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Next semester to see flex schedule

By Matt Simpson
staff writer

It's official. OHS will no longer be a no flex zone.

At a faculty meeting on Nov. 18, the OHS faculty and staff voted in favor of a new flex schedule set to begin next semester. The new schedule implements a 27-minute "flex period," which will take place Monday through Friday – except Wednesday. Each day will focus on one of the core subjects – English, history, math and science – for the flex period. Classes will be shortened to 45 minutes each day, with the exception of One Thing Wednesday.

For more information on flex scheduling, refer to the article on thechargeronline.com.

Flex scheduling is an overall positive change for Oxford High School, according to some teachers.

"I think the flex scheduling offers a lot for all kids," said math teacher Karyn Fortenberry. "I do think it's a very good thing that can benefit kids in lots of different ways. But with everything, we definitely are going to have to do some preparation for it in order for it to be successful. Same thing with kids. If the kids go in and don't take it seriously, then it will not work. It is going to have to take effort on both parts."

OHS does not have a study hall, so the new flex period could act as a study hall for students who do not need help in their core subjects on certain days.

"When I was in high school we had study hall, and you do not have that," Fortenberry said. "Some kids take advantage of it and actually do homework. So the kids who do not need to go and see a teacher, that can offer them some time to get their homework during the day."

It is an abrupt change, especially since it is coming into effect next semester, but other teachers still seem to favor the flex schedule.

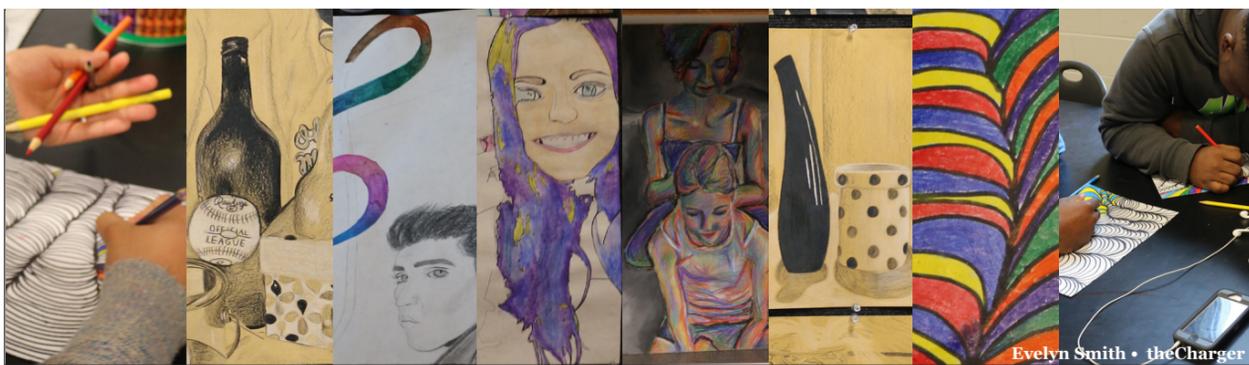
"It is a big change in the middle of the year, but I think it's worth it," said history teacher Robert Molpus. "I like that it is going to give that extra time to students who are struggling. They will have extra time with their teachers, extra time to be able to work on something that will be able to get their grade up. It will be a bit of a strain on teachers, but if it is going to help students then I have no problem with it at all."

However, some students, especially seniors, think of the flex schedule as a negative thing.

Senior McClellan Davis said, "If they're taking 27 minutes out of my day and I do not need those 27 minutes, then why do I have to be at school still? It is just adding more time for me where I am not being productive."

The flex schedule is mostly conducive to students who really need it. For students who do not need it, it will most likely act as a study hall. But the students who do not need it believe that they could get help some other time, rather than taking 27 minutes out of the day.

"I get that it is good for people who need it, but it is just a waste of my time," Davis said. "I do not need it, and if I ever did need to talk to a teacher then I could do that before or after school, or I could email a teacher and set up a time during the day, or go during my lunch, etc."



OHS improved art program opens doors for students

By Emma Scott
staff writer

The 2015-2016 school year has brought many changes, and among these is the addition of two new art teachers with fresh ideas to improve the art program this year and years to come.

"My husband is the other art teacher," art teacher Ebony Johnson said. "We have been wanting to teach together for a long time because he is the only quality art teacher I trust and I am his."

Johnson lives in Memphis with her husband and the two drive to and from Oxford every day. She is from the East Coast and believes that her background has helped her to see the avenues that are afforded if you can work in art.

"This is a quality profession developing these skills, and I just think the students here haven't been pushed hard enough," Johnson said.

The new art teachers have introduced a more difficult curriculum and opportunities for students to enter contests to gain recognition, and even money depending on the competition.

"Mrs. Johnson has given us opportunities for contests, which is different from other teachers I have had," freshman Anneke Buskes said. "I remember from the last time I was in an art program that it was a lot less challenging ... Mrs. Johnson gives you challenges."

Johnson is looking to improve the art program by adding more advanced placement courses, ceramics and graphic design. Johnson also wants to improve performances in the shows and exhibitions, as well as getting the students into the competitions.

"I am hoping that we have the best art program in

the state of Mississippi," Johnson said. "I do want a weekend studio developed for the students to come in ... so that they can work on their artwork."

Johnson's curriculum focuses on breaking down concepts to the most basic elements and then building up from that. Johnson also assigns more difficult projects if she believes a student is advanced enough.

"I do not believe in giving easy projects, and all of my students pretty much are rising to the expectation," Johnson said. "They are not doing just what is required of them. I am very proud of that."

Buskes enjoys art but believes that the curriculum Johnson uses is more difficult. Johnson, however, gives the students opportunities that they may not normally have in past art classes, such as creative freedom.

"Art is pretty fun; however, you can ask any artist and they will tell you it can be pretty challenging most of the time because you have to be creative with your ideas," Buskes said.

Junior Summer Batoon is an art student this year and believes that art is a way to relax because of the stressful environment at high school.

"Art creates a lasting impression on you because you see things in a different way," Batoon said. "You have a new creative side of you."

Johnson wants her students to realize that Oxford should not be their only boundary and has high expectations of the students at Oxford High.

"Mr. Johnson and I truly take our craft seriously, especially when it comes to the production of art and the world's future artists," Johnson said. "Everyone and anyone can learn how to draw. It is up to the individual to expand on their creativity and how they manipulate the rules of design."

“ I am hoping that we have the best art program in the state of Mississippi. ”
- Mrs. Johnson

Seniors stress over college apps

By Caroline Crews
staff writer

College application deadlines are looming, and seniors are hurrying to finish the final details to perfect them.

"It's been really stressful because it has to be perfect," OHS senior Isabella Kelly said.

Kelly is in the process of applying to 10 different colleges. She is taking eight classes this year, three of them being AP, and according to her, it has been challenging to juggle both her school work and her college applications. However, taking these classes will be a good way to enhance her applications.

Senior Victoria Colbert is in the process of applying to five different colleges.

"There's a lot of opening the application, staring at it, and going 'Ughhh,'" Colbert said. "I'll write a few sentences, forget my train of thought, walk away, go back, sit down, write some more, walk away again."

She applied early-action admissions to two of the colleges and regular admissions for the other three. According to both Colbert and Kelly,

writing essays was the hardest and most time-consuming part of their applications.

"It seems from the prompts that they wouldn't be, but they have to be perfect, so you have to edit them so many times," Kelly said. "The first draft that you do is going to be completely different from the last one."

"It's somewhat hard when it comes down to the college-specific ones about why you're applying to this specific college," Colbert said about college application prompts.

Senior James Cutler has applied to four different colleges, one of those being the United States Naval Academy. Both his brother, Jack Cutler, who is currently a junior at the Naval Academy, and his uncle, Frances Cutler, who attended the Naval Academy and retired last year after being a Navy Seal for thirty years, influenced him to apply to the Naval Academy.

"The Naval Academy is known for its more extensive application process," Cutler said.

To apply to the Naval Academy, Cutler had to write one three-page essay, answer six or seven short-answer questions, complete a physical test,

which included pull-ups, push-ups, sit-ups, shuttle run, a basketball throw and a timed mile run.

"You don't just wake up one day and say, 'I want to go to the Naval Academy, where you wake up at 4 am every single morning and have to follow orders and get yelled at every single day of college,'" Cutler said. "That just doesn't sound like the kind of college life a lot of people would want."

However, it is exactly the college experience that Cutler wants. He has visited the campus "countless times" with his brother, and feels that it is "really cool to see how disciplined all of these guys are."

"You can tell that every single person who goes through the Naval Academy is going to be successful because of how well they are disciplined," Cutler said.

According to OHS guidance counselor Sarah Breithaupt, the best advice that she can give is to "pay attention to deadlines, make sure that you allow a couple of weeks if you're asking a counselor or a teacher for a recommendation, and apply early."

She added, "I would not wait until the last minute to get things done."

Which colleges have you applied to?



"Mississippi Valley State and Mississippi State."

Lakenya Young
senior



"I haven't really started applying to colleges yet."

Ben Wright
senior



"Baylor University, Ole Miss, Mississippi State, Tulane University, LSU, and University of Alabama."

Grace Turner
senior