ScheduleX

2027 Edition

# State of Scheduling & Benchmarking Report

The first benchmarking study of master scheduling at American K-12 schools.

Foreword By:

TREY EDUCATION

Distributed In Partnership With:

NCAIS North Carolina Association of Independent Schools

NWAIS Northwest Association of Independent Schools

EDUCATIONAL COLLABORATORS

# Foreword

## BY TREY EDUCATION

When the time comes to build next year's schedule, the process at many schools looks something like this: a registrar, armed with notes from department chairs about staffing changes and new electives, begins with the current schedule and tries to preserve as much of it as possible. Weeks and months later, the schedule is "done." The registrar has made countless decisions behind the scenes and produced a model that delivers roughly what previous schedules have delivered.

No one can say with confidence that those decisions were the right ones for either the school's mission or its logistical needs. There is rarely a meeting to examine how well the new schedule advances the school's goals. There is no shared definition of a strong schedule and no metrics by which to measure success. There is simply relief that the school has found a viable option and will likely produce the same frustrations and disappointments as the schedule it replaced.

This report begins to give schools a shared vocabulary and a clearer frame of reference. The findings allow school leaders to ask better questions: *What might be possible for us? Which of our constraints are truly fixed? Where are we making unnecessary compromises?*

The stakes extend far beyond scheduling. At a moment when heads of school are being forced to reconsider fundamental questions, they must ask: *How closely do our daily practices align with our stated values? What distinguishes our school from the alternatives available to families?* Schools that can answer these questions confidently will be better equipped to navigate what lies ahead. The schedule is one of the most consequential places where those answers become real.

My hope is that this report encourages schools to approach scheduling as far more than a logistical puzzle. A schedule cannot deliver a school's vision on its own, but it can either boost or obstruct every effort to realize that vision. These benchmarks can help school leaders examine familiar roadblocks through fresh eyes and replace inherited assumptions with intentional choices. The standard for next year's schedule should not be that it works as well as last year's. It should be that it creates better conditions, day after day, for the school to deliver on its vision.



**Rob MacDonald**
Co-Founder & Consultant
Trey Education

METHODOLOGY

# How we built this report

All data comes from the ScheduleX platform and reflects information submitted by K-12 schools.

The report uses the data in **two ways:**

1. **Performance metrics** such as course fulfillment, section balance, and room utilization describe the schedules built through ScheduleX.
2. **School characteristics** such as enrollment, number of teachers, and class size describe the environments of schools themselves.

## How the data was analyzed

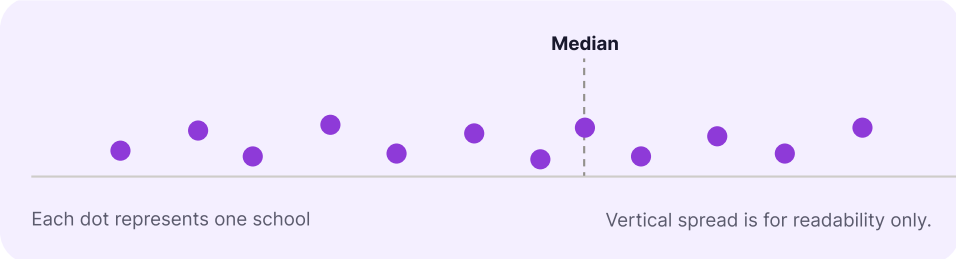
- Each metric uses the data available for it, so sample size varies across metrics. The “n” - number of schools sampled - is shown on every chart.
- Where schools submitted multiple schedule scenarios, we used the highest-performing one for that metric. This is the strongest outcome in the submitted data and may not be the schedule the school finally implemented.
- We used each school's data as submitted. We did not standardize how schools count courses, advisory, study hall, or similar classes. Similarly, we did not modify course tags to core or elective when schools used a different classification.

### A NOTE ON INTERPRETATION

The findings in the report are benchmarks and observed patterns, not prescriptions. They are a baseline for understanding how schools schedule today, and a reference point for what is worth examining or improving.

## How to read the charts

For distribution charts, each dot is one school’s reported value. Vertical spacing within a strip is for readability only and does not represent another variable.

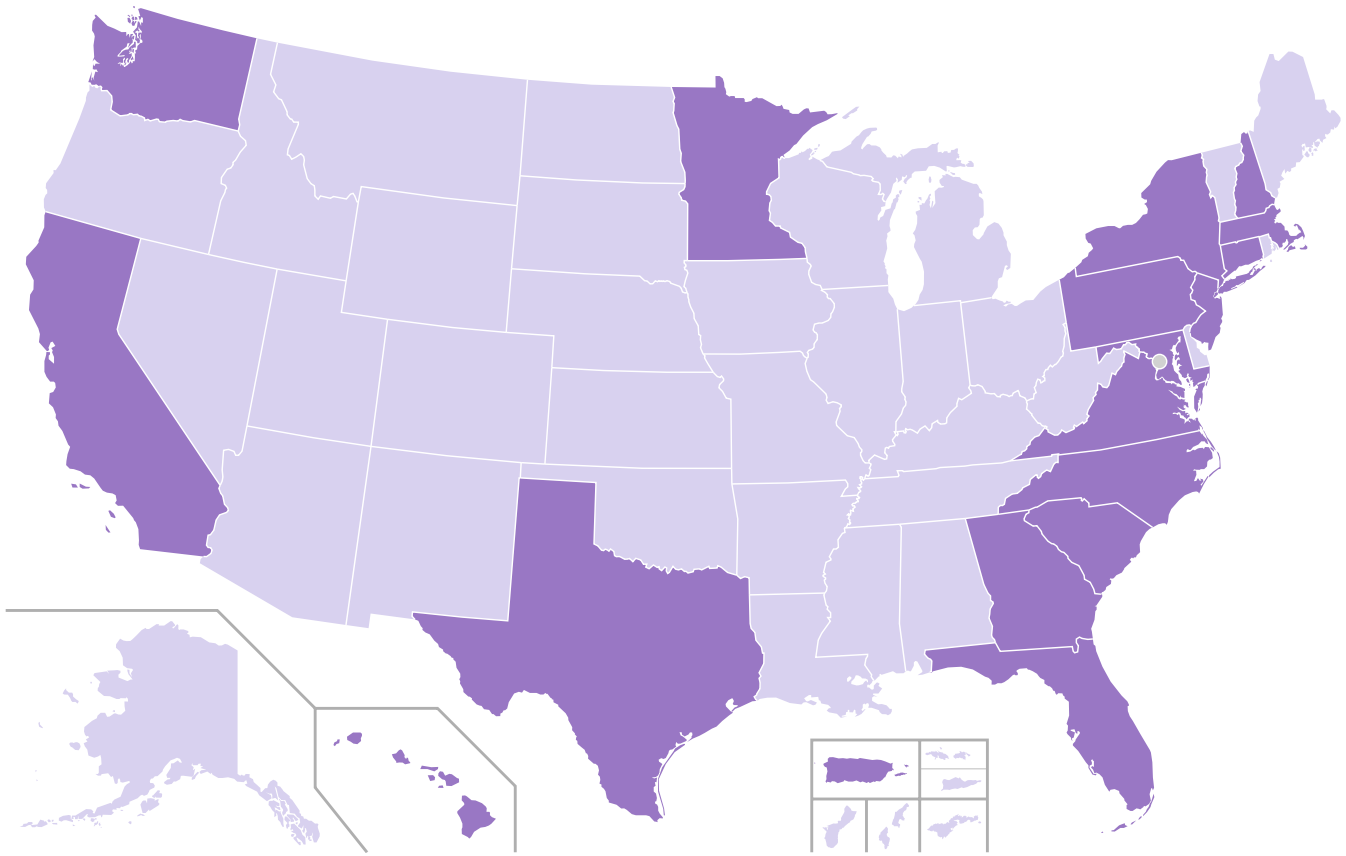



## What the data does not capture

- The data is a snapshot from when schedules were built. It does not capture changes made afterward, including student add/drop activity, staffing changes, or adjustments after the school year begins.
- The data is not independently audited. It comes from ScheduleX platform data, compiled and reviewed to the best of our research team's ability. Where the data could not support a reliable calculation, the corresponding school was excluded from the calculation of that metric.
- The findings describe what the data shows. They do not explain why schools reach particular outcomes, and they make no causal claims about scheduling practices, school characteristics, or results.

DATASET

# 48 schools included across 18 states & territories.



| ENROLLMENT | Schools | Share |
|---|---|---|
| Under 300 | **15** | **31%** |
| 301 to 600 | **22** | **46%** |
| 601 to 1,000 | **8** | **17%** |
| Over 1,000 | **3** | **6%** |

| SIS PLATFORM | Schools | Share |
|---|---|---|
| Blackbaud | **29** | **60%** |
| Veracross | **11** | **23%** |
| Others | **8** | **17%** |

| DIVISION | Schools | Share |
|---|---|---|
| Upper & Middle School | **26** | **54%** |
| Upper School only | **20** | **42%** |
| Middle School only | **2** | **4%** |

INTRODUCTION

# Nobody knows what a good schedule looks like.

Since starting ScheduleX, schools have asked us the same set of questions. How are other schools doing this? Is ours the most complex schedule you've seen? What can we do better?

Scheduling is one of the most consequential yet least comparable processes in a school. It has remained a matter of experience and instinct while the rest of school operations became data-driven.

The schedule determines how many students get the courses they asked for and who gets priority. How parents see the return on tuition. How evenly teaching load falls across teachers, who gets a higher workload, and who gets more flexibility. How much of a building gets used, and whether more facilities are needed.

The schedule can determine how well a school delivers on its mission, vision and promise for all stakeholders. That is why it can also become a hallmark of operational excellence at your school.

It's worth presenting to your board, to parents and to your admissions team. It can separate a great school from a good one and and it deserves to be recognized as such.

And so we've made a start with this report. Every school in this sample uses ScheduleX. They have ability to model scenarios, optimize across competing priorities and approach scheduling in ways that are harder to achieve through traditional processes. We benchmarked metrics we could reliably measure and report to give schools a shared vocabulary and a common baseline.

Schools should improve on scheduling metrics every year and not settle for what "works." Because scheduling is strategy, not logistics.



**Sahil Bhargava**
Co-Founder & CEO
ScheduleX

> **Scheduling is a hallmark of operational excellence. It can separate a great school from a good one, and it should be presented to your board, your families and to your admissions team.**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

# Key takeaways for schools leaders

COURSE FULFILLMENT

**97.4%**

Median request fulfillment, with the top schools crossing 99%.

SINGLETON SHARE

**55%**

More than half of all courses are offered in just one section.

SECTION BALANCE

**72.5%**

Multi-section courses are balanced.

CLASS SIZE

**11.8**

Section sizes cluster around 8 to 14 students at most schools.

TEACHING LOAD

**4.5 sections**

Across 3 course preparations on average.

ROOM UTILIZATION

**< 70%**

Schools use just over three-fifths of available room capacity.

SCENARIOS

**10-11**

Median scenarios a school explores before picking the best option.

SINGLE PERSON DEPENDENCY

**30 of 48**

Schools rely on a single person to manage scheduling.

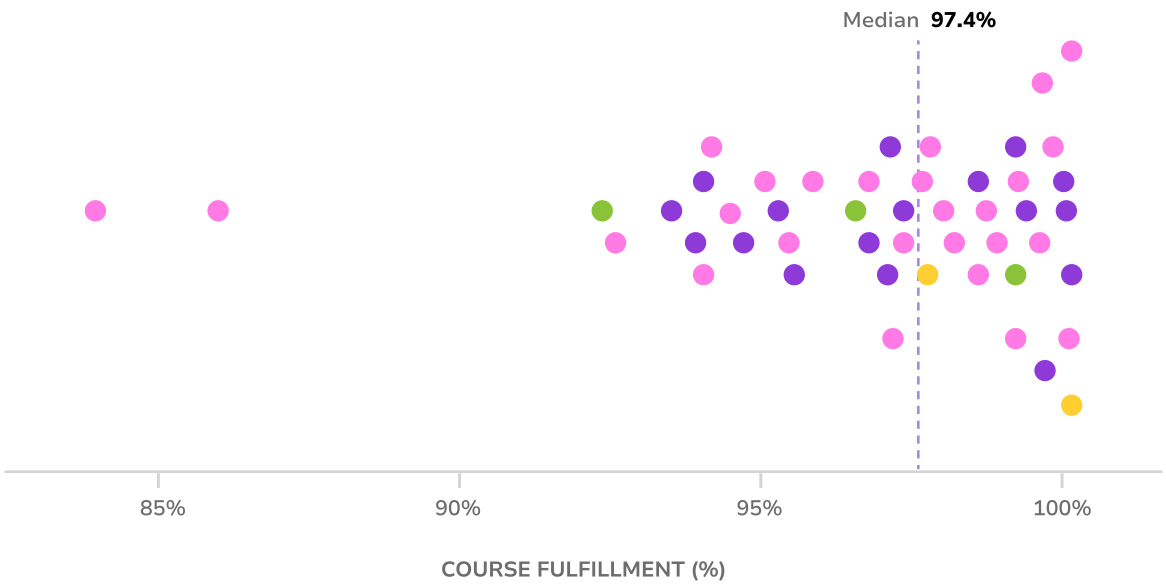
PREVIOUS SCHEDULING METHOD

**40 of 48**

Schools schedule by hand.

METRIC 01 · COURSE FULFILLMENT

# 97% request fulfillment is normal. The top 1/3rd schools cross 99%.




**Course Fulfillment** = Percentage of student course requests that receive a final placement.

One school collected rankings with requests. Students could take fewer courses than all rankings provided. That school's fulfillment reflects the schedule completion percentage.

Source: ScheduleX platform data. Course fulfillment percentage is reported across 48 schools.

ScheduleX

## 97.4%

Median course fulfillment
Range: 84% to 100%

## 15 of 48

Schools granted 99% or more of every request they received

### MEDIAN BY SCHOOL SIZE

| | |
|---|---|
| Under 300 (15 schools) | **98.6%** |
| 301 to 600 (22 schools) | **97.0%** |
| 601 to 1,000 (8 schools) | **97.1%** |
| Over 1,000 (3 schools) | **96.5%** |

### DIVISIONS IN THE SAMPLE

| | |
|---|---|
| Upper school only | **20** |
| Middle and Upper | **26** |
| Middle School only | **2** |

# It’s possible for almost every student to get their top choice courses.

Fulfillment in this sample runs from 84% to 100%. That spread is not explained by school size, division, or student body. It comes down to how the schedule was built and what it was asked to protect. Course fulfillment is an outcome that each school has the potential to deliver.

## Strategic questions for leadership

### 01 Is your school measuring & reporting this correctly?

It is easy to confuse course fulfillment with schedule completion. For example, a student that does not get into a course and compromises with an alternate is an unfulfilled request but still has a complete schedule. Therefore, reporting 100% completion is expected, even though fulfillment could still be stuck at 80%. The two measures describe very different outcomes.

### 02 Which students absorbed the miss?

Unfulfilled requests do not land evenly. They concentrate on students with unusual course loads and often on the same students year after year. A student not getting a top choice in their sophomore year shouldn’t have to compromise again in their junior year.

### 03 Why does this matter for your school?

It is the hallmark of your school’s operational excellence and a central pillar of fairness. Near 100% fulfillment differentiates the school - students get what they want, families see a return on tuition. and the school delivers on its mission.

FROM THE FIELD

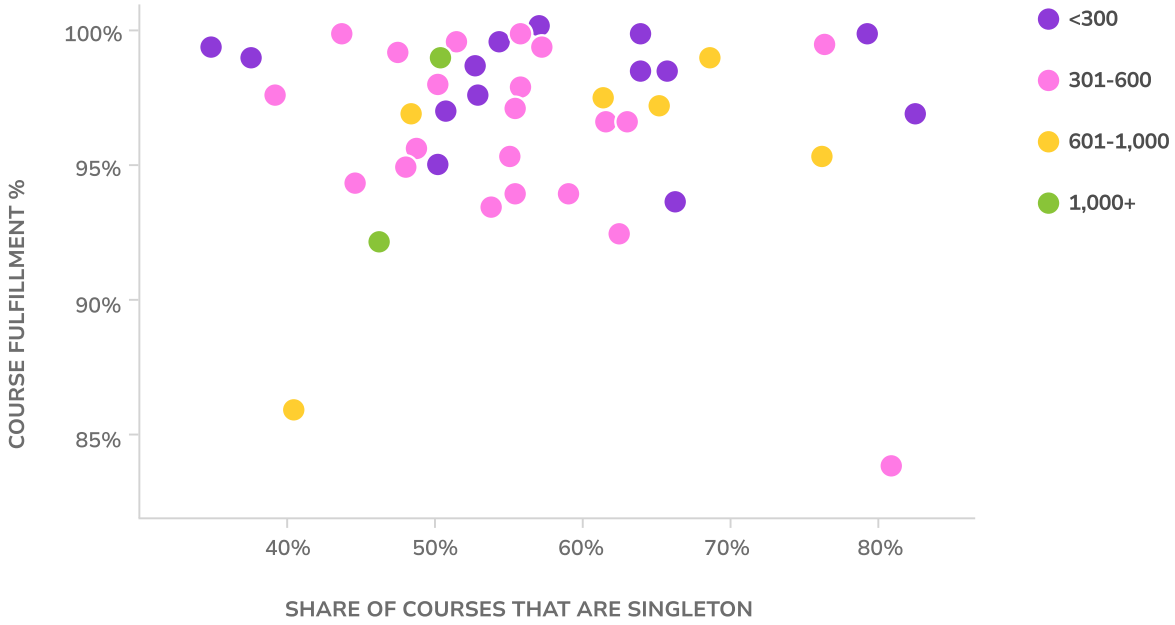
**720**

More Requests

At a school of 800 students carrying 8,000 course requests, improving fulfillment from 90% to 99% means 720 additional top-choice requests get fulfilled. That equals 720 fewer conversations with parents, and 720 fewer compromises.

METRIC 02 · SINGLETONS

# Singletons are not correlated with request fulfillment.




**Singleton percentage** = Percentage of unique courses that run with only one section.

Course counting is not standardized across schools. Some include advisory and study hall as courses. We have not adjusted for this, so the real singleton percentage is likely higher than reported.

Source: ScheduleX platform data. Singleton and core fulfillment percentage is reported across 43 schools.

ScheduleX

## 55%

Median percentage of courses that have only one section.

Range: 35% to 82%

## 34 of 43

Schools cross 95% fulfillment or better, regardless of the singleton percentage.

**MEDIAN FULFILLMENT BY ENROLLMENT**

| ENROLLMENT | SINGLETONS | FULFILLMENT |
|---|---|---|
| Under 300 | **55.8%** | **98.7%** |
| 301 to 600 | **55.1%** | **96.7%** |
| 601 to 1,000 | **63.0%** | **97.1%** |
| Over 1,000 | **48.2%** | **95.7%** |

# One school with 82% courses as singletons achieved 97% fulfillment.

Singleton courses are treated as one of the hardest parts of scheduling, and by hand they are. But in this sample that barely predicts fulfillment. Schools with over 80% singleton course share reached the high nineties, and some schools with far fewer did not. What separates them is how many of the rules and constraints have been examined and relaxed.

## The following could be limiting your schedule instead -

**01 Rules that nobody has documented, audited or approved.**

No first period for a teacher, same room all day for another one, no more than two preps for a third. Each might've been a reasonable accommodation at one point, but together they reduce more flexibility than any singleton.

**02 Lack of flexibility in assigning sections, or too many pre-placed classes.**

"We've always placed Honors Geometry here." But why? Too many pre-assignments limit scheduling flexibility and constrain the rest of the schedule.

**03 Teacher-driven vs student-driven schedules, decided by the placement order.**

Many schools want to be student-driven, or at least strike the right balance between the two. However, when you're building the schedule, you should ask - what gets placed first? Which constraints are being accommodated first?

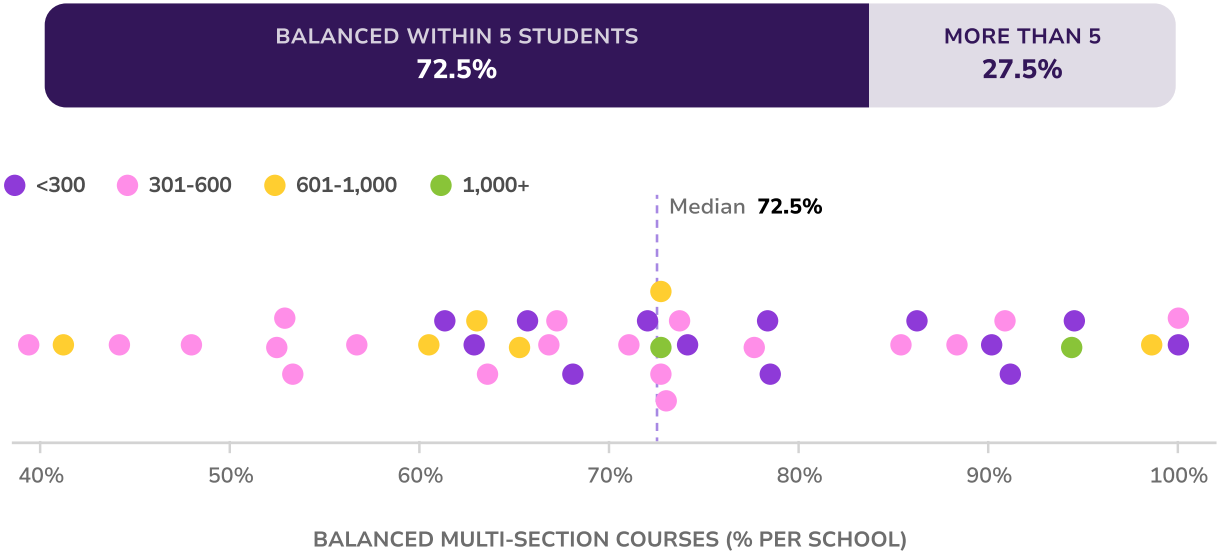
FROM THE FIELD

**99.78%**

At a school in North Carolina, many upper-grade core courses ran as single sections, making them extremely difficult to schedule by hand and leaving little room to absorb conflicts. The school still reached 99.78% fulfillment. By exploring roughly 15 schedule scenarios, the team discovered that some constraints it had assumed were fixed could be changed without sacrificing fulfillment.

METRIC 03 · SECTION BALANCE

# 72% of multi-section courses were balanced within five students.




**Balance percentage** = Multi-section courses where enrollment across all sections of that course differ by at most 5 students.

PE, study hall, and some non-academic periods are included in the dataset, those may not have been intended to be balanced. We did not exclude them. Therefore, the real balance percentage is likely higher.

Source: ScheduleX platform data. Balance ratio reported for 40 schools with course-level section data.

ScheduleX

## 72.5%

Multi-section courses balanced within five students.

Range 39.3% to 100%

## 9 out of 10

Multi-section courses are balanced within eight students.

**DISTRIBUTION BY ENROLLMENT**

| | |
|---|---|
| Under 300 (13 schools) | **78.4%** |
| 301 to 600 (19 schools) | **67.3%** |
| 601 to 1,000 (6 schools) | **64.2%** |
| Over 1,000 (2 schools) | **83.7%** |

# You can choose the balance that's right for your school.

Section balance is not an outcome outside your control, or a result you must live with. When given the choice, it can vary widely across schools. The typical school achieves at 72.5% of courses balanced within five students. Most importantly, it does not have to take weeks or negatively impact fulfillment rates.

## Strategic questions for leadership

### 01 How important is section balancing for your school?

"Very important" is not a good response. Every school says that. What would you be willing to give up in order to maintain the desired balance? Would you prioritize section balance above fulfillment and common planning times for teachers? Rank order your priorities.

### 02 Could you defend the widest gap if families and teachers asked you to?

Sections with five students and twenty students provide vastly different learning experiences for students paying the same tuition. They also are vastly different and challenging experiences for the same teacher.

### 03 Which of your gaps are decisions?

The same courses can be impacted every year. Few schools pressure test if that's inherited or intentional. Often, the limitations are school's legacy scheduling process and its assumptions.

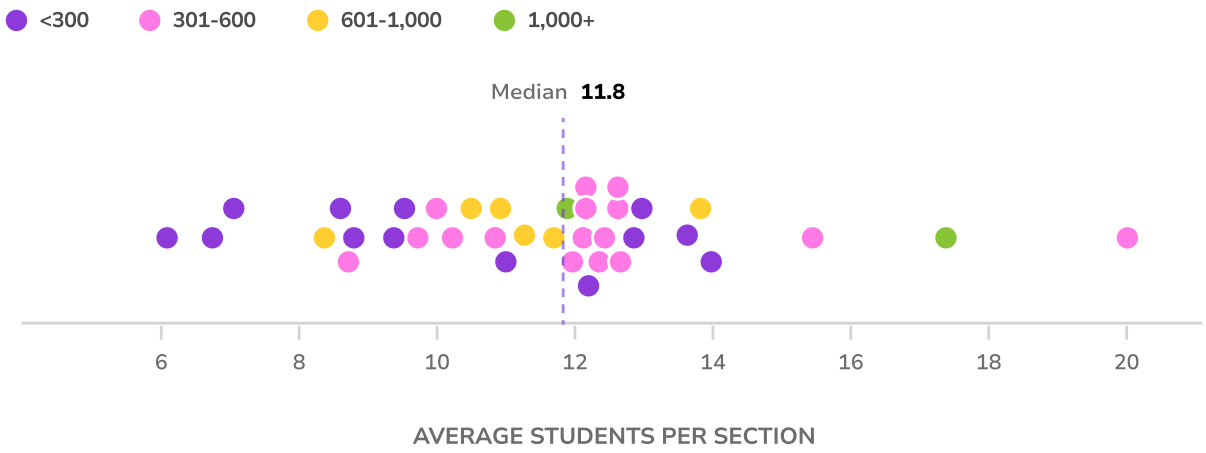
**FROM THE FIELD**

A New England school improved section balancing without impacting fulfillment. They progressively reduced the balance threshold from a 10-student gap to 8, 5, and finally 3 across multiple scenarios.

| BALANCE OF 10 | BALANCE OF 8 | BALANCE OF 5 | CHOSEN 3 |
|---|---|---|---|
| 100% fulfillment | 100% fulfillment | 100% fulfillment | 100% fulfillment |

METRIC 04 · CLASS SIZE

# Class sizes cluster around 8 to 14 students at most schools.




**Class size** = A school's average students per section across all scheduled sections.

PE, health, and study hall periods are included in the section count. We have not adjusted the data for this. This may affect class sizes reported here.

Source: ScheduleX platform data. Class size reported for 37 schools with usable section-count data.

ScheduleX

## 11.8

Median of average class size.

Range 6 to 20 students

## 31 of 37

Schools sit between 8 and 14 students per section

| SCHOOL SIZE | MEDIAN CLASS SIZE |
|---|---|
| Under 300 (13 schools) | 9.5 |
| 301 to 600 (16 schools) | 12.1 |
| 601 to 1,000 (6 schools) | 11.1 |
| Over 1,000 (2 schools) | 14.6 |

# Class size is an input, not an outcome of scheduling.

School size does not strongly predict class size. Because class sizes are largely set before individual course requests are made, larger schools don't necessarily have larger classes. Schools with 600–1,000 students average 11.1 students per class, comparable to, and sometimes smaller than, schools with fewer than 600 students.

## Strategic questions for leadership

### 01 Do you track how your class sizes are distributed?

A single average can hide meaningful differences between sections. Understanding the distribution can show where classes are consistently larger or smaller than intended.

### 02 Are your class sizes a deliberate choice or a result of scheduling?

If class sizes have grown over time, consider whether that reflects an intentional trade-off or simply the way sections have been built.

### 03 Where could smaller classes make the biggest difference?

Look at whether smaller sections are being used intentionally for courses or students where they add the most value, or whether they are simply a product of scheduling constraints.

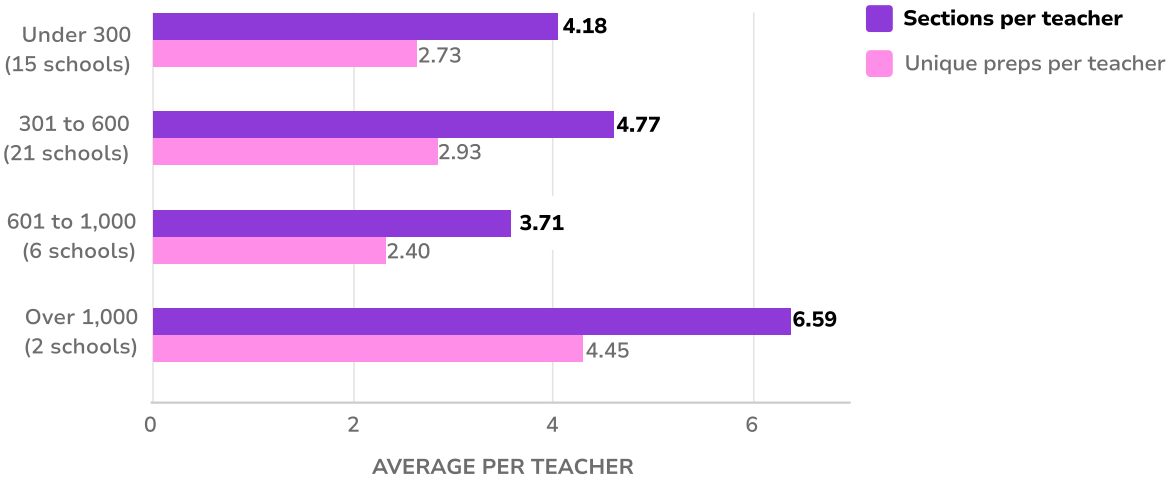
BEST PRACTICE

### Set parameters, not rigid class sizes

Define a minimum, target, and maximum number rather than prescribing an exact number of students per class. This gives the schedule room to balance class size with other priorities, such as fulfillment and teacher well-being.

METRIC 05 · TEACHING LOAD

# On average, teaching load is 4-5 sections per faculty member.




**Sections per teacher** = Average number of class sections a teacher leads at a school.
**Unique preps** = Average number of distinct courses those sections represent at a school.

This metric is averaged in two steps: first across each school's teachers, then across the schools in each size band. The bars show a typical school in each band, not an individual teacher.

To illustrate the difference, a teacher with three sections of Algebra and two sections of Geometry has five sections and two unique preps. Division heads or part-time faculty might carry a smaller teaching load. The chart counted them as full FTEs and did not manually adjust any figures. Therefore, the real section load might be higher than reported.

Source: ScheduleX platform data. Reported for 44 schools.

ScheduleX

**4.5**

Average sections per teacher
Across 44 independent schools

Range: 2 to 9.9

**2.9**

Average unique preps per teacher

Range: 1.4 to 6.6

**29 of 44**

Schools run between 3 to 5 sections per teacher

# Most schools lock teacher contracts before course registration ends.

When teaching assignments for sections are pre-determined, everything downstream inherits them: how many preps a teacher carries, how evenly sections fill, how much room the schedule has to move classes around. Two teachers can hold the same section count and very different workloads, with one teacher repeating a single course and the other juggling four.

## Sectioning impacts whether your schedule is student driven or not.

### 01 Are teacher assignments fixed before scheduling begins?

Fixed assignments limit how much room the schedule has to balance sections, preps, and planning time once it takes shape.

### 02 Are teachers carrying more unique preps than necessary?

Two sections of the same course cost far less than two different courses. The same teaching capacity can be assigned and utilized more efficiently.

### 03 Could you level teacher loads without adding staff?

Section counts that are set before scheduling tend to overshoot. Once assignments are tested against and optimized for actual course demand, schools often find they need fewer sections than they planned, and the load can even out without new hires.

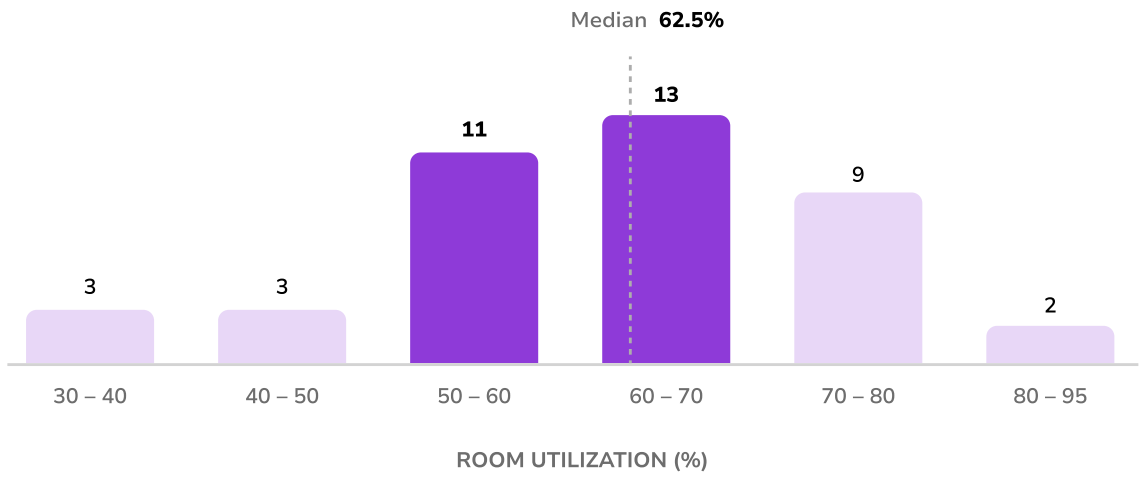
FROM THE FIELD

**422 → 299**

A school in Georgia initially planned 422 sections, but actual course demand called for only 299 sections. That represented 30% bloat-phantom sections that didn't need to run. The root cause was section counts being set before scheduling, based largely on historical numbers and department-level decisions.

METRIC 06 · ROOM UTILIZATION

# The same rooms can run at 37% or 92% utilization.




**Utilization** for a single room = Number of periods it is used / total periods in a day. Utilization at the school level = average of utilization across all rooms.

Rooms that were never used at all in the schedule are excluded from the school's room count. Therefore, the spare capacity could be higher than reported.

Source: ScheduleX platform data. Room utilization reported for 41 schools with usable room-capacity data.

ScheduleX

## 62.5%

Median room utilization
Across 41 independent schools

Range 37% to 92%

## 30 of 41

Schools use less than 70% of their available room capacity

**DISTRIBUTION BY ENROLLMENT**

| | |
|---|---|
| Under 300 (14 schools) | **56.0%** |
| 301 to 600 (18 schools) | **64.2%** |
| 601 to 1,000 (6 schools) | **71.2%** |
| Over 1,000 (3 schools) | **52.4%** |

# Room capacity is rarely the constraint schools assume it is.

Schools describe rooms in two opposite ways. Some schedule rooms as the last step after teachers and students. Other schools start with rooms as describe it as their driving constraint.

Many of them ended up with 50% to 70% room utilization. Room assignments often reflect other priorities: fixed commitments, teacher preferences, course requirements.

## Think about the following questions

**01 Is your real constraint room inventory, or the rules about who uses them?**

Experienced teachers might insist on teaching only in their homerooms, or they might request minimal room changes across floors or buildings. Evaluate your room assignment constraints and document the reasons for each one. Then ask - is this our policy and do we really need this? Pressure test how much it costs you in fulfillment and utilization.

**02 What would you gain by relaxing some rules?**

Test whether changing room assignments could improve fulfillment, section balance, or other scheduling outcomes.

**03 What becomes possible if your rooms ran at 85%?**

Often, it's offering more electives or adding more sections of popular courses.

FROM THE FIELD

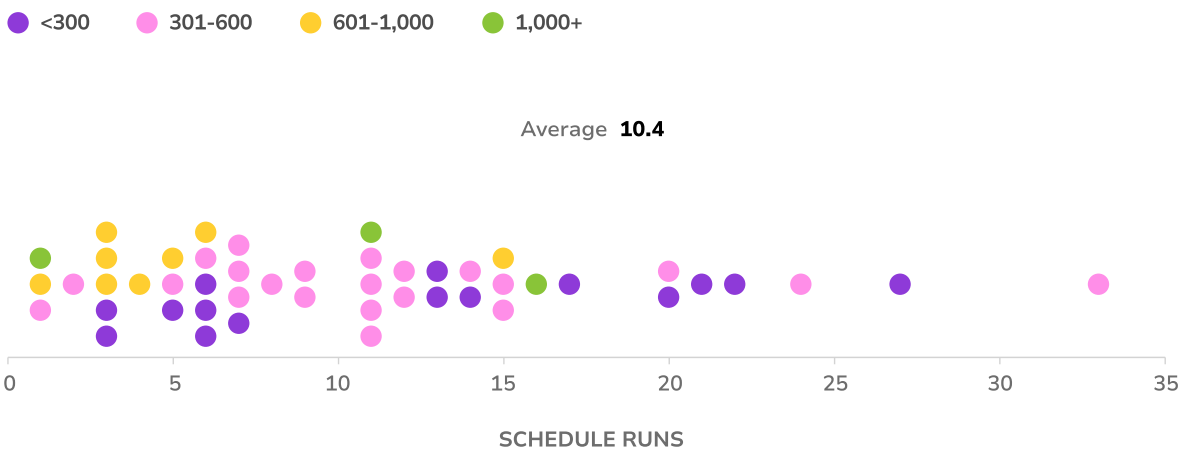
**$5-10M**

Project Reconsidered

A school near Washington DC hand scheduled for decades and believed it was short on rooms. It couldn't offer new electives because it didn't have the rooms, and a new building required a $5 to $10 million capital campaign. When the school analyzed its actual room utilization, it found that a number of rooms were operating at about 50% utilization.

METRIC 07 · SCENARIOS

# On average, schools explored 10 scenarios before picking the best option.




**Scenarios** = Number of schedules generated and evaluated per school.

A low scenario count may reflect a clean first pass, or that no alternative schedule was tested due to timelines.

Source: ScheduleX platform data. Run count reported for 48 schools.

ScheduleX

**10.4**

Average scenarios explored per school

**45 of 48**

Schools explored more than one scenario

**33**

Highest count of scenarios explored

**AVERAGE SCENARIOS BY ENROLLMENT**

| | |
|---|---|
| Under 300 (15 schools) | **12.2** |
| 301 to 600 (22 schools) | **11.4** |
| 601 to 1,000 (8 schools) | **5.0** |
| Over 1,000 (3 schools) | **9.3** |

# Multiple scenario options help test assumptions and enable data-backed decisions on key priorities.

For schools that schedule by hand, creating even one workable schedule can take weeks. That leaves little room to test alternatives and they accept the first schedule that works. Rules, priorities and assumptions are not tested and opportunity is left on the table.

## Examples of strategic decisions:

### 01 Teaching Equity & Well Being

When teaching assignments are fixed before scheduling starts, sectioning might not match up with actual demand. Critical parameters like back to back class limits, maximum classes per day, and sectioning can be pressure tested across scenarios.

### 02 Common Planning Period

Running different versions helps you see where nice-to-haves fit. Common planning periods can feel optional against the must-haves such as core course fulfillment, but testing multiple scenarios shows whether you can accommodate them without impacting other priorities.

### 03 Section Counts

Testing also provides an option to treat section counts as dynamic rather than fixed entities. Different section count and teaching assignments might lead to better overall results.

### 04 Section Balance

Run different scenarios to see how evenly students can be distributed across sections, and whether a different split gives you healthier class sizes without impacting other priorities.

FROM THE FIELD

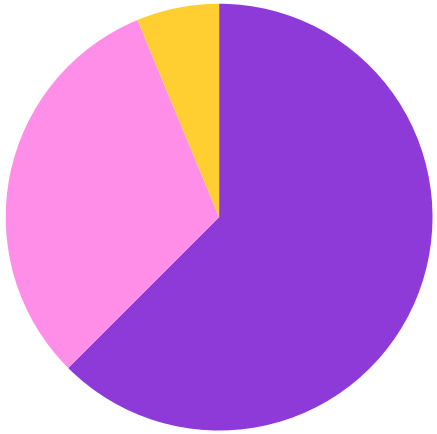
**$80,000**

Saved

A school had an open position for a science teacher for months. By June they still had not found a viable candidate. That's when they decided to explore whether the additional sections and teaching load could be absorbed by the existing roster of teachers. They tested different staffing models and discovered workable teaching assignments for everyone, and saved $80,000 in staffing costs.

METRIC 08 · SINGLE PERSON DEPENDENCY

# 2/3 of schools have only one person who does scheduling.




> **Could anyone else build the schedule if the scheduler left?**

**Single-person dependency** = Whether one person handles scheduling with no backup. "Yes" means the process depends on one person, "No" means others could step in, and "Maybe" means the school was unsure whether anyone else could step in.

This data is self-reported during onboarding to ScheduleX; a school's perceived dependency may differ from its actual risk.

Source: ScheduleX platform data. Data collected from 48 schools.

ScheduleX

## 30 of 48

Schools say their schedule would be significantly disrupted without their primary contact

| SCHOOL SIZE | SINGLE PERSON |
|---|---|
| Under 300 (15 schools) | **67%** |
| 301 to 600 (22 schools) | **64%** |
| 601 to 1,000 (8 schools) | **38%** |
| Over 1,000 (3 schools) | **100%** |

| SIS | SINGLE PERSON |
|---|---|
| Blackbaud (29 schools) | **59%** |
| Veracross (11 schools) | **82%** |
| Other (8 schools) | **50%** |

# Most schools have a single point of failure which creates institutional risk.

Scheduling knowledge often sits with one person: the rules, the constraints, the reasons behind past decisions. When that person is unavailable, whether through turnover or an unexpected absence, the school does not just lose a scheduler. It loses the only record of how the schedule works.

At 600-1,000 students, scheduling committees are common. Multiple people are involved. But surprisingly, the dependency on a single individual is high for schools above 1,000 students. Typically, their scheduling process is so complex that one person needs to anchor most of the context.

## Here's how to de-risk your scheduling process:

### 01 Documentation

Request detailed records of how the schedule is built: which constraints are treated as hard versus soft, what gets scheduled first, how trade-offs get made, where the data comes from, and how the schedule is configured. When the reasoning is written down, someone else can pick it up without starting from scratch.

### 02 Collaboration

Involve more than one person in scheduling. This helps when the primary scheduler is unavailable, and it also sharpens the judgment calls: a second person checks the first one's blind spots and brings fresh context to the harder decisions.

### 03 Scheduling Policy

Write down your school's scheduling policy: your ethos on fairness, teaching load, section distribution, etc., and what to prioritize when requests clash. A single source of truth for the hard calls moves the school away from intuition toward a standard anyone can apply.

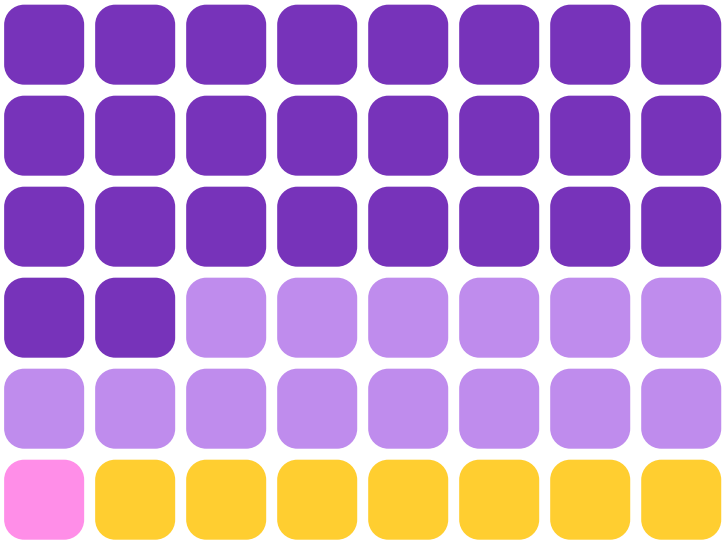
> **At most schools, if the scheduler leaves, nobody knows how to create the schedule. Everyone understands how complex the process is, but the knowledge required to create it often rests with a single person.**



**Matthew Norko**
Director of Technology

METRIC 09 · PREVIOUS SCHEDULING METHOD

# Most schools previously scheduled by hand.



- Manual (26)
- Manual + SIS (14)
- SIS Module (1)
- Other Tools (7)

**Note:**
Each square is one school. Purple squares represent manual scheduling.

**SIS module** = The school's SIS has a built-in scheduling module
**Manual** = Manual scheduling only, with no SIS module involved.
**Other tools** = A named third-party product or unspecified tool.

Please note that scheduling method was self-reported during the sales conversation and was not independently verified.

Source: ScheduleX platform data. Scheduling method before switching, reported for 48 schools.

ScheduleX

## 40 of 48

Schools did significant manual scheduling, either using post-it notes, spreadsheets or the SIS module.

## 83%

of the schools touched a manual process.

## 85%

Report scheduling complexity cannot be handled by their Student Information System (SIS).

| SIS | SCHEDULED BY HAND |
|---|---|
| Blackbaud (29 schools) | **83%** |
| Veracross (11 schools) | **82%** |
| Other (8 schools) | **88%** |

# Most schools accept the first schedule that works.

While experience and judgment help schedulers navigate decisions, it's impossible to explore millions of possibilities manually.

> **One time, after we finished the schedule before anyone had written it down, the facilities crew accidentally wiped the whiteboard during routine cleaning. We had to rebuild the entire schedule from scratch.**



**Elizabeth Gilbert**
Registrar
Caldwell Academy, NC

## What's the opportunity cost of hand scheduling?

### 01 No room to test alternatives

When one schedule takes six to eight weeks to build by hand, there's rarely any time left to build a second one. And because one change moves everything else, another version means a whole new schedule. So most schools never see what the alternatives could have been.

### 02 Risk of losing progress

Weeks of work can live on a wall of Post-its or a whiteboard. An accidentally erased board can make the schedule go away. Hand scheduling puts the whole process at the mercy of the surface it sits on unless you diligently save and update it every time you make changes.

### 03 Bias and legacy assumptions continue

As long as a person builds the schedule by hand, last year's choices carry forward as this year's defaults. A system can weigh each version on its merits, without giving extra credit to whatever happened to work before.

### 04 No way to optimize, measure or audit for quality

By hand, a scheduler can protect one goal at a time, but cannot weigh section balance, common preps, and teacher load against each other across thousands of options. The result is a schedule that works, not one that is tuned to perform its best on the measures that matter.

SCHOOL SPOTLIGHT

# How Westover School built its schedule around student demand.

Westover School has a constrained academic program: many AP courses run as singletons, while several specialized electives run only once every two years. A scheduling conflict can prevent a student from taking a course they may not have another opportunity to take before graduating. Historically, the school built its schedule by moving teachers, rooms, and sections into place and resolving conflicts as they emerged.

Westover School tested three schedule scenarios and ultimately achieved near 99% course fulfillment, with every student receiving every requested course. The team used different scenarios to test scheduling options and see how changes affected individual students before finalizing the schedule.

The registrar leading the process was in her first year in the role and had never managed the school's scheduling process before.

## What's next for Westover School?

The school will explore whether staffing assignments can respond more directly to student demand and whether it can distribute parts of the registration process beyond the academic office.



**Westover School**

Middlebury, CT | Grades 9-12

**99%**

FULFILLMENT

**3**

SCENARIOS

*"As a small school, being able to give students what they want is a huge positive in positioning us in the market, but also in retaining our students"*



**Michele Mongeau**
Director of Teaching & Learning Center
Westover School


ScheduleX