New Egypt High School's single lunch: "It's common sense"

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New Egypt High School’s Single Lunch

“Its Common Sense”

by

Joseph DiPietro

A Thesis

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the
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Of
The Graduate School
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ABSTRACT

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New Egypt High School's Single Lunch
"Its Common Sense"
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Dr. Gerald Lysik
School Administration

This study was conducted to determine if hosting an open campus single lunch at New Egypt High School would positively affect the cultural climate of the entire school. The single lunch project involved the entire school community. As the administrative intern I served as the project coordinator, as well as a lunch monitor.

To determine the project's effectiveness, students and staff members were randomly selected to provide feedback on separate questionnaires. The intern also held informal interviews with cafeteria workers and the school custodian to better understand their perceptions of the project.

Staff members perceived the single lunch policies and procedures as extremely effective. Eighty-eight percent of the staff believes that the policies and procedures were proficient. Students also perceived the single lunch favorably. Ninety-four percent of the students agreed to continue the program. The cafeteria workers and custodians also believed that the single lunch is working. The cafeteria workers and the custodian admitted having to make significant changes in their daily routines to accommodate the single lunch. The custodian responded by stating that it took time for her to get into a
routine. The supervisor of the cafeteria classified the single lunch as, “A work in progress.”

Everyone who was considered by the intern to be a stakeholder in the single lunch has adapted well to the change. The perception of the single lunch by all involved was extremely positive. To ensure that the single lunch continues to run efficiently it will be the recommendation of the administrative intern not to host more than three hundred and fifty students at New Egypt High School during one single lunch. Capping the lunch at this number will ensure continuity, comfort and safety for all single lunch participants.
This study was conducted to determine if hosting an open campus single lunch at New Egypt High School would positively affect the cultural climate of the school. Overall the project was well received by the entire New Egypt High School community. The major stakeholders in the project adapted to ensure that the project was successful.
Acknowledgements

I would like to thank the entire New Egypt High School community for supporting my growth in the field of educational administration. I would also like to thank my wife and my family for their tremendous support and encouragement.

As a final note I would like to give thanks and remember Mr. Joseph Barnes from Rowan University. Mr. Barnes was always there for me throughout my educational experience at Rowan University. Thank you for believing in me, you will be missed.
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Chapter 1

Introduction

Focus of the Study

One of the bullet statements that are listed under the vision of New Egypt High School is that the high school will inculcate values of honesty, dependability, trust, responsibility, tolerance, and respect. These values have all been tested this year as New Egypt High School moved to a single open campus lunch format. The high school moved to the single lunch format for two reasons. The first is it opened up flexibility for scheduling in the 4x4 block. The second reason is this format provides students with another real-life type activity where someone’s eyes may not always be directly on them.

The single lunch requires coordination by the entire high school staff. Teachers, aides and students are all involved in this scheduling and cultural change. Input of the entire New Egypt High School community was documented and used in order to formulate and adjust the format of the lunch.

Purpose of the Study:

The purpose of this study is to describe the advantages that scheduling a single lunch has on a school that operates within a 4x4 block. The study has documented both staff and students perceptions of the change. The study has also proved to the district that the school has not been negligent in its supervision of three hundred and thirty five students during a forty-five minute open campus lunch.
The study will also highlight some unforeseen cultural changes in staff and students due to the drastic scheduling change of this project.

Significance of the Study:

This study was based on a literature review of cultural and scheduling changes that occur with the implementation of a 4x4 block. The project has worked with the vision of the school, and it has prepared a collegiate-like mindset for our students. The implementation of this project has enhanced the overall cultural climate of our school. The project has also afforded students with the opportunity to take a greater variety of courses, which is often difficult to do in a small high school.

Definitions:

*Open Campus:* Defined as the areas where students can go to eat lunch during the single lunch period. These areas are supervised. It should not be mistaken for students having the ability to leave school grounds. This is unauthorized and is considered a discipline infraction.

*Advisor / Advisee:* This is a period that runs directly following the single lunch. This forty-five minute block of time is utilized to cover character education. Students are provided with the same adult advisor if applicable for all four years of high school. This class is not graded traditionally with a numeric system. Students can receive either a P for pass or F for Fail. (Also referred to as A/A)
Limitations of Study:

The overall perceptions and recommendations of the student body initially were to be covered utilizing student focus groups that met during lunch period. However, due to the busy academic and co-curricular schedules that some of the students maintained attendance at these focus group meetings suffered.

Setting of the Study:

New Egypt High School was in its third year of operation during the 2001-2002 school year. The high school is made up only three grade levels, (freshmen, sophomores and juniors). The overall student population consists of three hundred and thirty five students. In the past Plumsted Township School District was part of a sending receiving relationship with Upper Freehold Township Regional School District. Upper Freehold Township educated all of Plumsted Township high school students at Allentown Regional High School. During the 2001-2002 school year Allentown Regional still houses Plumsted Township student who are currently seniors. Plumsted Township’s main reason for severing the relationship and constructing New Egypt High School has been to gain fiscal control of the taxpayers’ money.

New Egypt High School is considered to have a district factor grouping of (CD) by the New Jersey Commissioner of Education. The dominant race in the high school is white. The minority population at New Egypt High School is less than 2%. The overall make up of the community is changing from a middle class rural community due to the selling off of farms to build homes with the average price tag of about two hundred thousand dollars.
Veteran Plumsted Township teachers believe that with the influx of a higher socioeconomic family residing in the township the overall concern for education by parents has dramatically increased. The parental support for the new high school has been very good. Throughout the entire process of building the new high school, choosing curriculum and programs parents have always been involved in the decision making process. The empowerment of parent groups has been a pleasant experience at the new high school.

New Egypt High School uses a 4x4 block schedule. The high school offers Academic, College Prep, Honors and Advanced Placement courses. New Egypt High School also offers diverse Special Education placements ranging from a self-contained class, resource rooms and in-class support settings.

The administration at New Egypt High School is made up of a single principal. There is a disciplinarian, one guidance counselor and one position that is split as half time guidance, half time athletic coordinator. There are five full time special education teachers in the high school along with a single case-manager from the child study team. The teaching staff is made up of nineteen full time staff members. Only one staff member is tenured in the district. Removing the tenured staff member from the calculations the average years teaching experience is 2.5 years. The average salary is under thirty six thousand dollars per year. A nurse, three secretaries, one full-time substitute and three instructional assistants also support New Egypt High School.

Organization of Study:

The purpose of this study is to show how scheduling a single open lunch can provide a cultural climate in a school that relies upon students and staff displaying values
of honesty, dependability, trust, responsibility, tolerance, and respect. The study will also show how flexibility, adaptability and foresight of staff are a key element in implementing any type of change within a school system. The uniqueness of this study will deal with some factors that are relevant only to New Egypt High School. The single fact that New Egypt High School has been in existence for only three years and is currently operating with only three grade levels (freshmen, sophomores and juniors) during the 2001-2002 school year will be the cause of many obstacles when looking to review past practice within the school. The fact that the school is operating with one full-time administrator and a staff that averages 2.5 years in experience has created obstacles in looking for the leadership that is needed to indoctrinate a program change amongst the teaching staff.

The remainder of the study will document how the students and staff of New Egypt High School perceived the change to a single open campus lunch format. Throughout the study the researcher will analyze data gathered during interviews and surveys. The project will reflect the constant revisiting and subtle changes that took place to overcome some of the obstacles that could have halted the overall success of this project.

Chapter 2 will examine the history of block scheduling with particular attention paid to the 4x4 block. The researcher will study the documented affects that block scheduling has on overall school climate. The researcher will also look at how schools that are operating within a block schedule organize their lunch process and why?
Chapter 3 will explain how data was collected and analyzed to examine the overall perceptions of the changes that occurred at New Egypt High School due to the open campus single lunch format.

Chapter 4 will explain by examining the data by displaying charts and providing other visual aides to help understand how all those who were involved in the study viewed the change.

Chapter 5 will give the researchers overall perspective of how the project has changed New Egypt High School. The chapter will include some unpredictable outcomes that were gained from the implementation of the single lunch. The chapter will also examine how the researcher utilized different types of leadership skills to garnish the support needed to successfully implement the project.
Chapter 2

Review of Literature

Introduction:

The purpose of this study is to determine the effect that scheduling of open campus single lunch will have on the overall schools’ cultural climate and scheduling opportunities. To try and gauge the overall effect this program would have on New Egypt High School it was important to search for three things in reviewing current literature. 1. How does the climate of a school utilizing block scheduling differ from those who utilize traditional forms of scheduling? 2. Why have schools chosen to turn to block scheduling, and how has it affected their lunch programs? 3. Does the philosophy of an open campus single lunch lend itself to what research believes a high school in the twenty first century should be turning towards?

Review of Literature:

New Egypt High School was put together utilizing the vision of the principal. The principal has openly made reference to the climate of the high school will be developed following some of the steps that are outlined in the report by the National Association of Secondary School Principals (1996) called, Breaking Ranks: Changing an American Institution. One of the purposes that are spoken about is how every activity that takes place in the high school must fulfill a larger purpose. Each and every person who partakes in that particular activity must understand that purpose. Including students
in the decision making process will help them develop an atmosphere of participation, and ownership. The belief is that the single lunch program will be one of those, “Larger lessons that prepare students for civic life that arise from experiences in school that lead them to value democratic and civil principles” (NASSP, 1996 p.30).

4x4 block scheduling has led to two basic approached to the lunch situation. The first is like what is scheduled at New Egypt High School a 30-45 minute block of time for the whole school community. As in New Egypt High School both the teachers and the students have the same time allotted for lunch. The second popular way to deliver lunch is by subdividing a block and staggering a lunch period between the blocks. This often allows for multiple lunch periods (George & McEwin, 1999).

Mistretta & Harvey, 1997 began the block at East Lyme High School with the vision of holding a forty-five minute lunch block for all students. Their goal was to utilize the extended lunch period for clubs and activities, meetings, make-up work, and health facility usage. The campus grounds remained open for lunch. However, students are not allowed to leave campus at any time. Students responded to a survey about the lunch block by stating that they felt that they did not have enough time to socialize and attend to academic type functions. At New Egypt High School lunchtime meetings are voluntary. Staff contractually is at lunch during this time period if they are not a member of the supervision team. New Egypt High School utilizes time during the forty-five minute advisor / advisee period and an after-school activities period from 2:15-3:00 to cover many of the functions that East Lyme had outlined for the open lunch. There are meetings that take place during lunch periods, however they are mostly student directed.
According to (Marsh, 1999 p. 33) the master schedule is one of the essential keys to an effective school. The day must be structured to make sure that; “Every student meets the standards by allocating time in response to a careful analysis of the student body’s strengths and weaknesses in relation to standards”. Utilizing the single lunch affords all students an opportunity to choose a greater variety of courses, especially in the related arts. Students are not tracked based upon their core academic classes. In a small school like New Egypt High School there are only a certain number of classes and sections available due to the size of the staff and student population. Reaching out to meet the needs of each and every student provides them with a sense of ownership that is essential when trying to maintain order and discipline in an open campus single lunch.

National curriculum standards call for schools to express a variety of thirteen different recommendations. New Egypt High School’s open lunch philosophy agrees with a few of the concepts defined by Bizar, Daniels and Zelman, 2001. The single open lunch can be characterized as *Social* due to the array of interactions that are offered to the students. The philosophy can also be considered *Collaborative* in nature because the reliance the project has on students and staff. Above all the lunch can be considered *Democratic*. The philosophy of the single lunch relies upon the students’ values of honesty and trust. These types of values and lessons transfer into our society. By affording students this experience, they can utilize this model to learn what it is like to live as a citizen outside of the school.

The democratic model is difficult to explain to the traditional teacher who is accustom to total control. This is a shared vision. If change is going to take place in a school district, the people that are involved in the initiation of change must have a vested
interest in the outcome. These people are often referred to as stakeholders. Their input on the planning, implementing, and refining of a project is essential. There are many different stakeholders in the open lunch project. All of the stakeholders approached the planning stage of the project with an agenda. The cafeteria staff needed to plan how to efficiently set up their food preparation and serving facility to serve three hundred and thirty five students. The administration had to be assured that the safety of all students was not at risk. The teachers wanted assurance that their rooms would be secure and kept orderly if they were utilized. The custodial staff wanted to make sure that open lunch would not provide them with further duties. The students wanted to be assured that there was adequate time and space to eat lunch and enjoy themselves during this block. Realizing that all these stakeholders had separate agendas the most vital component needed for this project to succeed was to come up with strategies that would create a commitment to the philosophy, rather than mere compliance because this was an administrative initiative (Wager, 2001).

Research showed that to change the culture of the school you must first practice. New Egypt High School was changing from a multiple lunch schedule to a single lunch schedule. Staff and students needed to be prepared for some of the roadblocks that might show up. New Egypt High School did what Eisenhower High School did before it converted to a single lunch, it practiced. Eisenhower High School allows kids to eat anywhere on the first floor of the high school. The school also sets up rooms for students to convene to study or hang out in. Much like New Egypt High School they dealt with long lines and confusion by the students. As the year went on students realized they did not have to hurry to the lunch line during the
beginning of the period to get food. Students also fell into a niche on where they would convene during this time. This type of cultural development cannot be predicted or controlled. It is a favorable outcome that can occur from the change to a single lunch. Students must realize that they all cannot sit in the cafeteria. Eisenhower handled 3000 kids during a single lunch. There cafeteria is not equipped to house that many students. New Egypt High School’s cafeteria can only house 120 students. It is serving over 300 students. Much like Eisenhower, New Egypt also set up designated areas where the students could convene for lunch. These were areas that were monitored by staff members. New Egypt High School tried to predict the number of students who would convene in certain areas so that adequate supervision could be provided. The superintendent provided a ratio of one supervisor per fifty students as a standard for adequate supervision of a lunch situation. New Egypt High School has eight supervisors available during the open lunch period. This is enough to adequately supervise the school based on the superintendent’s prerogative (Hemphill, 1995).

Queen has discovered the 4X4 method of block scheduling used at New Egypt High School to have some advantages that assist in setting up an educational environment were a single lunch can succeed. Some of those advantages are: 1.) Discipline improves in direct response to the reduced number of class changes. 2.) Teachers benefit from additional planning time. 3.) Schools using the block have the opportunity for acceleration and enrichment, and are able to offer a wider variety of elective courses. These outcomes not only please administration, but they also create an environment that is student friendly. Students feel that they are getting a more personalized education. In
turn this creates a strong sense of ownership and caring about the entire function of the school (Queen, 2001).

The advantages that block scheduling have to offer often reflects positively upon the staff of the school. At Evergreen High School the principal reported that 73% of the teachers felt that they were less stressed working in the block. The principal believes that the less stress and the decline in overall student discipline problems have caused an overall increase in the staff’s morale. Teachers now get more engrossed in content and are able to utilize methods and materials that they would not be able to do in a single class period before the block was instituted (Sommerfeld, 1996).

Conclusion:

The idea of an open campus single lunch is not unique only to New Egypt High School. Other high schools that use the 4x4 block-scheduling model also run a single lunch for the entire school. Research has shown that block scheduling has a definite positive effect on the climate of the school. Schools that are successful in utilizing block scheduling tend to see a transformation in both the students and faculty of the school. This change in the overall cultural climate of the school is what allows for non-traditional programs such as having an open campus lunch period for the entire school succeed.

A single lunch program also provides even more flexibility for scheduling additional classes in the schedule. The ability to provide more courses affords the school the opportunity to reach more of the individual likes and needs of the students. Students who feel a sense of purpose and validity in their education show greater pride and ownership with the school that is providing them their program. A sense of civility and
trust between the school and the students is the backbone of operating a successful open
campus single lunch program at New Egypt High School.
Chapter 3
Design of the Study

Introduction:

The research methods that were used measured the perceptions’ of students, teachers, cafeteria and custodial personnel through questionnaires and interviews.

Development and Design of the Research Instrumentation:

To properly gauge the perception of all the people who were affected by the single lunch a few different techniques were used. The teaching staff’s perception of the policies and procedures and their understanding of those policies was documented using a questionnaire. The effectiveness of the project was rated by a percentage of the high school students using a questionnaire. The perceptions of the cafeteria staff and the custodial staff were recorded through participant observation and informal interviews.

Description of the Sampling Techniques:

Simple random sampling was used to gather information from the teaching staff. Three administrators who are in charge of observation of staff asked all participants to answer a brief questionnaire following their post observation conference. The questionnaires that were given to students were done so using a systematic sampling technique. The first two students that came through the doorways during a given advisor advisee period were asked to provide answers to the survey. This would provide a total sample of forty students. The participant observations and informal interviews’ data
were gathered during journalized observations of cafeteria workers and informal conversations that took place between the workers, custodial staff and the researcher.

**Description of the Data Collection Approach:**

Teacher data was collected from the questionnaires on February 1, 2002. On this date the supervisors forwarded me the anonymous confidential questionnaires through inter-office mail.

Student questionnaires were handed out to the first two students in each of the twenty advisor / advisee classes on February 5, 2002. Teachers were instructed to explain to the students that it was voluntary and that their answers would remain anonymous. If a student refused the teacher was asked to randomly select a willing participant from the class. This procedure did not have to be instituted. All forty participants were willing advisor / advisee students who were the first two students in class on February 5, 2002.

Cafeteria workers and custodial staff were all observed and questioned during the lunch block and after the lunch block during a two-week period from January seventh until January eighteenth 2002.

**Description of Data Analysis Plan:**

The data will be analyzed to see if the entire school population that performs a function within the project observes the benefits that the researcher projects for the school. The data will be analyzed showing both favorable and non-favorable outcomes. Graphs will be used to display means and standard deviations of selected answers.
Chapter 4
Presentation of the Research Findings

Introduction:

To properly gauge the perceptions of how the single lunch developed during the 2001-2002 school year, students and staff members were asked to answer questionnaires (see Appendix A and B). Perceptions of custodial and cafeteria staff members were gathered during informal interviews and conversations between the intern and staff members.

Grand Tour Question:

What types of procedural changes will have to occur to supervise this lunch?

To determine the staff perceptions of the single lunch at the high school and the overall policies and procedures that governed this project they were asked to respond to two questions on the staff questionnaire (see Appendix A question numbers 4 and 10.)

Results of Staff Questionnaire (Questions 4 and 10)
The results of the questions overwhelmingly show the positive support that the staff showed for the entire single lunch project. Seventy five percent of the staff perceived the single lunch as extremely proficient. Eighty eight percent of the staff perceived the single lunch policies and procedures as proficient. Twenty five percent believed that the single lunch was in need of clarification. Twelve percent believed that the policies and procedures needed to be clarified. There were no non-favorable responses to either question.

Question number ten of the staff questionnaire contained a section for staff comments and suggestions about the single lunch project. Teachers responded with positive comments reflecting that they believe that the students enjoy the lunch. A staff member responded by stating “I consider the time eating lunch with my students as quality time with them.” Another staff member responded to the question by suggesting we supply more areas for students to sit. A staff member also felt that the monitoring of the lunch might need some improvement.

The majority of the staff members who responded to the staff questionnaire provided positive responses about the single lunch. As the administrative intern I believe that their responses reflect the entire school community’s commitment to the change. Staff members familiarized themselves with the policies and procedures that were reviewed during a staff in-service and followed up by reviewing the single lunch policy and procedures that was provided for them in a resource manual at the start of the 2001-2002 school year.

Grand Tour Question:

What type of restrictions will students have during the single lunch?
To better understand the students’ perceptions of the single lunch block, forty students were chosen randomly to answer a questionnaire about their lunch (see Appendix B questions 4, 5 and 6.) Question four attempted to measure the students’ perception of the climate during the single lunch. Question five asks the students’ to define the behavior of their peers during the single lunch. Question six lets the students’ choose the fate of the program by asking them to continue it or cancel the program. The questionnaire also offers students’ an opportunity to provide the intern with suggestions regarding the single lunch (see Appendix B question 7.)

Results of Student Questionnaires (Questions 4, 5, and 6)

Students’ perception of the climate during the single lunch is extremely positive. Eighty three percent of the students who responded said they would best describe the
lunch period as fun and relaxing. Seventeen percent of the students responded by
describing the single lunch as ok sometimes. No student responded with what was
considered non-favorable response by choosing answer three, (I wish we had lunch only
in the cafeteria.)

Question number five asked students to best describe how they believe their
classmates act during the single lunch period. Seventeen percent believe that their peers
act mature by keeping the school clean. Eight percent of the students believed that their
peer’s behavior could be better. Three percent of the students classified their peer’s
behaviors as very immature.

Question number six allowed students to make the decision whether to continue
the program or cancel it. Ninety four percent of the students agreed to continue the
program. Only six percent of the students questioned believed that the single lunch
should be cancelled.

Students made a wide range of suggestions about the single lunch period in
question number seven on the questionnaire. The two most repetitious suggestion were
that lunch be served later in the day, and that students take on a greater responsibility by
keeping the school and their eating area clean. Students suggested that more classrooms
should be made available to eat in during this time. The students also suggested
providing more tables and chairs in designated eating areas.

Overall the students who provided answers on the questionnaire show that they
are enjoying the single lunch, and the climate that it has created within their school.
Their answers show the intern that the students are aware of their responsibility in
keeping the school clean. The students who responded to question five believe that the
maturity level of their peers could be better pertaining to the way that they act during the
single lunch period. The level of awareness of all the students who responded by
answering questions and making suggestions is very promising. The perceptions of the
students who answered the questions and made suggestions are very similar to ones that I
have as the administrative intern who has coordinated the project. I truly believe that
some of the suggestions that these students made are legitimate areas that will require
change.

Grand Tour Question:

What type of changes will have to occur for the cafeteria staff, and the custodial staff to
meet the single lunch demands?

To find the answer to the grand tour question I informally interviewed one
custodian, the supervisor of the cafeteria, and a woman whom works for the privatized
cafeteria service. In order to better understand their perceptions of the single lunch and
how the project has affected their positions, I asked them a series of questions informally
during a normal conversation. One of the questions that I asked of all the individuals
was, “What do you think of lunch this year?” I also asked them, “How has your job
changed?” I also tried to gauge if they believed the single lunch has been an added
burden on their workload. Through conversation I was also able to measure their
perceptions of the staff monitoring system, and their perceptions of student behavior.

The first conversation that I had was with the day custodian. In our conversation
she told me that the setting up for single lunch was hard work at the beginning of the year
before she developed a system. Single lunch requires the custodian to set up an
additional three trashcans, five tables, seventy-five chairs, and pull out the bleachers in
the gymnasium. These duties are performed in strategic areas throughout the school.

The custodian told me that this is a little more work than last year because of the set up and break down of the tables and chairs outside of the cafeteria. In years past lunch was only eaten in the cafeteria. The implementation of the single lunch affords students with that opportunity as well as four other eating areas. The daytime custodian feels that the students are generally well behaved during lunch. She said, “You can’t blame everyone for a few kids behavior.” The custodian said that closing the library during lunch has helped her out. Originally the library was open for students to eat in. However, due to continued problems, (messy tables, and spills on the carpet) the custodian and the monitor suggested that the cafeteria be off-limits to eat in. This rule has been implemented to eliminate those problems.

I left the conversation that I had with the custodian feelings that she is unhappy with the extra work that is required of her to set up and break down the single lunch. I also believed that the mess that is left after lunch, which is no longer, contained to one room causes her an added burden to her normal workload. Our daytime custodian does a tremendous job in keeping the school neat and presentable. I understand that keeping the entire school neat is a big job, and utilizing more areas of the school to eat other than the lunchroom, increases her workload. I also have witnessed the respect that she has gained from the students at our school.

The custodian has often successfully placed the responsibility of keeping areas of the school clean back on the students. Recognizing how hard the custodian works, a member of the high school student council proposed, and implemented student council assistance teams. These students volunteered their time at the end of the lunch period to
help clean up debris that was left behind in the designated eating areas during the single lunch.

The other two informal interviews were conducted together at the end of a lunch period. I combined the interview during a conversation between the supervisor of the cafeteria, a cafeteria employee and myself. I conducted the conversation in the same manner as I did with the custodian.

I began the interview by asking the question, “What do you think about lunch this year?” The supervisor responded saying, “It was just a matter of perfecting a new system, our goal was to get everyone served in an eight to twelve minute time frame, we have been able to do that since the very beginning.” She also went on to talk about the subtle changes that were made to make the lunch line run more efficiently. The supervisor proclaimed the single lunch as “A work in progress.” According to the interview I believe that the supervisor has been able to adapt and modify the duties and procedures for the single lunch without providing an added burden to the cafeteria staff members.

The cafeteria worker interviewed responded after the supervisor was finished discussing about the changes. The worker talked about the problems that they have had with theft in the lunch line. She told me “We have to be on our toes this year, it is difficult to watch all the kids when you have on the average two-hundred and fifty kids coming at you at one time.” She said the students have responded well to the sometimes-increased waiting time for service. When asked about if she saw any other problems concerning the students beside the theft, she responded by saying, “Students don’t seem to mind waiting a few minutes for lunch anymore.”
The interviews that were conducted with the cafeteria employees were very positive. They appear to be extremely comfortable with preparing for the single lunch. Throughout the year they have listened to suggestions from staff and students about possible ways to make the serving more efficient. As the project supervisor I have also listened to recommendations from the cafeteria staff. Cafeteria workers recommended that I station a lunch monitor near the lunch line to help cut down on theft. I responded by placing a monitor in the area suggested for the first fifteen minutes of lunch. The cafeteria workers believed it helped with the theft problem. I also listened to the workers when they asked me to help redirect the line formed when students were waiting for their lunch. This element was changed and the congestion that was at the doorway subsided. The overall partnership between the privatized cafeteria staff, and the staff and students of New Egypt High School enabled the single lunch to run more efficiently that anticipated by the intern.

Conclusions:

Change is not easy. Especially when the change affects some many different stakeholders. I gathered from the questionnaires, open-ended responses and interviews, that the overall perception of the single lunch is positive. The perceptions of any adult staff member were definitely effected by the positive actions displayed by the students on a daily basis. It must be understood that kids are going to be kids. They are messy, they sometimes spill things, and they often will do things deemed immature by adult audiences. However, the understanding of this by staff members, and the recognition of this by the students themselves have limited the occurrence of these undesirable behaviors.
Chapter 5
Conclusions, Implications and Further Study

Introduction:

The focus of this study was to determine what type of an impact the single lunch format at New Egypt High School would have on the overall climate of the school. The perceptions of staff members and students were measured using questionnaires, interviews and observations.

The review of literature written about schools that utilize a 4 x 4 block schedule and an open lunch showed that block scheduling provides more time for a lunch block. During this longer lunch time students can utilize the time to participate in clubs, get extra-help from teachers or take an academic break. The extra-time provides students with choice. When a high school student has the ability to make choices and decisions they are more likely to feel a sense of ownership in their school. The sense of ownership is what positively affects the climate of the school.

Grand Tour Question:

What types of procedural changes will have to occur to supervise this lunch?

The staff members at New Egypt High School perceived the supervision of the single lunch as good. Returning staff members of the high school appreciated the extra ten minutes of lunchtime that the staff members also received with the change. As the intern in charge of the supervision of the project I was happy with work that the entire staff put in to ensure that the single lunch was properly supervised.
Throughout the year minor shifts were made in supervision as problems arose. The biggest cause for changes in supervision was excessive debris left on the floor after lunch, and vandalism in the bathrooms. Because of these two problems additional restrictions on where students could travel throughout the school during the lunch period needed to be added. The library was closed due to debris, and only two of the bathrooms would remain open during the lunch block. Staff members were placed on high alert for vandalism in the bathrooms. The lunch monitors were instructed to do routine spot checks in both of the bathrooms during the lunch period. These added restrictions decreased the level of debris left behind, and vandalism during the lunch period.

Staff support of the single lunch was easily observed throughout the year. As the project coordinator I asked staff members who were not monitors to help assure that students were keeping their lunch areas clean throughout the school. Staff members were asked to walk throughout the school during the last five minutes of the student lunch. They were asked to assist the monitors in the process of transitioning the students from lunch to advisor advisee block.

Grand Tour Question:

What type of restrictions will students have during the single lunch?

Students who responded to the questionnaire overwhelmingly choose to continue the single lunch program. The students also recognized that some of their peers could act maturer during this time. By acting more mature the students were referring to keeping the area that they are eating in clean. The single lunch tests the values of honesty, dependability, trust, responsibility, tolerance, and respect. Students are aware that adult
eyes are not always watching over them directly during this time. As the administrative intern I am pleased that students perceived that there is a need for improvement.

Throughout the year only four students were formally written up for administrative detentions because of their inappropriate actions during the single lunch. Lunch monitors handled most of the inappropriate behaviors by asking students to clean their area up, or if it was severe enough restricting their lunch to the cafeteria only.

Grand Tour Question:

What type of changes will have to occur for the cafeteria staff, and the custodial staff to meet the single lunch demands?

The biggest concern that I had when I initially proposed the single lunch to all the stakeholders was, “Will implementing the single lunch cause additional cost for the cafeteria and custodial staff?” The project did not require any additional staffing by either entity. Unfortunately, I do believe that the workload of the day custodian did increase because of the single lunch.

The perception of the single lunch by these two groups was very positive. The day custodian admitted that the single lunch did provide her with some extra work. Most of the extra work that was required was in the set up and break down of additional tables and chairs. The other additional work was cleaning up spills and left over debris throughout the school.

The cafeteria staff believes that the single lunch is a work in progress. They have been very cooperative it tending to the demands that serving the entire school at once has placed on them. It has been a pleasure to observe and be a part of a project that has worked because of the diligent efforts of the cafeteria staff.
Implication of Study on Leadership Skills:

In order to implement the change to a single lunch many different groups of stakeholders needed to collaborate. The coordination and presentation to these groups was the sole responsibility of the intern. The intern and the groups of stakeholders based changes that occurred during the year upon continued observation and study.

These groups did not all formally meet together as a committee, however the intern facilitated communication between the groups. The communication was generally positive. The groups all believed that the single lunch was positively affecting the climate of our school. They viewed this as favorable outcome for the student population at New Egypt High School.

The style of leadership that best suited this project was a collaborative. The intern was able to gain support for the program by providing the stakeholders with a sense of empowerment.

The style of leadership did not change much throughout the duration of the project. The intern often had to fill in as a lunch monitor to assure success of the project if a regular monitor was absent. This enabled the intern to see the project from a different prospective. The ability to supervise, coordinate, collaborate and participate in the project enabled the intern to be proactive when solving problems associated with the single lunch.

Implications for Further Study:

As the administrative intern I recommend that a new committee should be formed to see if a schedule could be generate to form two open campus single lunch blocks. The
population at New Egypt high School is projected to steadily increase over the next ten years. The nine through twelve-grade population is projected to be around six hundred students by the year 2010. I believe that the school can support an open campus single lunch for three hundred to three hundred and fifty students maximum. To assure that this project continues to run efficiently the need to explore running two blocks of the lunch is warranted.
References


Appendix A

Staff Questionnaire
Staff:

Please take a few moments to answer these questions regarding New Egypt High School’s Policies and Procedures regarding (SINGLE LUNCH, A/A, AFTER SCHOOL ACTIVITY PERIOD, ATTENDANCE, and the DISCIPLINE POLICY)

Please Rate your answers on a scale of (1 to 3) by circling the number to the question that you feel best applies.

- 3.) Extremely Proficient
- 2.) Partly Understandable, In Need of Clarification
- 1.) Confusing

1. What are your perceptions of the student attendance policies and procedures?
   (3) (2) (1)

2. How do you feel student discipline problems are handled with in the school?
   (3) (2) (1)

3. How would you best describe the system used for dispersing A/A materials?
   (3) (2) (1)

4. What are your perceptions of the single lunch at the high school?
   (3) (2) (1)

5. How do you see the overall effectiveness of the student usage of the after school activity period?
   (3) (2) (1)

- In the following section please rate how the policies and procedures in the specific areas were explained to you as a staff member. Also, please take the time to include comments and suggestions regarding the areas which were discussed during the questionnaire.

6. Discipline Procedures: (3) (2) (1)
   Comments:

7. Attendance: (3) (2) (1)
   Comments:

8. A/A (3) (2) (1)
   Comments:

9. After School Activity Period: (3) (2) (1)
   Comments:

10. Single Lunch: (3) (2) (1)
    Comments:
Appendix B

Student Questionnaire
Students:

You have been selected randomly to fill out this anonymous questionnaire regarding Advisor / Advisee and the Single Lunch Period. Please take a few moments to answer these questions to the best of your ability. The outcome of this questionnaire will help administrators identify any changes that may need to be implemented for next year.

**Directions:** Please answer the following questions by circling the response that best describes the way you feel.

1. **How would you describe the overall A/A format?**

   1.) Very helpful to me.
   2.) OK sometimes.
   3.) I don’t see any use for it.

2. **What aspect of A/A is most beneficial to you?**

   1.) Classwork
   2.) Study Hall
   3.) Current Events

3. **If it was up to you to decide if A/A should continue as it is, or be cancelled completely what would you do?**

   1.) Continue the program
   2.) Cancel it

4. **How would you describe the Single Lunch Format?**

   1.) Fun & Relaxing
   2.) OK sometimes
   3.) I wish we had lunch only in the cafeteria.

5. **How do you think your classmates act during the single lunch period?**

   1.) Mature (keep the school clean)
   2.) Could be better.
   3.) Very immature

6. **If it were up to you to make the decision to continue the single lunch or cancel the program, what would you do?**

   1.) Continue it.
   2.) Cancel it.

7. **In the space below please write any suggestions that you may have regarding A/A or Single Lunch? (Use the back of this questionnaire if necessary!)**
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