their plans for next year.
21. **Why is there no passing time between classes?** According to ISM, *Independent School Management*, the more time awarded between classes, the more time students will take. Tongue-in-cheek, they recommend students be encouraged to get to their next class “instantly.” There is a learning curve with the process, but students will become accustomed

to getting where they need to be without wasting time. Students will be able to go to the restroom and lockers between every two to three classes.

22. **What will the faculty do on Thursday mornings?** Since many of our teachers have multiple grade levels and subjects, finding a regularly scheduled collaboration time is nearly impossible. The amount of grading that teachers must accomplish after hours makes having a morning time, when all are available, the optimum time. The Thursday morning late start will allow common planning, time to collaborate and fine tune vertical alignment of curriculum, or meet regarding at-risk students.
23. **What if my student wants to take a dual enrollment class at a local college?** Students may leave campus at 2:40 to take an additional class. Additionally, Calhoun and the University of Alabama offer online coursework.
24. **My student wants to work after school. When can he leave campus?** Juniors and seniors in good academic standing, with all A's and B's, may leave campus at 2:40 with signed parent documentation.
25. **What about the start of afternoon athletic teams?** Students participating in an in-season sport may be dismissed at 2:40 to begin practice. The Athletic Department will determine which sports and grade levels.
26. **What is the Study Period/Office Hours designation?** This is the time when all **teachers** will be available to students. Many parents and students have requested a study hall at the end of the school day. The time from 2:40 - 3:10 gives students the opportunity to connect with their teachers one more time at the end of the school day. A random sampling of students showed that students often feel as if they "waste" a study hall because it seems to "go on forever" under the current schedule. However, with only 30 minutes in the new schedule, they feel that they can effectively focus on the completion of assignments, knowing that the "end of the day" is near.

Teachers who are also coaches may not be available. Students are encouraged to schedule another time to meet with those teachers if needed.

Carnegie Units Chart

The chart below displays the Carnegie units required by some of the colleges our graduates have attended.

<p>Auburn University</p>	<p>4 years English 3 years social studies 3 years math 2 years science</p>
<p>Liberty University</p>	<p>4 units of English 2-3 years of college preparatory mathematics 2 years of laboratory science 2 years of social science 2 years of foreign language At least 4 units of elective credits</p>
<p>Mississippi State University</p>	<p>4 units of English 3 units of math 4 units of science 3 units of social studies 1 unit of arts 2 units advanced electives ½ unit technology</p>
<p>Troy University</p>	<p>15 Carnegie units, with three or more units in English</p>
<p>University of Alabama</p>	<p>4 units of English 4 units of social sciences 3 units of mathematics 3 units of natural sciences 1 unit of foreign language 5 additional units of academic courses</p>

<p style="text-align: center;">University of Alabama in Huntsville</p>	<p>4 units of English 3 units of math 3 units of science 4 units of social studies 4 units of electives</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">University of Mississippi</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Required number of units</p> <p>4 units of English 3 units of math 3 units of science 3 units of social studies 1 unit of arts 2 units advanced electives ½ unit technology</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Recommended number of units</p> <p>4 units of English 4 units of math 4 units of science 4 units of social studies 1 unit of arts 2 units advanced electives ½ unit technology</p>