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THE BENEFIT OF ALTERNATIVE SCHEDULING ON A LARGE HIGH SCHOOL

2002

Brian Wert

A Thesis

Submitted in partial fulfillment
Of the Requirements of the
Masters of Arts Degree
Of
The Graduate School
At
Rowan University
May 16, 2002

Approved by_____
Professor

Date Approved May 1, 2002

Abstract

Brian Wert

The Benefit of Alternative Scheduling on a Large High School 2002
Dr. Gerald Lysik
Educational Leadership

In 2002 the teaching staff at Washington Township High School were asked to participate in a survey that would determine what scheduling format would benefit the large population enrolled at their school. This report presents the results of an analysis of a needs assessment survey administered to the entire staff. The results of this mandatory survey were compiled manually and appear in tabular form. The analysis of the results of the teacher survey yields the following findings: most teachers felt that the "nine period day" scheduling option would best address the needs of WTHS with regard to mechanics and logistics. Secondly the staff felt that 4x4-block scheduling would best fit the current curriculum and allows for more instructional variety. Finally the majority of staff members view the nine period day as easier to implement and operate, it is clear that they have identified the 4x4 block as the best suited to delivering the curriculum and meeting the needs of the students.

Mini-Abstract

Brian Wert

The Benefit of Alternative Scheduling on a Large High School 2002
Dr. Gerald Lysik
Educational Leadership

This study investigates alternative scheduling of a large high school. The analysis of the data yields the following findings: the majority of staff members view the nine period day as easier to implement and operate, it is clear that they have identified the 4x4 block as the best suited to delivering the curriculum and meeting the needs of the students.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Dr. Gerald Lysik of Rowan University for his leadership and guidance throughout my internship experience.

I would like to thank the teachers and administrators of Washington Township High School who offered their support, help and guidance during this experience. I would personally like to thank my field mentor, Ann Moore, Assistant Principal in the 9-10 wing, for her help and guidance throughout my internship experience.

Finally, and most importantly, I would like to thank my family for their support through this internship experience. I would especially like to thank my wife, Valerie, for her love and support me through this experience.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Focus of the Study

Within recent years, research in the field of education has strongly suggested that active student participation in school be directly related to student achievement. Often the structure of the traditional eight period schedule falls short of the goal of involving all students actively. To accommodate more student-centered learning experiences, many schools are seeking alternative ways to schedule the academic day. Time management tools may enable schools to improve the quality of education they offer the community (Pisapia, Westfall, 1997).

This study of current research will investigate one of the more popular alternatives to the traditional eight period day. First, the intern will gather information pertaining to a block schedule with regard to student achievement. This data will be compared to the levels of student achievement that already exist within the Washington Township High School. Thus, the focus of this study is on the differences between a traditional and block schedule as they pertain to the academic success of high school students.

The findings will be particularly pertinent to the Washington Township School District. Washington Township Public Schools has been considering the implementation of a block schedule for several years, and has recently approved adding a ninth period to the academic day to fulfill the needs of various programs. To date, the nine period day has not been put into practice.

Purpose of the Study

The intern intends to research current literature related to block scheduling and traditional scheduling. The review of the literature will show the benefits and drawbacks of each with emphasis on teaching methods, student achievement, and faculty and student satisfaction. This will compare the teaching practices and resultant student achievement of high schools using a block schedule and those using more traditional schedules. The intern will report these findings to the district so that an informed decision can be made about which type of program is more feasible. According to Anderson, Herr and Nihlen (1994), the use of practitioner research to gather site-specific knowledge is highly effective in bringing about school reform.

Definitions

The following terms are defined for the purpose of this study:

Traditional schedule – a schedule in which the school day is divided into eight periods lasting 45 to 50 minutes each.

Block schedule – a schedule in which the school day is divided into 4 periods lasting 80 – 90 minutes each.

Limitations of the Study

Data will be gathered by reviewing currently existing literature and research in the field. Therefore, the scope and limitations of the cited studies will limit this review. It will not be possible to measure the effects of block scheduling on the population of Washington Township High School students because a traditional schedule is being used. Any findings regarding the application of block scheduling to Washington Township will be speculative in nature.

Setting of the Study

It is important to note here certain characteristics of the community of Washington Township and its school system. Recently selected by the Courier Post Reader's Choice poll as having one of the best school districts in South Jersey, the district was also listed as one of the best educational values in the state by New Jersey Magazine Superintendent's On-going Report to the Community, 2001). The Township spends Approximately $7, 408 on each pupil per year, which is comparatively lower than the state average of $8,850 per student.

With a population of nearly 50,000, it is also the largest community in Gloucester County, New Jersey. Beginning in the 1950s, the township gradually shifted from a rural farming area to an ever-extending residential suburb. Its population has become more diverse with the influx of European-Americans, African-Americans, Latinos and Asian Americans.

Enrollment as of June 2001 is almost 9,800 students district-wide, and the average student to teacher ratios are as follows: kindergarten – 22 to 1, elementary – 26 to 1, intermediate – 26 to 1, and high school – 24 to 1. The school district houses their students in one preschool / kindergarten center, six elementary schools, three middle schools, and one high school complex. The high school complex is quite extensive and requires the cooperation of several administrators including one head principal, two executive principals overseeing operations of a 9^{th} and 10^{th} grade wing and an 11^{th} and 12^{th} grade wing, four grade-level principals, an assistant principal in charge of athletics and student activities, and ten department chairpersons. The district employs about 950

professional staff and 700 full- and part-time support staff members. The Washington Township High School dropout rate is a mere 3% (50 students out of every 3,000) whereas the state average is 26 percent. Most students attending the high school are from middle income families. Their test scores place them in the top 25 percent of the nation.

The total 2000 – 2001 Budget was $91,936,193. The school tax rate is $1.778 per $100 of assessed value, so the average homeowner with an assessment of $122,252 will pay $2,174 in taxes. This places Washington Township fourteenth out of the twenty-four Gloucester County communities with respect to the amount of property taxes paid. After consistently failing to pass a school budget for nearly a decade, voters turned out in higher numbers in the last election to pass the current school budget.

Significance of the Study

In the past five years, Washington Township High School has been examining several forms of block schedules to determine whether to implement such a schedule at the high school. Administrators, teacher, parents, students and board of education members have arranged on-site visits to block-scheduled schools throughout neighboring counties and the tri-state area.

These visits enabled them to collect a vast array of implementation plans, scheduling procedures, and opinions of administrators, teachers and students involved in block scheduled schools. The emphasis of this study is to expand the amount of information available to Washington Township High School about block scheduling as well as the scope of the research by including data from many states.

This study will provide additional information about teaching practices that are used within a block schedule, which might contribute to its overall success. Perhaps

methodology is the true reason that students within block scheduled schools are able to achieve more than students in regularly scheduled schools. It may be that certain teaching practices and learning activities can be utilized within a traditional day, yielding the same levels of student achievement as block scheduled schools. Whether a block schedule is adopted by the Washington Township High School or not, this information alone will be of value to administrators and curriculum coordinators.

Organization of the Study

In chapter 2, the intern will conduct a review of the current literature pertaining to block scheduling, traditional scheduling and learning activities used in each type of school. Chapter 3 will focus on the design of the study, and research findings will follow in chapter 4. The paper will conclude will implications for further study in chapter 5.

Chapter 2

Review of Literature

For decades, people have speculated as to what the new millenium would bring. New developments and research in communication, technology and medicine were expected to change the quality of life. In many areas, they have. Certainly many also believed that society would be able to solve the many problems plaguing public education by the new millenium. Yet this remains elusive.

Report after report has found the nation's schools lacking, but administrators and educators still struggle to find ways to update education to meet the demands of a vastly different and ever-evolving global economy. At times, educators themselves are loath to create school change through reform. "We cling tightly to arcane structures and practices despite the fact that American education is choking on mediocrity." (Murphy, 1993)

One such reform involves restructuring the school day by increasing the amount of time spent in one class, while limiting the number of classes in the academic day. Thus, block scheduling was born. Surprisingly, the idea dates back to 1959 when J. Lloyd Trump encouraged teachers to experiment with the length and content of their classes according to what best fit their academic needs and the needs of their students (Queen, 2000)

Since then, various forms of block scheduling have been put to use. The three main types are the '4 x 4' block, the 'A/B' or '8 block', and the modified block or 'FAN'. Within the 4 x 4 block, students attend 4 classes a day per semester, with each period lasting 90 minutes. The A/B block is a two-day rotating system in which students

complete eight 90-minute class periods over the course of two school days. Last, the modified block combines a few 90-minute blocks with 45-minute classes (Canady and Rettig, 1999).

Educators believed there would be several positive results achieved through block scheduling. In 1990, Gunter, Estes and Schwab found that the block schedule enabled teachers to maintain student interest through the use of cooperative learning techniques, large group discussions, and simulations. Students enjoyed a large amount of time to study fewer subjects and less quizzes, tests and homework on any given day. Reduced paperwork allowed more time for teachers to plan.

Later, lengthened classes were found to improve the quality of instruction because teachers spent less time on classroom management (Seifert and Beck, 1994). In general, teachers on a block schedule spent less time reviewing material because they found it was often unnecessary (Canady and Rettig, 1995). In two 1997 studies, teachers reported that they were able to provide more individual attention to their students while studying subjects more in-depth, and students expressed satisfaction with more varied instructional activities (Skrobarcek; Alozzine, Eaddy and Queen, 1997). Parents surveyed believed that block scheduling was successful and well worth continuing.

Hackmann and Waters (1998) found students were able to take a broader array of courses, while schools implementing block schedules reported fewer discipline problems, an increase in student attendance, more participation in Advanced Placement courses and improved grades. In their book, The 4 X 4 Block Schedule (1998), Kimberly Isenhour and J. Allen Queen listed ten advantages of the block schedule over a traditional schedule. These included less time spent on administrative tasks and more instructional

time, greater continuity between lessons, fewer discipline problems, more focused study of a subject and more planning time for teachers. Student in a block-scheduled school had less make-up work after an absence, received the opportunity to repeat a course if necessary within the same academic year, and a wider variety of accelerated and elective courses from which to choose.

On the downside, block scheduling has been criticized by some for poor content retention from one level to the next. As well, students must spend a greater amount of time on independent study. Other pitfalls include transferring student from schools on a traditional schedule, fewer new elective choices and the overuse of lecture-type instruction by some teachers (Queen, 2000). Shortt and Thayer (1995) argued that relatively few students transfer between schools during the school year and added that it is " . . . difficult to match schedules for students regardless of scheduling practices."

Another cause for concern is that block scheduling reduces the total instructional time for a given class. Traditional schedules allow for 9,000 minutes of class in a two-semester course, while 4 x 4 block schedules allow only 8,100 minutes. Researchers claim that, given the amount of time teachers spend in traditionally scheduled schools on administrative functions at the beginning and end of a class, either format offers approximately 7,200 minutes of actual instruction (Hackmann, 1995)

A major problem in clock scheduling today is the limited use of instructional strategies best suited for the longer class period (Marshak, 1997). Problems emerge when teachers from blocked schools do not receive sufficient training in the use of a variety of instructional approaches (Jenkins, 2000). Instead, the overuse of the traditional lecture format leads to student complaints and difficulty maintaining interest (Queen,

Burrell and McManus, 2000). In fact, the success or failure of a block schedule can be attributed mainly to extensive, on-going staff development or the lack thereof.

Under fire to improve national test scores, many teachers fall back on lecturing as a time-effective way to cover a lot of content (Marshak, 1997). The appropriate implementation of block scheduling, including the use of different instructional techniques eliminates many of these pitfalls (Murphy, 1992).

In 1994, Julia Anderson reported that educators need to vary their strategies to maximize time-on-task. The most useful and engaging practices within block scheduled schools used to generate the enthusiasm of students were found to be games, cooperative learning groups, group discussion, peer tutoring, inquiry and discovery learning, and creative projects which require the synthesis of information (Cunningham and Nogle, 1996).

How, then, does block scheduling compare to traditional scheduling with regard to student achievement? Many researchers have chosen to explore this query. Hottenstein (1998) found that not only did block scheduling positively affect student achievement, but also helped build a positive school climate, created more flexibility and greater teacher satisfaction. In 2000, Walter Hart developed a code to record the types of instruction teachers used during classes. While he found no difference in the use of instructional time, he did note that teachers in traditionally scheduled schools used more interactive instruction in their shorter classes than teachers in block scheduled schools where the class periods were longer. This led him to suggest that teachers in the block scheduled school were not adequately trained to take advantage of the extended period (Hart, 2000).

In Texas, a comparison between high schools using a block format and those with traditional formats showed no significant differences in student achievement (York, 1997). A case study in California yielded different results claiming student achievement improved due to the opportunity to repeat failed courses immediately in the second semester. Most students earned better grades when repeating a course and therefore student failure rates were reduced significantly (Mutter, Chase and Nichols, 1997).

Shortt and Thayer (1995) found that students in Virginia block scheduled high schools fared better than their traditionally scheduled counterparts on standardized tests. Researchers in Pennsylvania discovered poorer mathematics scores and better verbal scores on the SAT results of students educated on a block schedule. Other positive effects to note were the increased percentage of students earning A or B report card grades and a decrease in the number of high school dropouts (Hottenstein, 1998). Scroth and Dixon (1996) reported slightly higher student achievement on national tests in blocked schools than traditional schools.

The most recent study of instructional strategies used in both block scheduled and traditionally scheduled schools in North Carolina indicates no significant differences in most subject areas with regard to the types of instructional strategies used. However, teachers from blocked schools revealed that they had not been sufficiently trained to adequately utilize the time a block schedule allows. In contrast, those schools using block scheduling in which teachers have been extensively trained reported greater success (Jenkins, 2000).

These results support earlier findings that teacher use of varied instructional strategies is directly related to the amount of training and the quality of staff development

provided prior to implementing a block schedule (Adams and Salvaterra, 1997). Most recent research identifies staff development as key to school reform. Queen (2000) states that block scheduling will not achieve its promise until teachers adopt instructional techniques that take advantage of the extended time, which would in turn create better learning opportunities for students resulting in a greater degree of achievement.

Several researchers have outlined ways to move toward a block schedule in order to help schools make smooth transitions from the traditional day. David Hottenstein (March, 1999) provides six steps for modifying a school schedule in his book *Intensive Scheduling: Restructuring America's Secondary Schools Through Time Management.*

First, the school must see the need for improvement. Goals must be set and measured. Data gathered must be analyzed and reported to everyone involved. Next, all personnel who will be directly involved or affected by the change must take part. When students, faculty, administrators and parents are all kept well informed there is greater likelihood of success. Third, the right type of schedule for the needs of the particular school must be adopted. Hottenstein encourages schools to experiment with various schedules and modify them to fit the needs of the particular school. Step four is to be specific in identifying exactly what it is the school is striving to improve. Once this has been determined, the new schedule can be put into practice gradually. It is recommended that staff development become a major priority if the process of change is to be meaningful. Teachers must have a vested interest and be compensated or recognized in some way for changing. Last, schools must maintain fair and constructive accountability. The commitment to school reform must be kept long enough to yield accurate data and effective results.

Burrell, McManus and Queen (2000) recommend that teachers change activities every ten to fifteen minutes to prevent student boredom, encourage class participation, and create an environment that enables teachers to better meet the needs of their students. They propose beginning with a review followed by a variety of hands-on activities and a summary of the concepts. Some of the techniques advocated in the study include cooperative learning, inquiry method and simulated learning stations.

Hackmann and Schmidt (1997) offer yet another model for teaching within a block schedule. As Burrell, McManus and Queen suggested, they too begin with a review of what was previously learned. Next comes the instructional input. This twenty to thirty minute session is spent developing new concepts and may resemble a traditional lesson. The third part of the block, another thirty or forty minutes, is devoted to student participation, in which students are directly involved in their learning through the creation of models, the conducting of experiments, role-playing or the use of technology. The last five to fifteen minutes are designated as closure or reteaching.

Extensive literature review prompted Scroggins and Karr-Kidwell to develop a handbook for implementing block scheduling. It includes many techniques for building support for block scheduling among students and teachers as well as a time line, which aids schools in preparing for and implementing block-scheduling practices (1995).

Chapter 3

The Design of the Study

The Research Design

The purpose of this study is to compare and contrast the various teaching processes and activities used by a school within a block schedule and a traditionally scheduled high school with an eight- or nine-period day. The many proponents of block scheduling claim that the extended periods of class time allow teachers to use a greater variety of teaching methods, many of which are student-centered. Because of the emphasis on student-centered learning activities, there is also a belief that students in block scheduled schools retain more information than those who experience more traditional teaching methods, such as the lecture format.

In addition to incorporating student-centered learning activities, many topics can be covered in greater depth, thus requiring the use of higher level thinking skills. The research shows that teachers in traditionally scheduled schools used a higher percentage of whole-class instruction than teachers in block scheduled schools, thereby failing to reap the benefits of student centered activities. The research also indicates that the traditionally scheduled schools offer less opportunity for individual student instruction.

Finally, the intern expects to find that the teachers in the block-scheduled school have a higher degree of satisfaction regarding student achievement, student attendance, and teacher workload than the teachers in the traditional school.

Over the past six years, Washington Township High School has been investigating the possibility of implementing block scheduling. The investigation has

Included many groups such as administrators, teachers, students, parents and board of education members. This investigation has included many visits to high schools in the tri-state area. The needs assessment survey will allow the intern to provide the current faculty with a reference guide which includes the advantages and disadvantages of block scheduling as well as the various types of block scheduling with examples of mock schedules. This will be followed by a survey or needs assessment questionnaire to be filled out by all staff in the high school. The data collected will provide additional information for the decision-making process underway in WTHS.

The Development and Design of the Research Instrument

The survey instrument used for this study has been developed in accordance with the Alternative Scheduling Models Steering Committee. This committee was established to determine the future direction of scheduling in WTHS, in terms of an extended school day or alternative scheduling. The committee is made up of teachers and administrators of all instructional departments. The survey they designed consists of two parts. The first part is an informational handout or reference guide that gives the staff a summarized background on the ins and outs of block scheduling. The second part is the actual survey that is divided into three segments.

The first section is a respondent profile, designed to gather information about the person completing the survey. It includes professional assignment or grade(s) taught, department and subject areas taught, number of years working in the high school and total years teaching experience. The second section is a series of multiple-choice questions about each of 4 types of schedules. These include 4x4 (90 min.), A / B (90

min.), Rotating Modified Schedule (60 min.) and finally, a nine-period day (42 – 45 min.). The five areas within this segment are ten questions pertaining to Mechanics and Logistics of the Schedule, thirteen questions regarding Instruction and Curriculum, four questions about Student Learning, and five questions about School Climate. Each multiple-choice item has 3 possible responses: agree, disagree, or unsure. The last section of the survey is a series of six short answer items. The entire survey can be found in Appendix A of this report.

The Sample and Sampling Techniques

Data for this study was collected at Washington Township High School in Sewell, New Jersey. This school was chosen for the study for two reasons. First, the researcher is employed at Washington Township High School and a member of the Alternative Schedule Steering Committee. Secondly, WTHS has been evaluating the feasibility of implementing block scheduling for quite some time.

Data Collection

Data was collected by surveying the entire teaching staff at WTHS. The surveys were distributed to all teaching staff in January. They were instructed to complete the survey with the attached reference guide.

Data Analysis

The results of the survey were compiled using manual tabulation. The results will allow the Steering Committee and the intern to evaluate responses. The results can be found in Appendix B of this report. The responses to the summary section will be

tabulated by educational departments as a group answer. These results will be listed in Appendix C.

As mentioned above, the primary purpose of this study was to perform a needs assessment for the teaching staff at WTHS. This will determine how scheduling at the high school will be handled in the future. This study is a form of action research. The results provide information that may be used in the educational decision-making process at WTHS.

Chapter 4

Presentation of Research Findings

Data for this study was gathered using a needs assessment survey. The survey consisted of two parts. The first portion was a forced-consensus using a 3-point scale (agree, disagree, unsure), while the second portion listed six essay style questions. (See Appendix A) Teachers at Washington Township High School were asked to fill out the first part of the survey independently, and meet within their departments to brainstorm and write answers to the six questions in the second part. The data were used to explore innovative scheduling options and gather information about which options the teaching staff preferred. While the first section gathered numerical data, the second section was designed to gather written information that could not be generated by the first.

Along with the survey, each teacher was given a five-page reference guide describing each scheduling option and how it would work within the context of Washington Township High School. (See Appendix B) As well, specific instructions were given as to how to complete the survey. A total of 249 surveys were distributed to staff members in February of 2002, with the intent of using the results to plan the 2003 – 2004 school year. All surveys were returned, along with written input from eleven departments.

Scoring of the Data

Data gathered were compiled manually from the surveys returned by the Washington Township High School staff. The first part of the survey asked respondents to rate three different block scheduling models (4X4, A/B, and a rotating modified block)

and a nine-period school day. Respondents were not asked to provide any information about the traditional eight period day currently in use at Washington Township High School.

There were thirty-two indicators listed, and teachers were asked to indicate whether they agreed, disagreed or were unsure about the statements written in the indicators. Some examples of the statements are included in the table below. Raw scores were gathered and results appear in Appendix C.

TABLE 1 – Examples of Survey Items
Students will be able to receive appropriate academic support services as needed.
I will cover too much material in a class period for students to absorb.
Students will be more actively involved in their learning in an extended time / alternative schedule.
I will use group work as a major instructional strategy.

The second portion of the survey was a questionnaire which allowed for compilation of more specific feedback from staff members about alternative scheduling as opposed to extended time. The six narrative questions asked:

1. What are the greatest advantages of an extended time schedule? (i.e. 60 to 90 minute periods)
2. What are the greatest disadvantages of an extended time schedule? (i.e. 60 to 90 minute periods)
3. What are the greatest advantages of a 9-Period Day schedule? (i.e. 42 – 45 minute periods)

4. What are the greatest disadvantages of a 9-Period Day schedule? (i.e. 42 – 45 minute periods)
5. Have you ever participated in a visitation to another school (s) that utilize an extended time / alternate schedule? If so, during what school year and what model?
6. If we decided it was necessary to implement one of the extended time/ alternative scheduling models, which model would you choose? (Circle One)

4 x 4 (90 min.) A/B (90 min.) RMS (60 min.) 9-Period Day (42 – 45 min.)

Analysis of Data

The first part of the scaled survey was designed to gather information about "Mechanics and Logistics of the Schedule." Teachers were asked to agree or disagree with each of ten statements, or abstain by choosing "unsure". See Table 2 for raw scores.

TABLE 2 – Mechanics and Logistics

	Pro	Con	Unsure
4 x 4	623	464	558
A / B	654	465	535
RMB	688	390	540
9 Periods	910	305	433

According to these results, most teachers felt that the "nine period day" scheduling option would best address the needs of WTHS with regard to mechanics and logistics. Clearly, many of the staff were not familiar enough with the other three types of schedules to feel sure about agreeing to try them.

The next segment of the survey was entitled "Instruction and Curriculum" and consisted of thirteen items. Again teachers were asked to agree, disagree, or state that they were unsure. Table 3 gives raw scores for this segment.

TABLE 3 – Instruction and Curriculum			
	Pro	**Con**	**Unsure**
4 x 4	941	601	524
A / B	908	609	532
RMB	916	614	548
9 Periods	925	812	371

Results for this segment seem to indicate that WTHS staff felt the 4 x 4 block schedule would best fit the current curriculum and allow for more instructional variety. As well, there was a high level of doubt as to whether the nine period day would benefit instruction and curriculum. These results are in direct conflict with those of the first part of the survey. Again, note the high rate of uncertainty about the 4 x 4 block schedule, the A/B block schedule, and the Random Modified Block schedule. In comparison, the structure of a nine-period day is familiar to most staff.

The third section of the survey consisted of four items about student learning. The intern finds it interesting that such a small portion of the survey was dedicated to such an important issue. See table 4 for results.

TABLE 4 – Student Learning			
	Pro	**Con**	**Unsure**
4 x 4	269	137	242

A / B	253	143	252
RMB	243	156	249
9 Periods	165	246	217

This data shows that the nine period day would be the least beneficial to student learning, while the 4 x 4 block schedule would best meet students' needs, according to those surveyed.

The final five items of the survey comprised the last section. This section gathered information about which scheduling option would be best for overall school climate. See table 5 for raw scores.

Most staff members believe that the greatest positive impact of school climate at WTHS would come from implementing either the Random Modified Block schedule or the 4 x 4 block schedule. Again, there is a high level of

TABLE 5 – School Climate

	Pro	**Con**	**Unsure**
4 x 4	229	231	432
A / B	220	238	395
RMB	232	223	402
9 Periods	192	230	383

uncertainty about these newer scheduling options which interferes with the gathering of useful data. The nine period day is once again ranked last in comparison to the other three, although more people were against implementing the A / B block schedule.

Looking at the results in a different way allows for further interpretation of results. (See table 6.)

TABLE 6 – Survey Results by Subtopic

	4 x 4	A / B	RMB	9 Pd.
Mechanics &Logistics				☆
Instruction & Curriculum	☆			
Student Learning	☆			
School Climate			☆	

While the majority of staff members view the nine period day as easier to implement and operate, it is clear that they have identified the 4 x 4 block as the option best suited to delivering the curriculum and meeting the needs of students.

The written feedback generated from the questionnaire segment of the survey indicated that, given the four options, they would prefer the nine period day over any type of block schedule. (See Table 7.)

Table 7 – Departmental Rankings

Department	4 x 4	A / B	RMB	9 Periods
Science	3	4	2	1
Business Education	2	3	4	1
English	2	3	1	0

Guidance	4	3	2	1
Health / Phys. Ed.	2	-	1	-
Mathematics	-	-	-	1
Special Education	-	-	1	-
Visual & Performing Arts	2	3	1	4
World Language	-	-	-	1
Technology	-	-	-	1
Social Studies	2	-	-	1

Some departments only reported one choice after coming to consensus. Others reported only their first and second choices, and some departments even expressed a desire not to change from the current eight period day schedule, which was not included in the survey.

Discussion of Findings

Some conclusions that can be drawn in analyzing the data are that the majority of staff members are resistant to change, and very likely chose the nine period day because it is the most similar to the eight period day currently in use at Washington Township High School. As well, despite the distribution of a reference guide which described each block schedule option in detail, many staff members just did not feel they knew enough about them to make a critical decision regarding the use of block scheduling in the future. Those teachers who did report experience dealing with a block schedule often shared the drawbacks of block scheduling with their colleagues more than the benefits of each type of schedule.

Among the benefits listed for an extended time schedule were more instructional time, the ability to go more in-depth on a topic, and the greater likelihood that teachers would use a variety of instructional techniques. There would be more use of hands-on activities and students would be more involved. Extending the time also would give teachers the opportunity to individualize and connect with students, and there would be less student contact time in the hallways where problems usually develop in the greatly populated building.

When asked to name disadvantages of an extended time schedule, staff members cited a need for staff training in how to manage the extended period and a fear that the time would not be put to good use by students or staff. Some teachers thought it might be harder for students to maintain attention in longer classes, as they seem to have difficulty in the current shorter classes. The rotating schedules involved in some of the block scheduling options would be hard to implement in some types of classes, and in others simply confusing.

One benefit of a nine period day listed by those surveyed was having the classes meet for the entire school year, allowing for better student-teacher relationships and school climate. Another was that a nine period day would be logistically easier for both students and teachers to understand as it would entail only adding another period of the same length of time onto the existing school day. No teacher training would be needed. Also, nine periods would allow students to choose more elective courses.

One of the more frequently cited disadvantages of a nine period day was the fact that students would switch classes, and thus be in the hallways more than they currently are. Some staff members felt the disruption of the school bells used to signal the end of

each period and the beginning of the next would be very disruptive. Many teachers also felt that forty-five minutes was inadequate time for some of the classroom activities they wanted to use. They felt the class period would feel more rushed and chaotic, and students would have even more homework. A number of staff members were also concerned about potential loss of planning time, the increase in the number of classes each teacher would need to teach, and more non-instructional duties being doled out to teachers.

Chapter 5

Conclusions, Implications and Further Study

The purpose of this study was to investigate and research current literature related to block scheduling and traditional scheduling. The population of the study was the teachers of Washington Township High School in Sewell, New Jersey, where a traditional schedule is in affect.

The intern used the survey method to obtain the data for the study. The entire staff was required to respond to a five part survey which included the following in formation: Section 1- Mechanics and Logistics, Section 2- Instruction and Curriculum, Section 3- Student Learning, Section 4- School Climate, Section 5- Six question narrative to be answered by each educational department. Since this was a mandatory survey 100% of the population returned the survey. The data collected was analyzed and presented in tabular form. Conclusions and recommendations are made in the remainder of this chapter.

Conclusions

The analysis of the results of the teacher survey yields several major findings, which are listed below according to the sections of the survey. The supportive data for these findings are found in the report's appendices. The following conclusions are based on the data from Section 1- Mechanics and Logistics of the schedule:

1. Most teachers felt that the "nine period day" scheduling option would best address the needs of WTHS with regard to mechanics and logistics.

2. Many of the staff were not familiar enough with the other three types of schedules to feel sure about agreeing to try them.

The conclusions are based on the data from Section 2- Instruction and Curriculum:

3. The staff felt the 4x4 block schedule would best fit the current curriculum and allows for more instructional variety.
4. Teachers felt a high level of doubt as to whether the nine period day would benefit instruction and curriculum.
5. The majority of teachers still show a high rate of uncertainty about the 4x4-block schedule, the a/b block schedule, and the Random Modified Block Schedule.
6. The structure of a nine period day is familiar to most staff.

The following conclusions are based on the data from Section 3 – Student Learning:

7. The data shows that the nine period day would be the least beneficial to student learning.
8. The 4x4 block on the other hand would best meet students' needs.

The following conclusions are based on the data from Section4 – School Climate:

9. Most staff members believe that the greatest positive impact of school climate would result from implementing either the Random Modified Block schedule or the 4x4-block schedule.

The following conclusions are based on the data from Section 5 –Narrative Questions (Departmental Rankings):

10. Given the four options, they would prefer the nine period day over any type of block schedule.

Implications and Further Study

Based on the findings of this study, the intern makes the following recommendations:

1. Further research regarding alternative scheduling should be undertaken by Washington Township High School to contribute to the decision-making process that is already underway.
2. Further investigation of block scheduling in the form of visitations to other block scheduled schools by teaching staff members at WTHS.
3. Similar research should be conducted at other large high schools that employ both a block schedule and traditional schedule for the purpose of further comparison.
4. A similar study should be done to establish student's feelings regarding class schedule at their school.
5. Additional research should be done by WTHS to determine how teachers can effectively plan for large blocks of time.

This study gave the intern the opportunity to conduct additional research that may contribute to the decision –making process already underway at WTHS. The results of this study add to the body of knowledge already compiled and aid the district on the decision of which direction the highly populated school district should go. During this study the intern was able to develop many leadership

quality skills that involved communication, strategy and proper assessment of school scheduling.

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Appendix A

Research Instrument

WASHINGTON TOWNSHIP HIGH SCHOOL

SAMPLE EXTENDED TIME/ALTERNATIVE SCHEDULE NEEDS ASSESSMENT

CORE QUESTIONS FOR FACULTY

Introductory Information (example):

The Alternative Scheduling Models Steering Committee is seeking your opinions about a change to an extended time/alternative schedule for the 2003-2004 school year. The research team is interested in the ways in which instruction, student learning, and school culture and climate would be affected by an extended time/alternative schedule. Additionally, the logistics and mechanics of implementing an extended time/alternative schedule, and the extent to which the schedule would work effectively for you and the students is also addressed in this survey. Four (4) types of extended time/ alternative schedules are described in the attachments for your review.

Instructions (example):

Carefully consider the statements presented below. You are being asked to answer each item for the 4 different types of schedules. Your responses will not be personally identifiable, but will be an important component of the overall assessment of the possible implementation of an extended time/alternate or 9-Period Day schedule to-date. On a scale of 1 (you agree) or 2 (you disagree), please enter a number on the blank next to each statement using the following guide. If you are new to the school, or do not have sufficient information, please enter 3 (I am unsure).

- **1 You agree**
- **2 You disagree**
- **3 I am unsure**

Respondent Profile Information (example):

Please provide the following information so that the research team can more effectively analyze the responses.

- **Grade(s) you teach _____**
- **Department and subject area(s) you teacher_____**
- **Number of years teaching at this high school _____**
- **Number of years total teaching _____**

Thank you for your time and thought in completing this needs assessment.

♦ 1 you agree 2 you disagree 3 I am unsure

Mechanics & Logistics of the Schedule	4 X 4 (90 min.)	A/B (90 Min.)	RMS (60 Min.)	9-Periods (42 Min.)
1. An extended time/alternative schedule will allow students to take the courses they need				
2. An extended time/alternative schedule will allow students to take the courses they want				
3. An extended time/alternative schedule will adequately accommodates electives				
4. Students will be able to receive appropriate academic support services as needed				
5. Study hall can be used effectively by students				
6. Passing time between classes will be adequate				
7. The amount of time for lunch will be adequate				
8. The amount of planning time for staff will be adequate				
9. The amount of time for teacher collaboration will be adequate				
10. I have experienced some form of training to implement an extended time/alternative schedule effectively				N/A
Instruction & Curriculum	**4 X 4 (90 min.)**	**A/B (90 min.)**	**RMS (60 min.)**	**9-Periods (42 Min.)**
11. Our departments curriculum can accommodate an extended time/alternative schedule				
12. Our departments curriculum needs to be modified to accommodate an extended time/ alternative schedule				
13. Our departments curriculum needs new courses to be added if we change to an extended time/ alternate or 9-Period Day Schedule				
14. I will have to cover material too quickly				
15. I will cover all the material I need to each term				
16. I will cover too much material in a class period for students to absorb				
17. I currently use a wide variety of instructional strategies				

18. I will have adequate opportunity to individualize instruction				
19. I will use lecture and/or presentation as a major instructional strategy				
Instruction & Curriculum (Cont.)	**4 X 4 (90 min.)**	**A/B (90 min.)**	**RMS (60 min.)**	**9-Periods (42 Min.)**
20. I will use group work as a major instructional strategy				
21. Students will have adequate opportunity for "hands-on" learning				
22. I currently have appropriate supplemental materials to use with an extended time/alternative schedule				
23. My classroom assessment practices will change because of an extended time/alternative schedule				
Student Learning	**4 X 4 (90 min.)**	**A/B (90 Min.)**	**RMS (60 min.)**	**9-Periods (42 min.)**
24. Students can learn more in my present class format than in an extended time/alternative schedule				
25. Students will be more actively involved in their learning in an extended time/alternative schedule				
26. When absent, it will be difficult for students to keep up with course requirements in an extended time schedule				
27. Student grades on classroom assessments will improve in an extended time/alternative schedule				
School Climate	**4 X 4 (90 min.)**	**A/B (90 min.)**	**RMS (60 min.)**	**9-Periods (42 min.)**
28. Student-teacher rapport will improve in an extended time/alternative day schedule				
29. Communication in the school will improve				
30. A safe learning environment will be enhanced				
31. Student behavior will improve				
32. I support consideration for some form of an extended time/alternative schedule beyond our current 45 minute class period schedule				

Narrative Questions

1. **What are the greatest <u>advantages</u> of an extended time schedule? (i.e. 60 to 90 minute periods)** _____

2. **What are the greatest <u>disadvantages</u> of an extended time schedule? (i.e. 60 to 90 minute periods?** _____

3. What are the greatest <u>advantages</u> of a 9-Period Day schedule? (i.e. 42-45 minute periods)

4. What are the greatest <u>disadvantages</u> of a 9-Period Day schedule? (i.e. 42-45 minutes periods)

5. Have you ever participated in a visitation to another school(s) that utilize an extended time/alternate schedule? If so, during what school year and what model? _____

6. If we decided it was necessary to implement one of the extended time/alternative scheduling models, which model would you choose? (*Circle One)*

4 x 4 (90 min.), *A/B (90 min.),* *RMS (60 min.), or* *9-Period Day (42-45 min.)*

Appendix B

Reference Guide

WASHINGTON TOWNSHIP HIGH SCHOOL

EXTENDED TIME/ALTERNATIVE SCHEDULE NEEDS ASSESSMENT

REFERENCE GUIDE

What is Block Scheduling?

Block scheduling organizes the day into fewer, but longer, class periods to allow flexibility for instructional activities. The expressed goal of block scheduling programs is improved student academic performance. Some other reported rewards of these programs are heightened student and teacher morale, encouragement for the use of innovative teaching methods that address multiple learning styles, and an improved atmosphere on campus.

Advantages of Block Scheduling

Much effort has gone into the study of block scheduling and its extensive impact on student learning. Researchers have conducted interviews with students, teachers, administrators, parents, and educators. They have administered surveys, both to collect data on individuals' perceptions, and to uncover the hard facts about block scheduling. As part of the inquiry process, researchers in the field have collected stories of real experiences; these help illustrate the change process that occurs as schools move toward block scheduling. There are both pros and cons to block scheduling, according to the findings of these researchers. Some of the major advantages researchers have noted are the following:

- ***IMPROVED TEACHING AND LEARNING***
  With longer blocks, teachers have more time to complete lesson plans and to examine and reevaluate practices. More class time is available to develop key concepts, incorporate creativity into instruction, and try a variety of classroom activities that address different learning styles. Longer time blocks allow for in-depth study, such as individual student projects, peer collaboration, and one-on-one work between teachers and students.

- ***ABILITY TO FOCUS ATTENTION***
  The "less is more" philosophy espouses the belief that students better understand and retain material when they have an opportunity to apply information to various contexts rather than merely cramming the facts. With block scheduling, students and teachers are able to focus on fewer subjects, and to explore them in greater depth. Both teachers and students assert that this exploration allows them to become engrossed in the subject matter rather than moving rapidly through material. With a standard 4 x 4 block program, teachers have only three to four classes to teach in a given semester, greatly reducing the number of students with whom they meet regularly.

- ***FRAGMENTATION REDUCED***
  With block scheduling, instructional time is not fragmented by frequent transitions between classes. Fewer distinct classes means less time spent on classroom management activities, such as calling attendance and organizing and focusing the class. In addition, there are fewer opportunities for students to arrive late to class.

- ***INDIVIDUALIZED PACING***

  The 4 x 4 schedule allows advanced students to move through material at a more rapid rate, and they are able to finish sequential language classes, such as Spanish I and II, within one academic year. Some schools allow students to use this to their advantage and graduate early. The 4 x 4 schedule also provides the opportunity for failing students to retake a class in the same year without falling behind their grade level.

- ***MORE COURSE OFFERINGS***

  Students actually take more courses in a standard 4 x 4 plan because they enroll in at least eight classes per year instead of six or seven.

- ***STRONGER INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS***

  The number of daily classes for which students and teachers must adjust and prepare is decreased, allowing students to develop the deeper interpersonal relationships that are integral to academic success. Teachers get to know students more personally, which enables them to adapt lessons to the interests of their students. This extensive personal interaction between teacher and student, frequently touted as the highest motivation for student learning, is strengthened through block scheduling.

- ***TEACHER COLLABORATION***

  More substantive collaboration between teachers is possible because block scheduling gives them longer time periods in which they can exchange ideas and strategies, hold meetings with each other, and work on staff development.

- ***ACHIEVEMENT LEVELS INCREASE***

  The results of some studies show that students' grades improve overall. There are fewer failed classes, a higher number of students on the honor roll, an increase in students' grade point averages, and fewer failing marks. Statistics reveal that fewer at-risk students drop out of a school with block scheduling. With a 4 x 4 model, students can have a fresh start at midyear or reenter school at the beginning of the second semester.

- ***ATTITUDES AND COMPREHENSION IMPROVE***

  Surveys indicate that teachers' and students' attitudes about their school improve. Students state that they get more done in class and learn more because they are better able to focus their attention on their studies. Teachers appreciate the inclusion of projects and activities that facilitate both learning and interpersonal communication. Class address material in more depth, and teachers feel students are better able to comprehend and retain concepts learned in a block period.

- ***STANDARDIZED TEST SCORES MAINTAINED***

  Though data are limited, statistics available indicate that block scheduling does not negatively affect standardized test scores.

- ***PACE OF SCHOOL RELAXES***

  Longer passing periods between classes can slow down the pace of a school by providing the chance for students to get books from the library, use the restroom, and talk with their friends.

- ***IMPROVEMENT IN DISCIPLINE***
  Most schools which introduce block schedules find that discipline problems on campus decrease, possibly because students are more challenged in class and are better known by their teachers. Decreasing the number of passing periods reduces opportunities for disruption. In addition, teachers of block classes feel more capable of handling behavior problems because they have adequate time to address these issues in class and have a stronger rapport with their students.

- ***ADDITIONAL FUNDING UNNECESSARY***
  Generally, block scheduling can be used in a school without spending any new money. However, block scheduling should be accompanied by staff development if its benefits are to be fully realized.

Concerns about Block Scheduling

Even those schools which have already successfully introduced block scheduling expressed initial concerns over the effectiveness of an approach that would challenge the conventional methods of time management. Often the most prevalent concerns relate to the basic need to remanage class time while following the same specific teaching and learning requirements. Block scheduling transforms the way one teaches the usual topics by introducing a new way of looking at time, and that often requires a shift in the approach to teaching and learning. Some of the concerns researchers have noted are the following:

- ***DIFFICULTY IN SCHEDULING MUSIC AND AP CLASSES***
  The greatest difficulties occur with classes whose expected duration is an entire year, such as music and band or AP classes. In the latter case, many schools believe that a review of materials at the end of the school year can be difficult for those students who completed course work in the winter. Enrollment in electives, such as music, often declines when students are forced to choose between academic and enrichment classes; only if accommodations for these classes are made can their enrollment be maintained.

- ***LOSS OF CONTENT RETENTION***
  Students forget course content when related subjects are not taken sequentially, much like the typical break from a student's studies that occurs during the extended summer vacation. However, actual research shows that, in fact, the retention of concepts, and process and analytical skills declines only slightly.

- ***OVERUSE OF LECTURES AND STUDY HALLS***
  The block system is doomed if teachers are not properly prepared to utilize a longer class period effectively. Adequate teacher preparation and professional development are crucial elements that are necessary for developing the use of varied teaching techniques. This aspect is especially important in eliminating the fallback to the traditional lecture mode of past decades.

- ***CLASS TIME MAY DROP***
  Total class time may drop, depending on the plan selected. When some teachers become aware of this difference in class time, they may feel that progress through the expected material will be impeded. Teachers sometimes feel this puts added pressure on the requirements they face in helping students meet national standards.

- ***TRANSFERRING CAN BE PROBLEMATIC***
  Students transferring between schools may have a difficult time settling into the new system. This could be true of leaving or entering a school which follows a block schedule, where subjects and time blocks run the risk of being different.

- ***ABSENCES DIFFICULT TO MAKE UP***
  When students or teachers are absent, they lose double the amount of time and may have a more difficult time catching up. With the alternate day model, an absence creates a wider gap in the time between class meetings.

Samples of Block Scheduling Models

There are many different block scheduling configurations, each with several variations depending on the number of class periods per day, the number of courses needed each semester, the addition of full-year courses for specialty subjects, and other accommodations needed in individual schools. Basic models will be presented in this booklet along with a descriptive summary of various formats of block scheduling.

4X4 BLOCK PLAN

This plan typically divides the school day into four 90-minute periods with time added for lunch and passing between classes. Each class lasts for one semester, although some schools make exceptions by maintaining the full-year schedule for Advanced Placement (AP) and music classes. Frequently teachers are responsible for teaching three classes each semester and are encouraged to use the fourth class for planning. Students enroll in four classes in the first semester and four new classes in the second semester.

Some advantages of the 4x4 block plan

- Students concentrate on only four courses per semester.
- Teachers work with fewer students during the semester.
- Students and teachers prepare for fewer courses each semester.
- Students may retake failed courses in the same year.
- Fewer textbooks are required.

FALL	SPRING
Course 1	Course 5
Course 2	Course 6
Course 3	Course 7
Course 4	Course 8

Sample of a basic 4x4 block plan for eight courses

A/B PLAN

This plan, also called an alternate day plan, organizes each day into four 90-minute periods but has a total of eight classes meeting over two consecutive days ("A Day" and "B Day"). Oftentimes, the blocked time "slides" or meets at different times during the day on a rotating basis. While this alternate day schedule allows for development of new teaching strategies, teachers still have a large number of students, and both teachers and students have as many classes for which to prepare.

Some advantages of the A/B plan

- Students receive increased instructional time.
- Students have fewer classes, quizzes, and homework assignments each day.
- Cool-down time for problem classes is increased.

Monday A-Day	**Tuesday** B-Day	**Wednesday** A-Day	**Thursday** B-Day	**Friday** A-Day	**Monday** B-Day
Course 1	Course 2	Course 1	Course 2	Course 1	Course 2
Course 3	Course 4	Course 3	Course 4	Course 3	Course 4
Course 5	Course 6	Course 5	Course 6	Course 5	Course 6
Course 7	Course 8	Course 7	Course 8	Course 7	Course 8

Sample week of an A/B plan (alternative day) for eight courses

The Rotating Modified Block

THE ROTATING MODIFIED BLOCK

1-DAY	2-DAY	3-DAY	4-DAY
1	2	3	4
2	3	4	1
3	4	1	2
LUNCH	LUNCH	LUNCH	LUNCH
5	6	7	8
6	7	8	5
7	8	5	6

THE ROTATING MODIFIED BLOCK

1-DAY	2-DAY	3 DAY	4-DAY
Biology	Elective	History	Health/PE
Elective	History	Health/PE	Biology
History	Health/PE	Biology	Elective
LUNCH	LUNCH	LUNCH	LUNCH
Geometry	English	Spanish	Elective
English	Spanish	Elective	Geometry
Spanish	Elective	Geometry	English

ROTATING SCHEDULE ADVANTAGES

- Longer periods for more active learning opportunities
- More time for quality assignments and assessments
- Increased daily instructional time
- More productive school and classroom climate
- Instructional process has fewer disruptions
- Day is less frenetic for students and staff
- Rotation of classes for a more interesting day
- Enhanced socialization and co-curricular opportunities
- Improved room utilization and class size balance
- Opportunities for teacher team meetings

Longer Periods for More Active Learning

Sample Day	Period Length	Sample Schedule
Biology	60 min	7:50a – 8:50a
Elective	60 min	8:55a – 9:55a
History	60 min	10:00a – 11:00a
LUNCH	LUNCH	11:00a – 11:45a
Geometry	60 min	11:45a – 12:45p
English	60 min	12:50p – 1:50p
Spanish	60 min	1:55p – 2:55p

Increased Instructional Time

	Traditional Schedule	Rotating Schedule
Period Length (min)	45	60
Number of Class Meetings (days)	180	135
Instructional Time per Class (min)	8100	8100
Number of Classes Offered	7	8
Total Instructional Time (min)	56700	64800

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Quality Assignment and Assessments

- 60 minute periods provide time for reports, briefings, closure, and other active learning strategies and performance assessments
- Fewer subjects daily allow students to focus better during homework hours
- 60 minute periods provide more time for content depth and higher level thinking

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Appendix C

Research Results

WASHINGTON TOWNSHIP HIGH SCHOOL
EXTENDED TIME/ALTERNATIVE SCHEDULING NEEDS ASSESSMENT

1-Agree 2-Disagree 3-Unsure NUMBER OF ACTUAL RESPONSES

Question	4X4 (90 Min)			A/B (90 Min)			RMS (60 Min)			9 Periods (42-45 Min)		
1-Agree 2-Disagree 3-Unsure	**1**	**2**	**3**	**1**	**2**	**3**	**1**	**2**	**3**	**1**	**2**	**3**
1. An extended time/alternative schedule will allow students to take the courses they need	98	38	49	93	39	42	96	30	47	137	11	26
2. An extended time/alternative schedule will allow students to take the courses they want	64	61	54	60	55	49	81	42	48	130	14	30
3. An extended time/alternative schedule will adequately accommodates electives	53	62	61	61	50	67	66	36	73	122	15	39
4. Students will be able to receive appropriate academic support services as needed	65	34	72	61	42	63	67	29	69	89	21	59
5. Study hall can be used effectively by students	25	95	51	25	93	51	39	73	23	87	40	42
6. Passing time between classes will be adequate	98	13	62	100	14	54	91	15	61	69	38	60
7. The amount of time for lunch will be adequate	89	25	58	90	24	57	93	21	56	111	18	44
8. The amount of planning time for staff will be adequate	83	31	60	79	35	59	77	28	66	73	47	53
9. The amount of time for teacher collaboration will be adequate	52	33	73	50	36	72	50	32	75	48	44	62
10. I have experienced some form of training to implement an extended time/alternative schedule effectively	43	72	18	35	77	21	28	84	22	44	57	18
11. Our departments curriculum can accommodate an extended time/alternative schedule	66	51	50	67	49	49	85	31	49	115	21	33
12. Our departments curriculum needs to be modified to accommodate an extended time/alternative schedule	89	39	39	87	41	38	73	53	40	53	77	33
13. Our departments curriculum needs new courses to be added if we change to an extended time/alternative schedule	30	76	56	30	75	49	32	72	55	30	79	47

WASHINGTON TOWNSHIP HIGH SCHOOL
EXTENDED TIME/ALTERNATIVE SCHEDULING NEEDS ASSESSMENT
1-Agree 2-Disagree 3-Unsure NUMBER OF ACTUAL RESPONSES

Question	4X4 (90 Min)			A/B (90 Min)			RMS (60 Min)			9 Periods (42-45 Min)		
1-Agree 2-Disagree 3-Unsure	**1**	**2**	**3**	**1**	**2**	**3**	**1**	**2**	**3**	**1**	**2**	**3**
14. I will have to cover material too quickly	64	59	43	50	69	52	34	83	47	46	80	27
15. I will cover all the material I need to each marking period or term	51	51	60	55	47	60	65	31	65	101	30	31
16. I will cover too much material in a class period for students to absorb	75	43	39	80	48	37	41	81	45	21	86	23
17. I currently use a wide variety of instructional strategies	118	9	19	85	11	18	119	8	17	126	11	9
18. I will have adequate opportunity to individualize instruction	79	33	51	72	34	51	72	28	54	62	57	42
19. I will use lecture and/or presentation as a major instructional strategy	45	95	23	38	92	27	50	79	28	73	75	12
20. I will use group work as a major instructional strategy	99	31	31	96	30	34	89	35	35	74	53	30
21. Students will have adequate opportunity for "hands-on" learning	118	14	28	116	14	32	114	17	31	85	44	30
22. I currently have appropriate supplemental materials to use with an extended time/alternative schedule	62	57	44	61	55	46	76	44	42	105	26	27
23. My classroom assessment practices will change because of an extended time/alternative schedule	45	43	41	71	44	39	66	52	40	31	96	27
24. Students can learn more in my present class format than in an extended time/alternative schedule	50	32	72	47	37	74	47	37	74	47	47	60
25. Students will be more actively involved in their learning in an extended time/alternative schedule	63	47	58	59	48	60	69	43	50	50	59	50
26. When absent, it will be difficult for students to keep up with course requirements in an extended time schedule	130	14	24	124	16	27	104	34	34	42	98	24

WASHINGTON TOWNSHIP HIGH SCHOOL
EXTENDED TIME/ALTERNATIVE SCHEDULING NEEDS ASSESSMENT
1-Agree 2-Disagree 3-Unsure NUMBER OF ACTUAL RESPONSES

Question	4X4 (90 Min)			A/B (90 Min)			RMS (60 Min)			9 Periods (42-45 Min)		
1-Agree 2-Disagree 3-Unsure	**1**	**2**	**3**	**1**	**2**	**3**	**1**	**2**	**3**	**1**	**2**	**3**
27. Student grades on classroom assessments will improve in an extended time/alternative schedule	26	44	88	23	42	91	23	42	91	26	42	83
28. Student-teacher rapport will improve in an extended time/alternative day schedule	75	30	103	57	37	73	61	33	72	43	55	61
29. Communication in the school will improve	29	43	99	28	44	98	29	54	97	27	44	92
30. A safe learning environment will be enhanced	52	27	90	50	28	91	47	28	94	36	36	90
31. Student behavior will improve	20	55	96	19	53	98	24	47	102	24	43	98
32. I support consideration for some form of an extended time/alternative schedule beyond our current 45 minute class period schedule	53	76	44	66	76	35	71	61	37	62	52	42
TOTAL	**2109**	**1433**	**1756**	**2035**	**1455**	**1714**	**2079**	**1383**	**1739**	**2189**	**1516**	**1404**

Washington Township High School
Science Department

To: Jack McGee
From: John Shivers
Date: February 7, 2002
Re: Needs Assessment Results from February 6 Science Department Meeting
Vote: **9-period day, if 45 minutes/period**

Number 1

- more class time to cover more material
- time to complete labs daily
- more time for warm up and closure
- more time to do labs, hands-on activities and group work in a single period
- can vary activities and keep on one topic with fewer interruptions and time to try various teaching methods
- flexibility to do labs on any day
- more time for individual help
- more time for make-up work during class time
- more time to use various teaching approaches
- less time in the hallways and changing classes
- in 90-minute period, can have pre-lab, lab and post-lab in the same period
- more intensive depth of subject ... but will have to reduce breadth of material covered

Number 2

- loss of about 2-3 weeks of instruction time over the school year
- teachers need training in how to manage the extended class time
- information overload in Honors and AP classes ... too much to pack in one period
- keeping low level students on task
- lost lab period/week over a 40-week year = 40 lost classes or 8 weeks of lost work!
- for every day that a student is absent, they have $1\ ^1/_2 - 2$ days of work to make up as compared to 45-minute classes
- hard to keep students on task for so long a time even with varying activities
- forced to test more often
- need to modify/rewrite curriculum to reflect longer periods and covering fewer units
- too much material for students to absorb
- AP scores go down about 0.3 points throughout the country

Number 3

- gives more flexibility and a wider choice in course offerings
- common time for department planning (45 minutes)
- reduction in class size
- permits more use of labs ... may not need additional science rooms

Number 4

- 42-minute periods would lose too 180 minutes over a year (16 class periods ... more than 3 weeks!)
- afraid that teachers will be expected to teach additional sections
- if students don't select electives, there would be too many study halls
- too many class changes and passing time
- students have too many courses to study for
- 42-minute classes too short for many activities
- can't do pre-lab, lab and post-lab in same period
- student achievement now isn't high enough now ... do we need more classes?
- need additional staff to teach the extra sessions
- if the teaching day is extended, fewer teachers will stay beyond the contracted day for make-up work and help

Number 5

- 4x4 at Nazareth HS
- 4x4 at Haverford HS

Number 6

- Department choice: ***9 period day if they are 45 minutes in length***
- Department vote: 24 for, 1 against
- Serious interest in RMS block scheduling ... IF the lunch problem can be solved AND an extra period per week is scheduled for lab sciences
- Most would prefer our present schedule and would not want the 9 period day if they were 42 minutes

SURVEY RESULTS
EXTENDED TIME/ALTERNTIVE SCHEDULING

BUSINESS EDUCATION
AND
FAMILY AND CONSUMER SCIENCE

1) **Extended Time Schedule—Advantages**
   - More time for diverse activities within a lesson, opportunity for using a variety of instructional methods. More activities and discussions can be utilized to reinforce concepts.
   - Subject matter can be taught in larger segments for conceptual understanding and application
   - More class time would allow for increased hands-on projects.
   - Students can focus on smaller number of classes
   - Opportunity to interact on a more personal basis with the students
   - Faculty, staff, and students will be less "stressed out" instead of rushing from class to class using present bell schedule. (less movement in the halls)
   - There will be sufficient time for prep work and clean up activities in labs, therefore, more time will be available for actual class instruction.
   - Less student movement in the halls—discipline outside the classroom may improve
   - Reduces number of students teacher sees
   - Culinary arts—more realistic experience:
     - Students will gain appreciation as to how long some food projects take to prepare and complete, instead of teacher doing some of the steps for the students prior to or after the current class period
     - Increased choices in food selection to prepare

2) **Extended Time Schedule—Disadvantages**
   - Question as to how this plan would affect cooperative education programs?
   - Teachers unwilling or incapable of adjusting their teaching methods
   - Retraining of teachers in methods of working with a longer block of time
   - When a student is absent, more work will be missed. Overwhelming for absent student with the amount of material he/she would need to catch up.
   - Chance of more "down" time, therefore, less effective use of instructional time
   - Possible difficulty for students to transfer from district to district
   - Potential classroom discipline problems for students with shorter attention spans
   - Too long of a period of time to keep students on task
   - Content retention—sequential courses may not meet for over a year
   - Rotating schedules could be confusing
   - Difficult for some first level courses such as keyboarding, speedwriting
   - Some teachers might assign homework or "busy work" done in the "extra" time; therefore not utilizing the concept of "homework" for reinforcement of lessons in school.
   - Courses with a co-curricular component (such as Marketing Ed) would not have yearlong contact with DECA advisor(s).
   - Rotating schedules—difficult for culinary arts classes—possibility that food would be prepared one day and have to sit several days until class meets again for the next step.

3) **9-Period Day—Advantages**

- Increased opportunity for electives to broaden student's knowledge and career interests
- Change of pace for students, more exposure to different teachers and teaching styles
- Only have a disruptive-type student for 42 minutes vs. a longer period of time
- Depending on structure of day, may allow for additional lunch periods being offered, resulting in smaller, more manageable groups in the cafeteria
- Less difficult to switch to from our present schedule

4) **9-Period Day—Disadvantages**

- Shorter class periods do not offer enough time for hands-on learning/project learning
- Too many classes for students to digest
- Less instruction time for all courses; therefore, less material covered
- Constant motion and too much traveling in hall for both students and teachers
- Number of preps assigned may increase
- Possibility of teachers being forced to teach a sixth class
- Students are too tired by the 8th and 9th periods of the day
- Students to not like being in school for 8 students, let alone 9

5) **Experience/visitation to another school**

Clearview, 1999	9 period day	1 teacher worked at a school with 9 period day
Oakcrest, 1993	Block Scheduling	1 teacher worked at a school with blocked
Paramus, 2001	RMS	
Maryland, 1999	4 x 4	
Haverford HS, 1999	4 x 4	
Hatboro-Horsham	4 x 4	
Hunterdon , 2000	4 x 4	
	4 x 4	Teacher's child attended 4x4 HS. Child's criticism was that teachers gave students too much "free time."

6) **Vote**

4 x 4 (90 min)	5
A/B (90 min)	2
RMS (60 min)	1
9-Period Day (42-45 min)	12

WASHINGTON TOWNSHIP PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Secondary English Department

February 7, 2002

Robert L. Petrillo
Supervisor of English 6-12

TO: Jack McGee, Principal WTHS
RE: Following is the results of our English Department meeting on February 5.

Extended Time/Alternative Schedule Essay Questions

1. *What are the greatest advantages of an extended time schedule? (60-90 minute periods)*

- ✓ The teacher can use a variety of methods to meet the needs of different learners.
- ✓ There is less prep – fewer students.
- ✓ Less subjects for students – better focus.
- ✓ Less movement of students during the day; especially helpful with our crowded hallways.
- ✓ No cafeteria duty for teachers with block scheduling.
- ✓ More time to incorporate student-centered activities and AV material in daily lessons
- ✓ More elective courses.
- ✓ Can retake failed courses.
- ✓ There is less grading in a block per semester.
- ✓ Class size would be smaller.
- ✓ Less time would be spent in having to review the previous day's concepts.
- ✓ Allows teachers to incorporate a variety of instructional methods in the same period.
- ✓ In depth exploration of ideas; more material can be covered; more time to complete lessons.
- ✓ More time for teacher collaboration.
- ✓ Students cover course material in a fashion similar to a college semester.
- ✓ Additional time to investigate connections across the curriculum.
- ✓ More time to create learning activities and orchestrate group activities (cooperative learning).
- ✓ More in school prep time for teachers.
- ✓ Allows ample time for teachers to conference with students (if class size is reduced).
- ✓ More time to digest the relevance of ideas to contemporary life.
- ✓ Partner work would be enhanced.
- ✓ Better attention and a quieter atmosphere.
- ✓ More time for application of ideas in class, in a less hurried environment.
- ✓ Two people felt there were NO advantages.

2. *What are the greatest disadvantages of an extended time schedule? (60-90 minute periods)*

- ✓ Content may be lost. There is a concern about fitting in all the material required for the course in a ½ year. There may be insufficient time for reinforcing concepts. Some material may have to be cut.
- ✓ Half year block format (4x4) will ultimately hurt school spirit.
- ✓ Fear that this will lead to all teachers having to teach a sixth class.
- ✓ A subject may not be "revisited" for ½ year, causing retention problems.
- ✓ Do not feel that lunch would work well in the schedule. There may be a lack of space to accommodate everyone.
- ✓ Students may not make full use of their instructional time.
- ✓ Make-up work will be excessive for students who have been absent.

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WASHINGTON TOWNSHIP PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Secondary English Department

Robert L. Petrillo
Supervisor of English 6-12

- ✓ Low level students will have a very difficult time focusing on their work for extended periods of time.
- ✓ The HSPA scores will be impacted negatively, especially if a particular student has a weakness in a subject area and doesn't have that subject at the time of testing.
- ✓ SAT scores will be affected in a similar negative manner (as above noted for HSPA).
- ✓ Would students be required to take electives? A long block of study hall would be a waste of time.
- ✓ Imperative need for the retraining of teachers.
- ✓ A/B is overwhelming for teacher prep, planning, number of students, and time management.
- ✓ Teacher absence would be a significant problem.
- ✓ Transfer students will have trouble fitting in.
- ✓ There may be too much time to maintain a high level of student interest.
- ✓ Students who tend to be disruptive, will be causing problems for the teacher for an extended period of time.
- ✓ There will be a need to adapt material to cover the extended time.
- ✓ There are numerous states and school districts which have abandoned block scheduling.
- ✓ 4x4 presents the problem of having to change classes just when a rapport begins to develop.
- ✓ Students can only process so much material on a daily and nightly basis.
- ✓ The possibility looms that some teachers may be cut as a result of the change.

3. *What are the greatest advantages of a 9 period day? (42-45 minute periods)*

- ✓ Attention span optimal.
- ✓ Curriculum can be taught in total.
- ✓ Exposure to a variety of subject areas.
- ✓ Helps transition for students moving in or out of WTHS.
- ✓ Students can take more classes and seek help during the day.
- ✓ Fragmentation of courses is avoided.
- ✓ For absent students or teacher, easy to make up work and get back on track.
- ✓ Keeps all programs in place.
- ✓ Allows teachers to maintain current teaching styles and activities within the classroom.
- ✓ More opportunity for course selection, especially electives, and extra credits.
- ✓ There is little change to the major teaching climate.
- ✓ More space might make for smaller classes.
- ✓ Easier adjustment period for students, than going to a block type schedule.
- ✓ No reduction in teaching staff.
- ✓ More student interaction; students will be able to talk to friends between periods. More passing time means more opportunity to see friends. This adds to a positive student perception of school in general. Having classes meet for the entire year allows them the opportunity to get to know each other better.
- ✓ Three individuals saw NO advantages to the 9 period day.

4. *What are the greatest disadvantages of a 9 period day? (42-45 minute periods)*

- ✓ Classes are shortened and content may not be covered adequately.
- ✓ Movement in the halls is added to the day
- ✓ Study halls may become too available to students. Students belong in class!

WASHINGTON TOWNSHIP PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Secondary English Department

Robert L. Petrillo
Supervisor of English 6-12

- ✓ A more intense day because of a bit faster pace.
- ✓ Fear that teachers will all end up teaching a sixth class.
- ✓ There may be more students, more paperwork and not enough prep time.
- ✓ Would make a very long day for both students and teachers.
- ✓ The thought of 180 plus papers to grade is frightening, if teachers end up with a 6th period to teach.
- ✓ Our school already starts too early; a 9 period day may cause us to start even earlier.
- ✓ Too many transitions may lead to more discipline problems.
- ✓ Some students may be overwhelmed by having 8 classes.
- ✓ For English teachers, a nine period day would cut into grading time.
- ✓ Too long and grueling of a day.
- ✓ Not enough students taking advantage of the extra time and courses could cause a problem, including to many study halls.
- ✓ There will be a hurried environment and a noisy hall.
- ✓ Does not lend itself as well to higher level English and writing classes.
- ✓ There may be increased student tension due to constant movement in overcrowded halls.
- ✓ Two teachers felt there were NO disadvantages to a nine period day.

5. *Have you ever participated in a visitation to another school(s) that utilize and extended time/alternate schedule? If so, during what school year and what model?*

- ✓ 2000 (2 South Jersey Schools)
- ✓ 1998-2000, Hatboro-Horsham HS (6 teachers)
- ✓ 2001, Paramus HS
- ✓ 1997, Haverford HS
- ✓ 1997, Hunterdon Central HS
- ✓ 2001, Northern Valley Regional HS
- ✓ 2000, Cumberland Regional HS

6. *If we decided it was necessary to implement one of the extended time/alternative scheduling models, which model would you choose?*

- ✓ The department unanimously voted for Status Quo as their first choice.
- ✓ If the decision were out of their hands, the vote was split as follows:
  - 9 votes for RMS (60 minute) schedule
  - 4 votes for 4x4 (90 minute) schedule
  - 3 votes for A/B (90 minute) schedule
  - 0 votes for 9 period schedule.
  - 5 teachers withheld their votes because they did not feel knowledgeable enough to make a decision.
  - 8 teachers were not able to make the meeting because of scheduling conflicts, but handed in their surveys.

Jack, I hope this helps you out. As we discussed in our department meeting, it is a very complex issue with many ramifications. Let me know if we can be on any additional help. Thanks. Bob Petrillo

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GUIDANCE OFFICE REPLIES (AS A DEPARTMENT)

Narrative Questions

1. **What are the greatest <u>advantages</u> of an extended time schedule? (i.e. 60 to 90 minute periods)**

1. Allows more time for individual instruction.
2. Allows more time for classes that are activity oriented.
3. Cuts down on suvervised time in halls, etc.
4. Teachers do not hve to cram everything into a 45 minute period.
5. More time for question and answer time.
6. Students can take more electives.

2. **What are the greatest <u>disadvantages</u> of an extended time schedule? (i.e. 60 to 90 minute periods?**

1. Advanced students are seriously hurt by the 4x4 block schedule.
2. Transfer in and transfer out students are hurt by this.
3. None of the school in the area use this.
4. Teachers that are not dynamic will lose their students.
5. If a class is 90 minutes, teachers are doing more entertaining.
6. Can cause class to be watered down.
7. If a student is absent, it can be harder to catch up.
8. If a teacher is absent, too much time is lost.
9. Rotating Modified Block - the one lunch time is a major concern.
10. Students have made the adjustment in middle school to a 9 period d
11. Student can only take 28 courses during the course of 4 years.

GUIDANCE OFFICE REPLIES (AS A DEPARTMENT)

3. **What are the greatest <u>advantages</u> of a 9-Period Day schedule? (i.e. 42-45 minute periods)**

1. Can take more electives.
2. Sequence and continuity of classes.
3. Same as the middle schools.
4. The student would have time for a study hall as long as state does not change the graduation requirements.
5. Less overcrowding i Phys Ed and lunch.
6. Honors math can have labs in conjunction with science.

4. **What are the greatest <u>disadvantages</u> of a 9-Period Day schedule? (i.e. 42-45 minutes periods)**

1. Too many changing times.
2. If too many students choose a study hall as their 9th class, housing can be a problem.
3. Having an academic class 9th period is tiring.
4. Will have students running from class to class without enough time in between classes (unless day is extended with enought time).

5. **Have you ever participated in a visitation to another school(s) that utilize an extended time/alternate schedule? If so, during what school year and what model?**

Yes - 4 counselors visited another school with alternate schedule
Hatboro/Horsham 98/99 - Block Scheduling — Northern Valley R
Upper Darby HS - 1999 - Block Scheduling — 2000 School Year

6. **If we decided it was necessary to implement one of the extended ti scheduling models, which model would you choose? (*Circle One*)**

4 x 4 (90 min.), ***A/B (90 min.),*** ***RMS (60 min.), or*** ***9-Period***

WASHINGTON TOWNSHIP PUBLIC SCHOOLS
HEALTH AND PHYSICAL EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

Re: Needs assessment

Date: Feb 6, 2002 Department Meeting

In attendance: Mary Ann Shivers, Peg Anton, JoAnn Berardi, Tracy Burkhart, John Bush, Rich Flemming, Kim Gilligan, Kim Griffiths, Donna Headley, Billy Hyatt, Chris Kitchin, Rhonda Logar, Jeannine O'Connor, Tony Procopio and Brian Wert.

Narrative Questions:

#1: Advantages of extended time:

a. Increased pupil contact time
b. More depth for individual activities/concepts
c. Could incorporate fitness into EVERY lesson(48 lessons per year)
d. Improved student-teacher relationship
e. Less opportunity for student problems in halls
f. A "split-block" would allow for PE all year
g. Allows for more time for extra help

#2: Disadvantages of extended time:

a. Reduced pupil contact time
b. Increased class size
c. Physical activity only ½ year(actually 12 of 18 weeks w/ 6 weeks for health)
d. Impact of student/teacher absences
e. Too diverse academic groupings, i.e. "specials needs: students in same class with "AP" students.
f. Room utilization concerns
g. Will eliminate electives
h. Student attention span too short to stay involved, could become disrup'
i. Cannot meet core standards for fitness and health
j. Poor retention of materials

#3: Advantages of a 9-period day:

a. Increased elective choices
b. Easy to implement, no teacher training

#4: Disadvantages of a 9-Period Day:

a. Decreased pupil time

b. Students in the halls more
c. Teachers pick up extra class
d. More stress on students
e. Unmotivated students could have 2(or more) study halls a day.
f. Severe impact on after school activities, including make-up PE
g. Too long a day for students since many have difficulty with 8 periods

#5: Visitations:

Upper Darby
Havertown
Hatboro-Horsham

#6: Model choice:

4x4.....1
A/B.....0
RMS.....4
9 Period Day.....0
8 Period Day....16

TO: Jack McGee
FROM: Yvonne Lisa
DATE: 1-7-02
RE: **NEEDS ASSESSMENT RESULTS FROM 9-12 MATH DEPT.**

NARRATIVE QUESTIONS

Number 1:

- Increased time for practice
- Students will have fewer subjects and, therefore, can spend more time in preparation for the courses
- Conducive to cooperative learning
- Fewer times students will be in halls during the school day
- More time for "hands on" activities

Number 2:

- Unable to cover as much of the curriculum
- Make-up work when students are absent
- A lot of planning is needed
- Too much time in one class for the low level student
- Not enough time to process information
- Continuity of classes might be jeopardized—i.e. Algebra 1 first semester of one year, Algebra 2 second semester of the second year
- ½ year classes might result in the "folding" of certain courses that require a lot of "home" time—i.e. working on robotic projects
- Makes students lazy
- Research on AP classes shows that AP test scores are lower for students coming from a block schedule format

Number 3:

- Students can take more electives
- Saves some of our courses
- Daily continuity of course work and reinforcement
- 45 minutes is a good block of time to keep students focused and on task

Number 4:

- More bells, therefore, more student contact time in the halls
- 42 minute time period would result in less subject matter time for studentsH
- Student fatigue due to an extra class and extra work

Number 5:

- Hatboro-Horsham 4X4
- Hunterdon Central 4X4

Number 6:

- Department choice 9 period day

Special Education Department 9/12
Block Scheduling Summary

February 4, 2002

What are the greatest advantages of an extended time schedule? (i.e. 60 to 90 minute periods)

- More projects/hands on activities
- More review – longer time allows for in-depth review
- Extended test time will help
- Longer period of planning
- Students would not be overwhelmed by the work (less classes to worry about)
- You can cover entire assignment/lessons without breaks (42 min.)
- Opportunity to use time for more activities
- Cover more material without bell disruptions
- With 4 classes per semester, students would be responsible for less subject material (homework in evenings)

What are the greatest disadvantages of an extended time schedule? (i.e. 60 to 90 minute periods)

- Absences of teachers and students (Spec. Ed)
- Attention span
- Retention of info/new set of classes in January?
- In math classes-students need practice (they can only handle a certain amount of material)
- Need for Inservice/new techniques for extended lessons
- Need more money (materials and training)
- Possibility of reducing staff and adding to class size
- Confusion (Spec. Ed. Students) knowing their schedule
- HSPA Test materials need to be done daily to master material. A semester off of subject material could reduce test scores
- Need to utilize several different teaching techniques
- Testing is major issue

What are the greatest advantages of a 9-Period day schedule? (i.e. 42-45 minute periods)

- Students could take more electives
- Opportunity to take more electives
- Classes held daily throughout the year – student less likely to lose skills for HSPA-SAT

What are the greatest disadvantages of a 9-Period Day schedule? (i.e. 42-45 minute periods)

- Another prep if required to teach 6 periods
- Not enough time to extend activities
- Disruption with bell every 45 minutes
- Set up of activities

Have you ever participated in a visitation to another school(s) that utilize and extended time/alternate schedule? If so, during what school year and what model?

- 1999- AB models discussed
- 2 teachers taught with AB 90 min. + 60 min. (Both liked it)
- Some teachers in group attended visitations. Pros and cons of visitations were noted

If we decided it was necessary to implement one of the extended time/alternative scheduling models, which model would you choose? ***(General consensus of Dept.)***

4 x 4 (90 min.), A/B (90 min.), **RMS (60 min.)** or 9-Period Day (42-45 min.)

Hearing Impaired Concerns

What are the greatest advantages of an extended time schedule? (i.e. 60 to 90 minute periods?)

- Gives opportunity for Deaf students to focus more on their reading and vocabulary skills
- Makes the classes less rushed – more time to have discussions and more time for individual attention
- Gives time to do activities
- More can get done – more materials covered, etc.

What are the greatest disadvantages of an extended time schedule? (i.e. 60 to 90 minute periods)

- Absences
- Attention time – can student focus that long
- Interpreters!→ if 90 minute classes happen, more interpreters will be needed (impossible to interpret 90 minutes straight!)
- A/B schedule – English is very important for Deaf students – that means one semester with no English? Parents will scream!
- Could be confusing for kids (different classes on different days)
- "Problem" students – long time to deal with them

What are the greatest disadvantages of a 9-Period Day schedule? (i.e. 42-45 minute periods)

- Too short!

Additional Suggestions:

- Modified Block – 4x4 1st period to follow A/B for HSPA areas for test prep. Allows full year of subject
- Testing can impede block schedule
- Block for lunch good idea – possible option for leaving grounds
- Full year HSPA skills for 11th, possible for 10th also
- Concern for test content requirements – aligned in a sequence for Math clusters (either 4x4 or 60 min. period)

In Attendance
February 4, 2002

Paul Spadafora
Tricia Coppinger
Shane Snyder
Ron Caccese
Jessica Slates
Bill Alvaro
Michelle Guetens
Ed Regan
Nicole Chamberlin
Shannon Bowdish
Kristin Harner
Cheryl Barnett
Lorie Cross Jones
Karen Emig
Judy Roback
Eileen Lucarini
Honora Kelley
Pat Conroy
Maryalice Smith
Deirdre Lee
Marie Blistan
Nicole Molinaro
Jackie Bockman
Jen Curcuru
Carol Costello
Ami Fishman
Donna Savill

Block Scheduling Discussion Notes
Visual and Performing Arts Department
February 6, 2002

9 Period Day

Advantages:

-Added course, another class students can take
-Rotating lesson schedule
-Retention of learning material on a daily, consistent basis.

Disadvantages:

-Kids have too much time in the hallways already
-Added stress for students – chaotic atmosphere - additional homework
-Insufficient instructional time
-Class period too rushed, not enough time to assess comprehension
-Cutting into extra curricular activities if the day is longer
-Not enough time to develop a thought or a process
-Contractual concerns (i.e. less prep time, more classes & duties)
-Lunch period concerns (duty issues)

Extended Time Schedule

Advantages:

- RMS & A/B: Classes meet all year long
-More instructional time
-Less time in the hallways
-RMS: Least amount of change of teaching styles
-Efficient time to set-up, clean-up and teach
-Provides more time for consistent/multiple instruction opportunities
-Ways of developing and completing a thought and process
-Improved quality of work time
-Instructional reinforcement work
-RMS: Attention span/endurance in music is better suited for 60 minutes
-Adding another class period for students
-RMS: Absences impact less than a 90 minute schedule
-Class morale and improved group instruction

Disadvantages:

-Frequency/consistency of class meetings
- RMS: All students and teachers eating lunch at the same time together
-Potentially creating 2 duties for staff
-Student absences from class are more significant (field trips, illness, etc.)
-4X4: AP testing issues
-4X4: Detrimental to the music program since it is not year-round
-4X4: Lack of a year-round experience
-More costly: students use more materials
-Endurance/fatigue in music rehearsals
-Modification of and impact on the music lesson schedules

Results: 4X4 – 1 vote, A/B – .5 votes, RMS – 12.5 votes, 9 Period Day – 0 vo

World Languages Department
Alternative Scheduling

Narrative Questions

1. What are the greatest advantages of an extended time schedule? (i.e. 60 to 90 minute periods)

1. There may be more time for reinforcement and cooperative learning.
2. There may be opportunity to implement a wider variety of activities, but they would have to be organized carefully to keep the students' attention.
3. The 90 minute prep period would be a positive feature, but only for those with one or two preparations.
4. It is of financial benefit to the Board, i.e. potential downsizing of staff with increased workload.

2. What are the greatest disadvantages of an extended time schedule? (i.e. 60 to 90 minute periods)

1. The amount of material missed during student absence could become overwhelming.
2. Retention between courses of a consecutive nature such as world language and math is usually very poor.
3. Paper work and correcting could be doubled for the teacher since there would most likely be a greater amount of written work done by students due to the extended periods. This could create a discouraging overload for the teacher.
4. If a teacher has three or more preparations the 90 minute prep would still be insufficient.
5. It would be necessary to move too quickly through the material during most periods in order to cover the curriculum. This could be too much information for the students to absorb in one period, since actually two current lessons would have to be covered in one extended period to keep pace with the goals of the course.
6. "Longer passing time," given as one advantage mentioned in the description given of the extended period model would not be a practical advantage for a school of our size. It could cause a greater potential for problems in the hallways.
7. The 60 minute Rotating Modified Block, although more feasible instructionally than a 90 minute block, would be difficult to manage in a school of this size due to the Lunch situation. Supervision of this could be quite problematic.

8. One other disadvantage is that the classes only rotate within the morning or the afternoon, never allowing later classes to meet early in the day, when they may be more focused.

3. What are the greatest <u>advantages</u> of a 9-Period Day schedule? (i.e. 42-45 minute periods)

1. It provides another period of electives for the students without having a negative impact on our department's course offerings.
2. This schedule would have a less negative impact on the scope of our current curriculum than the extended period models.
3. Our newly purchased texts are more appropriate for a period less than 60 minutes in length.
4. If adjustments could be made to shorten the lunch periods for the students, to accommodate the extra period, that could be beneficial for both students and teachers on duty (less potential for conflicts due to less "down time").

5. What are the greatest <u>disadvantages</u> of a 9-Period Day schedule? (i.e. 42-45 minute periods)

1. Unless a careful plan is made to conserve minutes in the day, any shortage of minutes would have a negative impact on instructional time.

The general consensus of the teachers of the World Language Department is that we prefer the current structure of the school day. If a change must be made, however, we feel that the nine-period day would be the less intrusive of the choices.
Unanimous: 1st choice- no change
2nd choice- 9 period day

WASHINGTON TOWNSHIP PUBLIC SCHOOLS
DEPARTMENT OF TECHNOLOGY

TO: Jack McGee

FROM: Ed Denton

DATE: January 23, 2002

RE: **NEEDS ASSESSMENT RESULTS FROM JANUARY 23, 2002 TECHNOLOGY EDUCATION DEPARTMENT MEETING**

NARRATIVE QUESTIONS

Number 1:

- Increased lab time
- Increased lecture time
- Less passing time in halls

Number 2

- Loss of electives due to 90 minute periods
- Possible budget increases
- Room utilization concerns
- Reduced lunch time
- Student fatigue
- Lost instructional time due to illness or field trips

Number 3

- Increased elective choices
- Improved room utilization
- Increased opportunities to satisfy graduation madates
- Less budget impact as compared to 90 minute block

Number 4

- Increased travel time
- Increased teacher-student contact time

Number 5

- Hatboro-Horsham 4x4
- Hunterdon Central 4x4
- Central Bucks West 4x4
- Cumberland Central 4x4
- Sterling Regional 4x4
- Northern Valley Regional - 60 minute/modular

Number 6

- Department choice 9 period day
- Department vote 11 For
  0 Against

SURVEY RESULTS
EXTENDED TIME/ALTERNATIVE SCHEDULING

SOCIAL STUDIES DEPARTMENT

NARRATIVE QUESTIONS:

1. *What are the greatest advantages of an extended time schedule? (i.e. 60 to 90 minute periods).*

- The ability to get more accomplished in a given time period and have a variety of instructional strategies utilized.
- More time with the students. More information covered without being broken up into parts.
- More time could be spent on pure instruction.
- More time to for all questions to be answered with exploration into the subject mater.
- Easier to do group work.
- Instruction time and flexibility of activities is a plus.
- More time for creative activities.
- Less between-class travel time.
- Students will have the ability to be more actively involved in learning.
- Student who need extra time to finish assignment, will have that time.

2. *What are the greatest disadvantages of an extended time schedule? (i.e. 60 to 90 minute periods).*

- Difficult to keep students' attention in the extended time (especially lower level students)
- Watering down of information to keep the students interested. Must have a variety of activities to keep student's interest.
- This facility is too big.
- Assemblies and testing interruption could put students and teachers 2 days behind in work/ content.
- Increase in time would/could lead to an increase in misbehavior.
- Difficulty for student to make-up work when absent for extended time.
- Revamping of Core Content would be required.
- Less choices for student electives.
- Difficulty for students who transfer in and out.
- Reduction of staff
- Substitute teachers teaching a course.
- Time span between courses causing students to forget material learned.

3. *What are the greatest advantages of a 9-Period Day schedule? (i.e. 42-45 minute periods)*

- It offers students a chance to take more classes and a chance to offer more electives.

- More immediate focus - fits within the attention span of the teenager.
- Maybe smaller classes
- Added prep time for teachers
- When student absent, the impact won't be as hard

4. *What are the greatest <u>disadvantages</u> of a 9-Period Day schedule? (i.e. 42-45 minute periods).*

- Limited time to get much accomplished.
- Longer day/more movement
- Not enough instructional time
- Time lost in traveling between classes
- Students will be worn out by the end of 9th period
- One more class to have to teach and prepare for.
- Less teaching time.
- Too many courses available.
- Added pressure to teach a 6th period

5. *Have you ever participated in a visitation to another school(s) that utilize an extended time/ alternative schedule? If so, during what school year and what model?*

Haverford H.S. 1996	4 x 4	
2001	RMS	
2000	90 minute schedule	

6. *If we decided it was necessary to implement one of the extended time/alternative scheduling models, which model would you choose?*

Vote:

4 X r (90 Minutes)	3
A/B (90 Minutes)	
RMS (60 Minutes)	
9 - Period Day (42 - 45 Minutes)	10

Biographical Data

Name	Brian Wert
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Undergraduate	Bachelor of Arts Physical Education Glassboro State College Glassboro, NJ
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