



# Academy of Science & Technology George Waters Middle School

190 Ferry Road  
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<http://georgewaters.sjasd.ca>

June 25, 2019

Dear George Waters Middle School community,

At George Waters Middle School, our leadership team continues to look at all the ways we can increase student learning and student engagement. In particular, looking at the learning environment created by our school day and how we can move from a restrictive traditional school day, to a more balance approach. A balanced school day model has been adopted by schools across our province and has achieved a measureable amount of success in student learning. We believe that some of the advantages of a balanced day include:

- Greater opportunity to balance physical activity and nutrition to increase student concentration
- Less interruptions throughout the day
- Greater flexibility in scheduling
- Less unsupervised time for our students
- Greater flexibility in scheduling for Music, PE and collegial learning groups
- More teacher-student contact time. There are longer blocks of classroom time and not as many disruptions

**We feel that it is important to identify what the difference is between the traditional school day and our proposed school day.**

- The start and end of the day does not change. It is simply how and when breaks are taken to allow for greater physical activity and nutrition that is more balanced.
- There are three ~100 minute blocks of instructional time.
- There are two wellness breaks; where students can do activities or have a nutritional break.
- One 30-minute break -The first break: 10:10am-10:40am
- One 20-minute whole school numeracy time slot 10:40-11am
- One 35-minute break –The second break: 12:50pm-1:25pm
- One 20-minute whole school literacy time slot 1:25pm-1:45pm

Currently our students' school day consist of two sustained blocks of instruction. The students start the day at 8:30am and are in class for 165 minutes in the morning until 11:15am. This is followed by a one-hour lunch break from 11:15am to 12:15pm. The students then have 180 minutes of class time in the afternoon.

**St. James-Assiniboia School Division**  
***Great Schools for Growing and Learning***



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We feel that our current school day schedule leads to several issues. These include:

- Our students currently have no nutritional breaks in the morning or afternoon.
- The one-hour lunch is too long of a break.
- A lack of supervision throughout the lunch hour. A limited number of teachers and lunch supervisors are available.
- A limited number of groups or activities offered over lunch hour to engage students.
- Students have difficulty settling back into an afternoon routine after a one-hour lunch.
- A longer afternoon that proves to be less productive for students in class.

We believe the balanced school day will address these issues and benefit our kids. The balanced school day that we will be using will not only increased instructional time but balance the day for our students with breaks and learning blocks. As part of the plan, we have added whole school literacy and numeracy learning blocks for every student. This will promote the belief that every teacher is a teacher of numeracy and literacy.

As part of a follow up to our plan, a team from our school visited Amber Trails School to experience their balanced school day firsthand and discuss the positive affects that it has had on their school's learning environment. We believe this will be successful based on a years worth of research and the efforts made by schools in several other schools in various school divisions , which have seen positive impacts on the physical, emotional, and social well-being of their students.

This process has been a collaborative effort between the administration and leadership team as well as all the staff of George Waters Middle School. We are confident that this would serve as a long-term plan to better our school and our students' learning experience.

Principal

George Valentim

Vice Principal

Rob Bell

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