

Spotlight on the schedule

Smith Junior High

Fall 2022

Smith Junior High is located in Mesa, Arizona, and serves about 900 students in Grades 7–8. Each core educator team serves about 150 students and includes certified teachers with expertise in a specific content area (i.e., math, English language arts, science and social studies), one of whom serves as the lead teacher for the team. Core educator teams are joined by special education teachers, electives teachers, specialists, instructional coach and others.

Example schedule at a glance

Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday		Wednesday	
9:15–10:20 a.m.	Electives/educator planning time	9:15–10:00 a.m.	Electives/educator planning time
10:24–11:22 a.m.	A block	10:14–10:42 a.m.	A block
11:26 a.m.–12:24 p.m.			
12:24–12:54 p.m.	Lunch	11:24–11:54 a.m.	Lunch
12:58–1:56 p.m.	Electives/educator planning time	11:58 a.m.–12:36 p.m.	Electives/educator planning time
2–2:58 p.m.	B block	12:40–1:18 p.m.	B block
3:02–4 p.m.			
		1:24–2 p.m.	
		2–4 p.m.	Educator professional learning

A block and B block: Smith teams that are new to Next Education Workforce models tend to devote one of these two blocks to ELA and social studies instruction and the other block to Math and Sciences instruction. Returning teams are more likely to plan cross-curricular inquiry units that flex the space and schedule according to task and need. Below, see how three different students from the same group — Luz, Kyle and Jadae — spend their day.

Electives/educator planning time: Students have two electives periods each day, during which they engage in engineering, performing arts, visual arts and more. During this time, core educator team members engage in planning time and meetings. One period is typically devoted to multi-tiered systems of support: analyzing student data, running interventions, and working with special educators and the ELL specialist to ensure all educator team members are equipped with the strategies necessary to support all learners.

The other period is a planning period, during which educators may plan upcoming lessons, reach out to families, or work together to prepare an upcoming unit. Importantly, educators elected to work with larger rosters of students during A block and B block in order to free up this additional planning time.

Educator professional learning time: Each Wednesday following students' early dismissal, educator teams engage in professional learning, either district-led or school-based. On district-led days, educators may engage with professional learning supporting new curriculum or career and technical education programming. On school-based days, professional learning offerings are driven by educators' interests. For example, one Wednesday afternoon Smith educators selected one of four professional learning offerings (e.g., a Socratic methods workshop facilitated by a social studies teacher, a collaborative study groups workshop facilitated by a math teacher), each of which was requested by and facilitated by teachers and educational leaders at the school.

Sample student schedules

	Luz	Kyle	Jadae
9:15–10:20 a.m.	Elective: Visual arts	Elective: Engineering	Elective: Performing arts
A block: 10:24 a.m.–12:24 p.m.	Work together to kick-off unit in library		
	Confer 1:1 with educator to identify research topic: Preparation for medical profession	Small-group brainstorming and discussion to narrow possible research topic	
	Work independently on research in library	Confer 1:1 with educator to identify research topic: Advances in biomedical engineering	Confer 1:1 with educator to identify research topic: Undecided
	Work together as a research community along with the science teacher and other students researching topics in the same discipline		Work independently to brainstorm topics
12:24–12:54 p.m.	Lunch		
12:58–1:56 p.m.	Elective: Dance	Elective: Weight training	Elective: Culinary arts
B block: 2–4 p.m.	Work together as a research community along with the science teacher and other students researching topics in the same discipline		Work together with peers to narrow possible topics for research
	Work together as a research community along with the science teacher and other students researching topics in the same discipline	Work independently on research in library	Work independently to brainstorm topics, continued
	Give and receive peer feedback		Confer 1:1 with educator to identify research topic: Media bias in news coverage