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Interest attitude survey towards a block scheduling change in secondary schools

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INTEREST ATTITUDE SURVEY TOWARDS A BLOCK SCHEDULING CHANGE IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS

by
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ABSTRACT

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Interest Attitude Survey Towards a Block Scheduling Change in Secondary Schools
1999
Dr. Ronald Capasso
Curriculum and Supervision

The purpose of this study is to research teacher attitudes towards a block scheduling change, in order to determine block scheduling favorability in schools where traditional scheduling presently exists. It will be determined if subject areas, years of experience and dominant teaching style have any relevancy towards block scheduling favorability.

Two-hundred and sixty three faculty members from five randomly selected schools were surveyed, requesting information on subject area, years of teaching experience, dominant teaching style and favorability towards a block scheduling change.

Data was collected, analyzed and presented to determine block scheduling favorability and relevancy in subject area, years of teaching experience and dominant teaching style. These areas were compared and ranked in favorability high to low in overall teacher responses and individual school responses.

It was concluded that the majority of the teachers did not favor a block scheduling change, but only by a small margin. Also, subject area, years of teaching experience and dominant teaching style do show relevancy to favorable and unfavorable responses towards block scheduling. However, individual school responses did vary from the overall conclusions.

MINI-ABSTRACT

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Interest Attitude Survey Towards a Block Scheduling Change in Secondary Schools
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Dr. Ronald Capasso
Curriculum and Supervision

The purpose of this research is to determine teacher attitudes towards a block scheduling change, where traditional scheduling presently exists. The surveyed teachers were marginally not in favor of a block scheduling change. There was relevancy with block scheduling favorability and subject area, years of experience and dominant teaching style.

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CHAPTER ONE
Focus of Study

Introduction

Changing from traditional scheduling to block scheduling is a major school organizational change. As with any change, there must to be time for people to accept and absorb the new information that might be implemented in their near future.

Administrations need block scheduling to be "bought into" by faculty, staff and school community to encourage a smooth and successful transition. Schools need to seek school community support from their stakeholders. Without this support, implementation of block scheduling may be difficult (Reid,1997). It's important that a group feels a sense of ownership for a comfortable commitment to a change (Cunningham and Nogel,1996).

The process of change takes time to accomplish completely and successfully. It takes time to move individuals out of their "comfort zones". Once this level of comfort is reached people are more willing to make a change. The process for a successful change consists of elements which include gaining ownership from stakeholders consisting of teachers, collecting student and parent input, allowing adequate time for staff development and preparation, allowing time for proper communication of concerns and successes and giving evaluation of the change including successes and difficulties (Cunningham and Nogle, 1996). These elements and steps are very crucial for a successful change. Change becomes difficult when there is inadequate preparation and not developing ownership by the school community (Fleming, 1997). Lack of preparation and ownership may cause a systemic nightmare which will take years to repair.

Teacher attitude may be the biggest factor determining a successful change to block scheduling. Teachers need to feel comfortable about change. However, some

teachers have great difficulty accepting any type of change. This does not necessarily mean teachers with more experience deny change, however, it can be relatively inexperienced teachers that use the inflexible teaching strategies.

Planning and preparation will help decrease and possibly eliminate negativism towards a changeover. Some districts, as in Dennis-Yarmouth Regional School District in Massachusetts, insist that ample preparation time was the reason block scheduling was successful. The amount of preparation for their changeover was three years (Sadowski, 1997). If the change is of major importance and needed for the district, they should take the time to prepare (Canady and Rettig, 1996).

In other districts, as in Middleburg High School in the Midwest, there was unsuccessful change due to lack of preparation time for staff development, unprepared parents and students and lack of time to develop ownership by the stakeholders in the community. Implementing block scheduling without school community support will hinder the success of the changeover from traditional scheduling (Fleming, 1997).

There are various ways to attain a commitment in order to develop and obtain ownership from stakeholders for a common goal. In this study our stakeholders are faculty in the school districts. Using a survey or questionnaire can be a method to introduce and prepare for a commitment to obtain a common goal. The information that is collected from a survey or questionnaire can help determine readiness for a change in the school organization. This information can be used by administration for more specific reasons. Here are a few:

-To determine attitudes toward the change process.

-To determine if the change is feasible for school personnel available.

-To define areas that will need more encouragement, attention or consultation.

-To prevent scheduling disasters or any hard feelings.

-To develop proper training and preparation for faculty and staff

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to research teacher attitudes towards block scheduling through survey, in order to determine block scheduling favorability in schools where traditional scheduling presently exists. It will be determined if subject area, years of teaching experience or dominant teaching styles have any relevance towards block scheduling favorability. In addition, comparisons of results towards favorability will be made between public and parochial schools.

Determining favorability of block scheduling will determine the potential of success for a scheduling change in that particular school system. A school system that does not support this change will need to use more effort for implementation (Reid,1997). Identifying areas of weaknesses will also assist in determining where administration need to focus their efforts, to ease implementation of the schedule change.

The process of change should include ownership by stakeholders for it to be successful. If ownership is not attained, then it is not the right time for the school to implement this change (Cunningham, 1996).

Definitions

The following definitions are helpful and pertinent for clarification of the research in this study.

Block scheduling- Alternative scheduling using larger blocks of time, (more than sixty minutes) to allow flexibility for diversity of instructional activities. There are various forms of this type of scheduling.

Traditional scheduling- Daily structure of meeting classes every day for forty-five minute periods.

Stakeholders- Members included in an organizational change.

Public school- School funded by state, local and federal taxes.

Parochial school- Tuition-based religious school.

Large school- Five-hundred or more students.

Small school-Fewer than five hundred students.

Dominant teaching style- Teaching method used most by teacher when presenting information in a classroom environment.

Limitations

This attitude interest study surveyed two-hundred sixty-four teachers from five different schools that presently have traditional scheduling. The schools were two secondary public schools, one large and one small and three small parochial secondary schools. Faculty from all the curriculum areas were surveyed for type of subject, years of experience and dominant teaching style and asked if they favored a block scheduling change. Although the surveys were completed where traditional scheduling is in place, there might be a predisposed attitude towards block scheduling that would influence the results.

Conclusions were determined from all teacher surveys in subject area, teaching experience and dominant teaching style with relationship of favorability towards a block scheduling change. In turn, the results were compared with parochial schools and public schools.

Setting of the Study

This study surveyed two-hundred sixty-four faculty employed at five secondary schools in New Jersey covering three counties. One school in Atlantic, two schools in Salem and two schools in Cumberland. The demographics of all counties range from rural and suburban to a suburban area with urban problems to a farming and industrial area. Two schools were public, Vineland High School South in the Vineland school district, consisting of approximately twelve hundred students and one-hundred and thirty faculty members and Arthur P. Shalick High School in Pittsgrove school district consisting of about seven-hundred students and sixty-five faculty members. Three

schools were parochial schools belonging to the Diocese of Camden, Sacred Heart High School in Vineland consisting of two-hundred and forty students and twenty faculty members, St. James in Carney's Point consisting of two hundred and twenty students and nineteen faculty members and St. Joseph's in Hammonton consisting of three-hundred and fifty students and twenty-eight faculty members.

Significance

This study will determine if subject areas, years of teaching experience or dominant teaching styles have any impact on a positive or negative attitude towards a block scheduling change. Collecting this information can benefit administration for implementation of a change in school organization. The information can be used to determine readiness for a change in school organization and find areas where administration needs to concentrate to implement a change with less difficulty. Collecting information from faculty will initiate a potential change from the bottom-up. This method will promote a easier transition for the change (Winn, Menlove, and Zsiray Jr., 1997).

For example, in two high schools in the metropolitan districts of South Florida, the subjects of math, language and music had shown not to favor block scheduling. The faculty felt that these highly sequential subjects would be affected by not meeting on a daily basis. When administrators determined this as a problem, they took appropriate action to alleviate it from becoming a major obstacle for implementation. They eventually made modifications to the schedule and collaborated with faculty about their concerns (Hamidy and Urich, 1997). Some of these modifications will be shown in Appendix A. If administrators can determine these concerns and weaknesses prior to the change, then planning and modifications can be accomplished before the implementation to prevent potential problems from occurring. Using collaboration with faculty can help to reduce friction and dissention among faculty, staff and administration during change.

Pre-determining areas of concern and weaknesses will help administration develop training programs for faculty to meet their needs and create a "comfort level." When this "comfort level" is achieved, it helps to make a major move smoother and easier (Winn et al., 1997).

Organization of the Study

Chapter Two will concentrate on the literature that supports the significance and the purpose of this study. This literature will include basic block scheduling information, results, advantages and disadvantages in some school districts, and the importance of developing ownership for a successful change in school organization.

Chapter Three will discuss the organization of the research design. In this case it is qualitative research that includes a closed ended survey to collect information from the relevant areas. The type of survey, distribution and collection strategies will be defined and discussed.

Chapter Four will include the presentation of the data. The data will be divided by subject, years of experience and dominant teaching style. The data will then be analyzed and researched for relevancy to a block scheduling change between the stated criteria and school districts. This data will be explained, discussed and presented in charts and tables.

Chapter Five will discuss the findings between subject, years of teaching experience and dominant teaching style and determine a positive or negative attitude toward block scheduling in each particular school district. In addition, comparisons will be made between schools and these findings. Implications for administration and school districts will be discussed from all the researched conclusions.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Educators continue to pursue methods to give students a quality education. In the past eight to ten years block scheduling has become the "buzz" word in many school districts. Some schools have prepared and implemented this scheduling for their districts in hopes of improving education for their children. Some districts have implemented this new change smoothly and others have had much more friction. Why does this happen?

Attitude may be the answer to this question. If teachers are not favorable to the change, it will make a change very difficult to implement. It may not be the right time or the chemistry of personnel is not appropriate. Unless the administration is prepared, it could become a nightmare of friction and problems in a school district. Administration might need to change strategies or decide to go ahead and be prepared for the aftermath.

The purpose of this study is to determine teacher attitude towards block scheduling before attempting implementation of this alternative scheduling. Determining favorability prior to change would hopefully prevent problems and promote a smoother transition from traditional scheduling. If the attitude is not favorable, changeover becomes much more difficult and more administrative efforts need to be given to weaker areas. However, this favorability can be determined prior to change, instead of after the fact. Initial prevention of potential problems can save time and money in the long term implementation of a school organizational change.

In this study, subject areas, years of teaching experience, dominant teaching style and block scheduling favorability will be determined to find areas of strengths and weaknesses. Hopefully, this will assist administrators in placing more efforts where it is

needed for a potential scheduling change and encourage a smoother transition for the change in the school organization.

This chapter will review literature on more popular forms of block scheduling. It will show advantages and disadvantages from school districts that have experienced a block scheduling change from traditional scheduling. Some of these districts implemented smoothly and successfully and others had more difficulty attaining success.

This chapter will also discuss important factors that must be considered when a change is to occur in a school organization. Some school districts will be reviewed for the strategies they used to implement a schedule change. Some were successful and others had more difficulty implementing a changeover.

Defining Block Scheduling

According to Gordon Cawelti (1994), block scheduling is defined as part of the daily schedule, organized into larger blocks of time (more than sixty minutes) to allow flexibility for diversity of instructional activities. Block scheduling is being used as an alternative to the traditional six to eight classes of forty to forty-five minutes daily structure in a school day.

There are a variety of forms and modifications of this type of scheduling. Here are a few of the more popular ones used (Canady and Rettig, 1996):

-The Four by Four Plan- Students enroll in four courses that last ninety minutes every day for one semester (ninety days). Each teacher has three courses and have one block for preparation time.

-Quarter off and Quarter on Plan- This allows inter-disciplinary teams to work together with one group of students for the first forty-five days of a semester. Each teacher has three courses and one block for planning.

-Trimester Plan (Also known as sixty-sixty-sixty)- This requires students to take two core courses and related subjects everyday.

-Instructional Term with One-Hundred Eighty Day Schedule School Year Plan-
This plan reconfigures the one-hundred eighty day school year into a combination of long and short terms. This provides instructional terms for remedial and enriched students, plus professional growth and development time for teachers. Additional and sample modifications will be be included in the appendix of this research.
Some schools that have already implemented block scheduling are reporting in evaluations some advantages and disadvantages experienced by their school districts.

Advantages

Since time is a major factor in this schedule change, it has great impact in many areas. For instance, there is a decrease in transition time between classes due to the large blocks for classtime, which gives more useable time for learning. Students will be able to study the subject area more in depth (Kramer, 1997). There is also a decrease in discipline problems since there is less time between classes for students to mingle in large groups, where there is potential for problems to erupt (Canady and Rettig, 1996).

The structure of block scheduling such as a Four x Four Plan will give students a fresh start in each semester and allow for a failed subject to be made up next semester. This structure also allows for students to have smaller number of subject classes and therefore less daily homework assignments (Kramer, 1997).

There will be a tendency for teachers to use variations of teaching methods instead of solely relying on the lecturing techniques. This will give students opportunity to receive information in a variety of ways and the schools to meet the needs of more students. Teachers will become more innovative in their teaching, attempting to reach more students during the larger block of time (Canady and Rettig, 1996).

Some of the important overall results have been a decrease in dropout rate, absenteeism and failures. There has also been evidence of an improved school climate (O'Neill, 1995). Finally, financially this scheduling can be advantageous since textbooks

may be used once during the first semester and then again during the second semester by different students (Canady and Rettig, 1996).

Disadvantages

There is difficulty in the school community accepting the concept of "less" is "more". They feel the curriculum has been "dumbed-down" because of less time per course in a semester. Certain sequential subjects in the curriculum such as math, foreign language and music claim students will forget material with too much time off between there next class meeting.

During a major change, there is a need of preparation. If there is a lack of staff development for the major change there are problems during the implementation of block scheduling. Enough time needs to be given for proper preparation and development. Some schools have experienced these problems (Canady and Rettig, 1996).

Another concern was class length. Students attention span is too limited and it is difficult to teach quality information the entire time. Some teachers have great difficulty keeping students receptive during a forty-five minute period, therefore a ninety minute block would only be more challenging. Due to this increase of time many teachers have chose to give a study when students begin to lose focus on the lesson. As a result of this, monitoring instructional use of class time becomes an issue (Walberg, 1993).

Other structural concerns were that students who transfer from another school have difficulty moving into the scheduling system and Advance Placement courses (AP) may not be prepared in time for their spring exams.

Most importantly, there is no hard data to support academic performance due to minimal use (O'Neil, 1995).

Teacher Attitudes

Pros and cons may vary from district to district as a result of the methods and strategies used to implement change into the school organization. As with any

organizational change there are many factors that can be influential and must be considered before implementing change into a school system. Determining teacher attitude is one of these factors. Teacher attitudes can be the biggest factor affecting the timetable for change in view of some administration. Many teachers are happily and willingly implementing change into teaching styles and methods. However, according to some principals, some teachers will adamantly refuse to modify the strategies that they have always used in the classroom. Good teachers will take risks and accept change, while less skillful teachers are afraid to try something new (O'Neill, 1997). It is the less skillful teachers that administrators need to know about so they may place their efforts in that area. Teachers need to feel comfortable about change. Once this "comfort zone" is reached they will be more willing to change. Preparation and planning can help decrease and possibly eliminate negative attitudes towards a changeover. Consideration of this factor, in addition to strategies for change, can determine the flow and successfulness of transition into the school organization (Canady and Rettig, 1996).

Presently, many schools are researching change to block scheduling from the traditional scheduling. They are attending seminars and workshops are observing schools using block scheduling. Over the last two to six years schools have prepared for the change and have already implemented block scheduling into their school system.

As with any change, it is important to communicate, prepare and develop a commitment from all who will be affected in the school organization. Schools must seek the support of school community and involved stakeholders. Without this type of input, implementation a block scheduling change can be difficult (Reid, 1997).

The process of change takes time to accomplish completely and successfully. Individuals have well defined "comfort zones" and moving them out requires time and energy. Investigating and determining attitude is a beginning for developing a process of change. The determination of attitude in the initial stages helps to gain ownership into

the change. Critical changes cannot be mandated but must evolve with both top-down and bottom-up involvement. Skeptical individuals can buy into changes when they become part of the decision-making process. Individuals tend to protect their interest. Individuals affected by decisions should participate in the decision-making process and be held accountable for the implementation of the change (Winn, Menlove, and Zsiray Jr., 1997).

Successful Change

The Frederick School District in Maryland created a "comfort level" by the school community before the change. Frederick's teachers and administration found their successful transition to block scheduling was due to six elements. (Cunningham and Nogle, 1996).

The first two elements are **gaining ownership** by collecting teacher input and by using parent and student input. Without this groundwork it is difficult to reach the "comfort zone" for progress towards a change. The next two elements include **time** for preparation and adequate **staff development**. Change should not be hurried just to try a new method. This may cause too many unforeseen problems. Staff needs to be properly trained and move gradually in the direction of the change. Once again, attempting to become comfortable before a changeover. Finally, the last two elements include **communication** to share concerns and successes among staff and then **evaluate** the successes from the change (Cunningham and Nogle, 1996).

At the Dennis-Yarmouth Regional School District in Massachusetts the assistant principal in charge of curriculum, researched and prepared for three years before changing to block scheduling. Due to their pre-planning, their transition was smooth and well accepted by the school organization. The plan began with interviewing teachers and administration about block scheduling in over one-hundred schools and then tailoring the changes to the needs of his own school. Using this information he developed a plan and

then began staff development in preparation for the change (Sadowski, 1997). The change was accepted more willingly and implemented with less friction.

In a metropolitan area of South Florida a study was conducted on two high schools to determine the perceptions of approximately one hundred teachers toward block scheduling. Teachers who participated in the study represented all academic and nonacademic disciplines. They were asked to complete a questionnaire and participate in an in-depth interview. Additional interviews were conducted with administrators. Each school selected two different plans of block scheduling and implemented these plans in their school systems. The results varied from both plans, with advantages and disadvantages for their school organization. These results were studied, recommendations were developed for improvement and both schools continued with their block scheduling plans. This study showed that teacher attitudes towards block scheduling were determined prior to the implementation of the scheduling into the school system. With this information a block scheduling plan was developed for both schools and implemented successfully (Hamdy and Urich, 1997).

Unsuccessful Change

In Middleburg High School, a Midwestern high school, their change to block scheduling was not very successful during the first year. There were too many scheduling conflicts, unprepared teachers, students and parents, who didn't understand why this scheduling didn't work for their district. They rushed into this alternative scheduling without proper preparation. They heard about it in February and in May of the same year the Board of Education approved implementation (Sadowski, 1996). The worst way to implement block scheduling is inadequate professional development or not developing ownership by the school community (Fleming, 1997).

Process for Change

According to Fitzpatrick and Mowers (1998), (Fitzpatrick is a principal and

Mowers is an English teacher at Beloit Memorial High School in Wisconsin), gaining support from all stakeholders is critical and that a top-down mandate only is sure to result in failure. They used an eleven step process when changing to a four by four block scheduling plan in their school system. The first three steps reinforced the need for planning and developing a faculty "buy-in".

The initial steps are crucial for a successful change. Administrators must take time to gain support from all stakeholders. To just take a vote is expedient but it will produce more "saboteurs" who will later be influential and spread negativism. It takes patience and hard work to gain faculty "buy-in". The second crucial step is to create a site level decision making model. A decision making model that is designed by staff almost guarantees input for everyone on faculty. If teachers believe the four-block is good, other stakeholders will follow. The third crucial step is to know the need for change. Administrators must communicate to faculty, parents and students about what, who and how they will be affected by the change, especially if the change might affect their programs or subject negatively. The fourth step is too keep the restructuring plan simple so everyone may understand the implementation. In the fifth step administrators must provide assurance from the board of education that teachers and staff will not lose their jobs with a changeover. The sixth step includes encouraging staff, faculty and administration to visit schools with block scheduling already in place. Many questions will be answered once this is done. The seventh step is for administration to communicate to all stakeholders during the planning stages. Thorough communication prevents shock or surprise when the school arrives at the final planning stages. The eighth step includes setting up a public forum for all parents and community members. Be prepared for controversial questions. Answer all questions or find answers and get back to these people. In the ninth step the proposal should be taken to the board of education for approval. The proposal should include the goals and results needed to

achieve for moving to a four by four block. Make sure there was enough parent, teacher and student input prior to this meeting. The board of education will not want to take of criticism from community, but not everyone will be happy about the change. Administrators will need to share everything collected to this point-favorable and unfavorable. The tenth step should provide plenty of support for the transition from a fifty- minute period to a ninety minute block. This step must be done thoroughly. It might cost now, but later it will save money. The final step, which is very important, is to monitor and maintain the accomplishments. This can be done by surveys from staff members, students, faculty, parents and administration. It is also important to document each semester failing grades, graduation rates, honor rolls, class GPAs and attendance. Administration needs to plan regular meetings for staff so they may exchange teaching strategies and techniques and address unanticipated problems.

Much success that has accompanied the move to block scheduling is due to a direct way of the willingness of teachers to make changes in their instructional methods and the willingness of their administration to support teachers in their efforts (Hackman and Schmitt, 1997). Once again "the willingness of teachers" exemplifies an attitude that needs to be reviewed prior to making a change. If this attitude seems to show too much negativism towards a change, it might mean the time is not right for the change or a different approach might be needed to develop the change.

This review of literature has revealed information on block scheduling and the process of change from a traditional scheduling system. The literature indicated that in order for a successful change to occur in the school organization it needs involvement of stakeholders from the bottom-up. According to the literature, teachers are included as stakeholders and their attitudes should be considered before and during the change to block scheduling. The literature found teacher attitudes to be influential during implementation of a block scheduling change.

CHAPTER THREE

DESIGN OF STUDY

General Description

Teaching staff members, from five randomly selected Southern New Jersey secondary high schools without block scheduling, participated in a survey to determine their attitude towards a block scheduling change. Two of the schools were public and three were parochial. The subject areas, teaching experience and dominant teaching styles were requested to determine any relevancy towards a block scheduling change. Results were compared and discussed for similarities and differences within each individual school and between schools. Conclusions will be determined and discussed for feasibility of a block scheduling change in the particular school district.

Development and Design

This cross-section survey began with requesting the name of the school district and a brief description of block scheduling. This information was given for identification, comparison and basic information for the teacher. The first three questions were closed-ended requesting teachers subject areas, number of years teaching experience (increments of five years and an unlimited amount), and select two dominant teaching styles. The fourth question was closed-ended to determine their favorability for a block scheduling change in school. The last two questions requested information to further define their favorability or nonfavorability toward a block scheduling change. These two questions gave information for further conclusions in the study.

Sampling and sampling technique

Two hundred and sixty-three teachers from five randomly selected schools were

used for subjects in this survey. Three of the schools were parochial and two were public. All schools had traditional scheduling in place. The teachers were from all subject areas and had varied teaching experience and teaching styles.

Description of data collection approach

One month prior to the survey distribution, a phone call was made with a follow up written confirmation requesting permission from the building principals to use their faculty for participants in the survey. The confirmation letter consisted of information of when the survey would be dropped off at their school, a copy of the survey and a message of thanks for allowing participation. The surveys were personally delivered by the intern and distributed by the principal of the participating schools. This procedure was followed up with a phone call for confirmation of distribution. The survey envelope consisted of a cover letter containing basic purpose of the survey and deadlines, credentials about the intern, the survey itself and a self-addressed stamped envelope to return to the intern. There was about one month before the deadlines. Once the deadline had passed, another phone call was made to encourage the return of surveys to the intern.

The survey consisted of six questions. Four of the questions were closed ended asking for faculty from individual schools to specify their subject area, years of experience, dominant teaching style and favorability towards block scheduling change. Favorability for a block scheduling change was calculated and compared for relevancy in subject area, years of teaching experience and dominant teaching styles. The other two questions were open-ended giving further information for conclusions with favorability or nonfavorability data results. The information collected will be compared for specific strengths and weakness towards favorability for a block scheduling change within the individual school and between the individual schools.

Data analysis plan

Data will be calculated in all survey responses for favorability and

nonfavorability towards a block scheduling change. These responses will be calculated and compared in subject areas, years of teaching experience and dominant teaching style. The responses will be ranked in order from highest to lowest in favorability and non-favorability towards a block scheduling change.

The results of all collected data will be compared and contrasted within the individual school and between the individual schools. Conclusions from this data will be determined and discussed for the feasibility of a block scheduling change in that particular school district and relate the results to subject area, teaching experience and teaching style. All of the information collected will be displayed in tables and charts for observation of strengths and weaknesses in the areas surveyed and discussed in this study.

CHAPTER FOUR
Presentation of Research Findings

Through the process of coding, data collection was divided into categories for presentation and conclusions. Overall results of favorability were categorized by school and percentage means of returned surveys and favorability were calculated. This information is displayed in Table 1. There was an overall fifty-two percent mean of returned surveys and a forty-nine percent mean favorablity towards block scheduling. Arthur P. Shalick High School in Pittsgrove, and Sacred Heart inVineland had the highest favorability percent with seventy and sixty-four percent respectively. St. Joseph's of Hammonton and St. James from Carney's Point had lower percents of favorability which were twenty-two and forty percent respectively. Vineland High School was approximately split in the middle with fort-nine percent mean favorability towards a block scheduling change.

TABLE 1
OVERALL RESULTS OF FAVORABILITY TOWARD A BLOCK SCHEDULING CHANGE BY SCHOOL

SCHOOL	SURVEYS SENT	SURVEYS RETURNED	PERCENTAGE RETURNED	RESPONSES YES	RESPONSES NO	PERCENTAGE FAVORABLE RESPONSES
ST. JAMES	19	10	52	4	6	40
ST. JOSEPH'S	30	16	53	5	11	22
SACRED HEART	19	11	53	7	4	64
SHALICK	65	43	66	30	13	70
VINELAND 11/12	130	63	48	31	32	49
TOTAL	263	143				
MEAN			52			49

The next three categories will display individual schools favorabiltiy towards a block scheduling change by subject availability in their respective school, years of experience of their faculty (increments of five years and unlimited) and dominant teach styles of the faculty. Favorability percentages and mean of percentages will be calculated for each subject, increment and teaching style.

In all tables, schools will be listed alphabetically, the "X" will represent a particular area which had "no response", the NA will respresent "not applicable" and the 0% equates that no one was in favor of block scheduling in that particular subject, years of experience or dominant teaching style.

Table 2 will display schools in alphabetical order, subjects and the favorability percentage in that particular subject area. The mean is calculated in each subject for the overall conclusion of attitude towards block scheduling and subject area. Table 3 will include years of experience and favorability percents and percent means for each increment for the overall conclusion of attitude towards a block scheduling change and years of teaching experience. The last category of this section will be displayed in Table 4. This will include dominant teaching styles from faculty in the individual schools and favorability towards a block scheduling change. The favorability percents and means will be calculated to determine an overall conclusion of attitude towards a block scheduling change.

Table 2 displays the favorability percents and means in subject areas of individual schools. Theology and Home Economics had one-hundred percent mean and the Arts (visual and peforming) had eighty-five percent. These subjects had the most favorability towards a block scheduling change, however there were minimal responses in these subjects. Science had sixty-one percent mean , Other (Administration that responded) had sixty percent mean and Business had fifty-five percent mean. They were the next highest in favorability with complete reponses. Math and Social Studies

TABLE 2

PERCENTAGE OF FAVORABLE REPONSES FOR SUBJECT AREA

X=No response NA-Not applicable 0%=No Favorable response

SCHOOL/SUBJECT	ST. JAMES	ST. JOSEPH'S	SACRED HEART	SHALICK	VINELAND	MEAN
THEOLOGY	0%	0%	100%	NA	NA	100%
MATH	100%	0%	50%	75%	44%	54%
ENGLISH	36%	50%	X	75%	40%	55%
H/PE	100%	0%	0%	40%	17%	31%
LANGUAGE	X	50%	50%	50%	50%	50%
SCIENCE	100%	66%	100%	83%	60%	61%
HOME EC.	X	X	X	X	100%	100%
SOCIAL STUDIES	0%	50%	100%	80%	42%	54%
SPECIAL ED.	X	X	X	50%	38%	44%
OTHER	0%	0%	X	80%	100%	60%
ARTS	X	X	X	66%	100%	85%

had fifty-four percent mean. Language and English had fifty percent mean, which split these areas in favorability. Special Education had forty-four percent mean and Health and Physical Education had thiry-one percent mean. These two areas were least favorable towards a block scheduling change.

Table 3 displays favorability percents and means in years of teaching experience. The table is divided into five increments. Four of these are five year increments and the last one is unlimited. It showed that increments of sixteen-twenty and unlimited years of teaching experience were the most favorable towards a block scheduling change with sixty-seven and sixty-two mean percentage of favorability respectively. The six-ten years experience was the least favorable for this change with a forty-five percent mean response.

Table 4 displays favorability percentages and means by which teaching style was most favorable towards a block scheduling change. Projects and seatwork were most favorable to a block scheduling change having seventy-nine and seventy-eight mean percentages respectively. Teachers who used lecture and outside sources were least favorable with forty-eight and fifty-three mean percents respectively. The other two teaching strategies of demonstration and cooperative learning were also more favorable than non-favorable with sixty-two and sixty-eight percent means respectively.

TABLE 3

PERCENTAGE OF FAVORABLE RESPONSES

FOR YEARS OF TEACHING EXPERIENCE

X=No response 0%=No favorable response

SCHOOL/YEARS OF EXPERIENCE	0-5	6-10	11-15	16-20	21and up
ST. JAMES	0%	0%	100%	66%	50%
ST. JOSEPH'S	20%	100%	0%	50%	50%
SACRED HEART	60%	0%	X	100%	75%
SHALICK	66%	75%	62%	57%	75%
VINELAND	60%	50%	64%	64%	61%
MEAN	51%	45%	57%	67%	61%

TABLE 4

PERCENTAGE OF FAVORABLE RESPONSES

FOR DOMINANT TEACHING STYLE

X=No response 0%= No favorable responses

TEACHING STYLE/ SCHOOL	ST. JAMES	ST. JOSEPH'S	SACRED HEART	SHALICK	VINELAND
LECTURE	43%	10%	60%	68%	57%
PROJECTS	50%	80%	100%	75%	90%
COOP. LEARN.	50%	45%	895%	77%	51%
DEMONSTRATION	100%	33%	62%	86%	61%
OUTSIDE SOURCES	0%	X	X	100%	58%

The final two findings are comparisons and overall conclusions from the data collected. The first is a comparison between parochial and public schools favorability towards a block scheduling change. After calculating the means from Table 1 (Overall Favorability) it showed that the public schools had a mean percentage of fifty-two percent and the parochial schools had a mean percentage of forty-two percent. Therefore, the two public schools were more favorable towards a block scheduling change than the three parochial schools.

The second finding is an overall ranking from highest to lowest favorability in subject, years of experience and dominant teaching style. This will be displayed in the next three tables by individual schools, school type and an overall category will also be presented. A rank of one will be most favorable towards a block scheduling change and consecutive numbers above one will decrease in favorability. Like numbers will mean same percentage means for that particular category.

The next three tables will illustrate the overall ranking from highest to lowest favorability by subject, experience and dominant teaching style according to schools. The overall will be calculated from all the schools which had responses in all subject areas. The public and parochial school responses will be calculated by means and ranked, as well as the individual schools. The "X" indicates no response in the area. The "NA" indicates that course is "not available" in the school.

In Table 5 rankings are derived from previous data in Table 2. However, the public and parochial school rankings are derived from the average of the means within their school type found in the data on Table 1. According to the data, Science has the highest mean percent favorability towards a block scheduling change overall and most of the schools. The least favorable mean percentage towards a block scheduling change is Health and Physcal Education. This was found in the overall data and in all schools but

one. Public and parochial schools also agreed for Science to be the most favorable towards a block scheduling change and Health and Physical Education to be the least favorable.

In Table 6, the rankings are derived from data calculated from Table 3. The percent means are compared and ranked overall, in public and parochial schools and in the individuals schools. The most favorable increment towards a block scheduling change was found to be in the sixteen-twenty and the twenty-one and up age bracket. This was found to be true in the overall category and in most of the individual schools. The public and parochial schools ranked the twenty -one and up category as number one in favorability.

Table 7 shows favorability ranked by dominant teaching style. The data was derived from the information from Table 4. Project usage ranked one in the overall category and high favorability in the other schools shown. Public and parochial schools had project use in the top three of their rankings. The least favorable to a block scheduling change was using lecture in the overall category and it was ranked lower individually in the public schools than in the parochial schools. Written and Seatwork are also shown as low favorability in the overall category and in the individual schools.

TABLE 5

OVERALL BLOCK SCHEDULING FAVORABILITY

BY SUBJECT AREA

Ranking is derived from highest percentage of favorable reponses to the lowest percentage of favorable responses for each subject in the individual school and total faculty responses. The data is used from Table 2 for ranking purposes.
1 is the highest ranking.

NA=Not available X= No responses in that area

SCHOOL/ SUBJECT	**OVERALL**	PUB.	PAROCH.	SAINT JAMES	SAINT JOSEPH'S	SACRED HEART	SHALICK	VINELAND
ENGLISH	**5**	7	4	2	2	X	4	7
BUSINESS	**3**	3	1	3	3	1	1	2
MATH	**4**	6	3	1	3	2	4	5
H/PE	**6**	10	5	1	3	3	7	7
SPEC. ED.	**NA**	9	NA	NA	NA	NA	6	5
THEOLOGY	**NA**	NA	1	3	3	1	NA	NA
LANGUAGE	**5**	8	3	X	2	2	6	4
SCIENCE	**1**	2	2	1	1	1	2	3
HOME EC.	**NA**	1	X	X	NA	NA	X	1
OTHER	**2**	3	5	3	3	X	2	1
ARTS	**NA**	4	X	X	NA	X	5	1
SOCIAL ST.	4	5	3	3	2	1	3	6

Table 6

OVERALL BLOCK SCHEDULING FAVORABILITY RANKING

BY YEARS OF EXPERIENCE

Ranking is derived from the highest percentage of favorable reponses to the lowest percentage of favorable responses for each school and total faculty responses. The data was used from Table 3 for ranking purposes.
1 is the highest ranking.

X=No response

SCHOOL/ EXPERIENCE	**OVERALL**	PUB.	PAROCH.	SAINT JAMES	SAINT JOSEPH'S	SACRED HEART	SHALICK	VINELAND
0-5	5	2	5	4	3	3	3	3
6-10	4	2	4	4	1	4	1	3
11-15	3	2	3	1	4	X	4	1
16-20	1	3	1	2	2	2	2	1
21 and up	2	1	2	3	2	1	1	2

Table 7

OVERALL BLOCK SCHEDULING FAVORABILITY RANKING

BY DOMINANT TEACHING STYLE

Ranking is derived from the highest percentage of favorable responses to the lowest percentage of favorable responses from each school and total faculty responses. The data was used from Table 4 for ranking purposes.
1 is the highest ranking.

X= No response

SCHOOL/ STYLE	**OVERALL**	PUB	PAROC.	SAINT JAMES	SAINT JOSEPH'S	SACRED HEART	SHALICK	VINELAND
LECTURE	5	6	4	3	4	4	5	5
PROJECT	1	1	3	2	1	1	4	1
COOP. LEARNING	3	5	2	2	2	2	3	6
DEMSTR.	2	3	1	1	3	3	2	3
OUTSIDE SOURCES	4	2	6	4	X	X	1	4
WRITTEN/ SEAT	6	4	5	4	5	1	6	2

CHAPTER FIVE
Conclusions, Implications and Further Study

Conclusions

The purpose of this research was to determine teacher attitude towards a block scheduling change, where traditional scheduling already exists. In addition, to determine if subject area, years of teaching experience or dominant teaching style has any relationship towards block scheduling favorability. A comparison of results between public and parochial schools was also completed.

The major conclusion found from all the collected data was that the teachers surveyed did not favor a block scheduling change, but this result was only by a one percent margin. Individual schools had their own results, which are presented in Chapter Four, Table1.

There were three major reasons for non-favorability. These were mentioned by faculty on the survey sheets. Each of these reasons were also stated as a disadvantage in Review of Literature. The number one reason for non-favorability, according to the data received, was attention span of students was not long enough to be able to handle the block of time. This agreed with a disadvantage stipulated by Walberg, 1993. The second reason was their particular subject areas was not conducive to block scheduling, such as Math and Language. This was consistent with a disadvantage mentioned by Rettig and Canady, 1996. The third reason was that time would not be used for quality teaching. Once again this was mentioned as a disadvantage of block scheduling, by O'Neill, 1995. The concern was that there would be a tendency to use time doing homework and other non-subject related activity. Therefore, quality teaching time would be decreased and

there would be a strong need for classes to be closely monitored by and supervised. These are all valid reasons and would need to be addressed by administration.

There were three other conclusions derived from the collected data. First of all, specific subject areas had more favorability towards a block scheduling change than other subjects. Subjects as Science, Business, Home Economics and Social Studies were higher in favorability and Math, Language and Health/Physical Education were much lower in favorability. Subjects with more "hands-on time" seem to favor the change more than subjects that were more sequential in nature.

The second conclusion found that teachers with more experience favored a block scheduling change. Teachers with at least eleven years of experience or more, favored a block scheduling change. Teachers with less than eleven years were not as favorable to this change. This result could possibly be due to low confidence levels of inexperience teachers and skills and perspective of change from more experience teachers.

The third conclusion discovered that specific teaching styles favored a block scheduling change compared to other teaching styles. For instance, teachers who use projects, demonstration and cooperative learning were more favorable to a block scheduling change than teachers who predominantly used lecture, written seatwork and outside sources. Lecture and seatwork will become very tedious over a long block of time and teachers think they will have a difficult time to fill in this time and keep students receptive to their teaching. Whereas, teachers who use projects, demonstration and cooperative learning will need more time for students to use critical thinking and problem solving skills. These skills need more time for implementation.

Finally, general comparisons were made between public and parochial schools. According to the data collected, the average percentage of the two public schools favored a block scheduling change and the average of the three parochial schools did not favor a block scheduling change. Specific data is available in Chapter Four, Table 1.

However, we must keep in mind that subjects were different for these schools, such as Religion was not in the public school and Special Education was not available in these particular parochial schools. The number one subject, that was available in both types of schools, in favor of a block scheduling change was Science and the least favorable was Health and Physical Education. Both public and parochial schools had more experienced teachers in the twenty-one and up category that were favorable to a block scheduling change. In addition, teachers in both public and parochial schools who were favorable towards a block scheduling change used projects for their dominant teaching style. Lecture and seatwork teaching styles were use by teachers who were not as favorable to a block scheduling change.

These comparisons resulted in the same overall conclusions previously mentioned in the beginning of this chapter. However, individual schools revealed different outcomes in some of these areas. This information is illustrated in Chapter Four, Tables 1 through 7.

Implications

The results of this type of survey can be used for administration to generate interest, find strong and weak areas in the faculty and prepare the faculty for a potential school organizational change. Knowing this information ahead of time can prevent possible systemic disasters and create a more comfortable and acceptable transition of change. If administration is aware of specific subject areas and teachers who are non-favorable to this change, they can reach out to them and encourage them to discuss their concerns. These concerns can individually be addressed and potentially create a more comfortable atmosphere for change to occur. According to Winn, Menlove and Zsiray Jr., 1997, individuals have well defined "comfort zones" and moving them out take requires time and energy. Once this is accomplished change is more freely accepted.

In addition, knowing the teaching strategies of your staff is important. If the

information reveals that lecture is the dominant style, a training and preparation course of various teaching strategies that are more conducive to block scheduling needs to be available and implemented for their faculty. Professional development is a must to build ownership by the school community to have the faculty "buy-in" to the change (Fleming, 1997). Administration needs to support their teachers in their efforts to make changes in instructional methods (Hackman and Schmitt, 1997). When faculty are part of the stakeholders in the change, they are more likely to accept it and therefore change will be smoother and successful.

Conclusions and Implications on Leadership Development

The implementation and the results of this survey gave the intern an understanding of the importance of developing change from a combination of the bottom-up and top-down methods of organizational leadership. It is necessary to involve staff from the beginning to pinpoint areas of concerns and discuss with faculty and staff ways to address these concerns. Too many times administration tries to avoid these conflicts and push change on faculty that is not willingly prepare to accept the change at that particular time. This can cause too much friction and potential for an unsuccessful change. Once areas of weakness are determined together by administration and faculty, then adequate planning and preparation time should be given so everyone can become comfortable with the change. If the school organization is not ready for the change, then continue with preparation or temporarily postpone change and retry at another time when the organizational needs have changed.

Hopefully with enough preparation an unsuccessful change can be avoided. However, after a year, a re-evaluation would need to be done to see how change was adapted by the school community and school organization. Based on this information it would be concluded to continue with the change or revise the change to accomodate the system.

Organizational Leadership

As far as the intern's knowledge, none of the surveyed schools have presently adopted block scheduling in their districts. The only foreseeable impact was an increased awareness of an alternative method of scheduling that is available to secondary high schools. It also confirmed, according to the data, that this alternative method of scheduling would be difficult to implement at the present time in some of the individual schools.

Further Study

To further study information on attitude towards block scheduling favorability, it would be advantageous to increase the number of faculty surveyed to have a better representation of the general population. This would give a more accurate account of attitude towards block scheduling based on subject area, years of teaching experience and dominant teaching style.

Another area to pursue would be to initiate a one and three year follow-up questionnaire for all schools to determine if block scheduling was considered in the district. If it was, what steps have been taken to prepare the school community for this organizational change? If this alternative method wasn't considered, why not?

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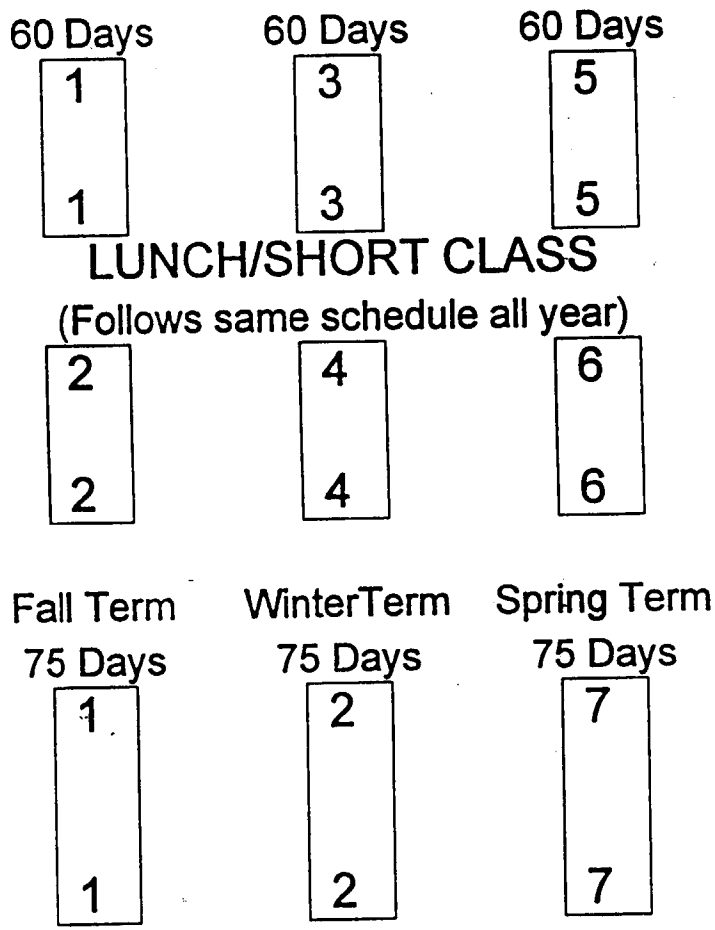
Appendix A

Models and Modifications of Block Scheduling

TRIMESTERS/TERMS

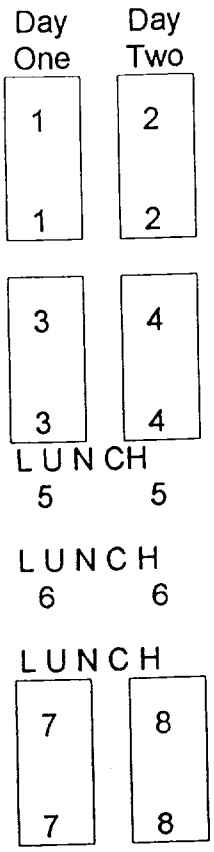
60 Day Trimesters

includes two, 160 minute, integrated blocks each trimester and one short class alternating with lunch

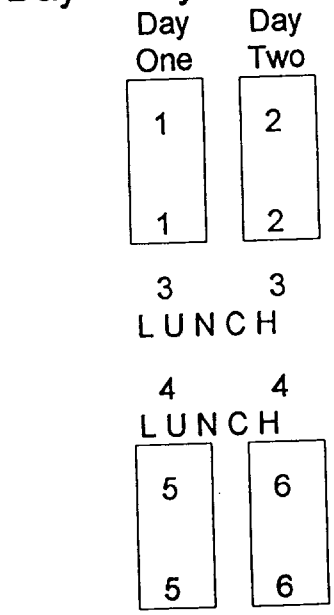


Days of the Week

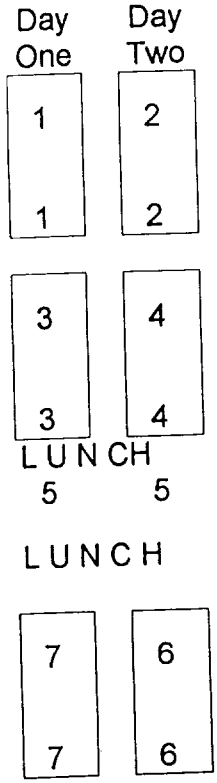
Day 1/Day 2 Eight Period



Day 1/Day 2 Six Period



Day 1/Day 2 Seven Period



Semesters

90 Day Semesters

Four 90 to 100 minute blocks

Semester 1		Semester 2	
1 1	Course 1	5 5	Course 5
2 2	Course 2	6 6	Course 6
3 3	Course 3	7 7	Course 7
4 4	Course 4	8 8	Course 8

Figure 1.—Alternative Schedules for the Music and Advanced Placement Programs

Music Alternative #1

Block	Semester 1	Semester 2
1	Marching Band (9 Weeks) 1/2 Credit	Concert Band (27 Weeks) 1 1/2 Credits
		Honors Government, AP Government, or Keyboarding (27 Weeks) 1 1/2 Cred.
2		
3		
4		

Music Alternative #2

Block	Semester 1	Semester 2
1	Marching Band (Mandatory) 1 Credit	Concert Band (Optional) 1 Credit
2		
3		
4		

Music and Advanced Placement Alternative #3

Block	Semester 1	Semester 2
1	Music Course (45 minutes) 1 Credit	
	Advanded Placement Course (45 minutes) 1 Credit	
2		
3		
4		

Advanced Placement Alternative #1 (Courses with Lab Requirements)

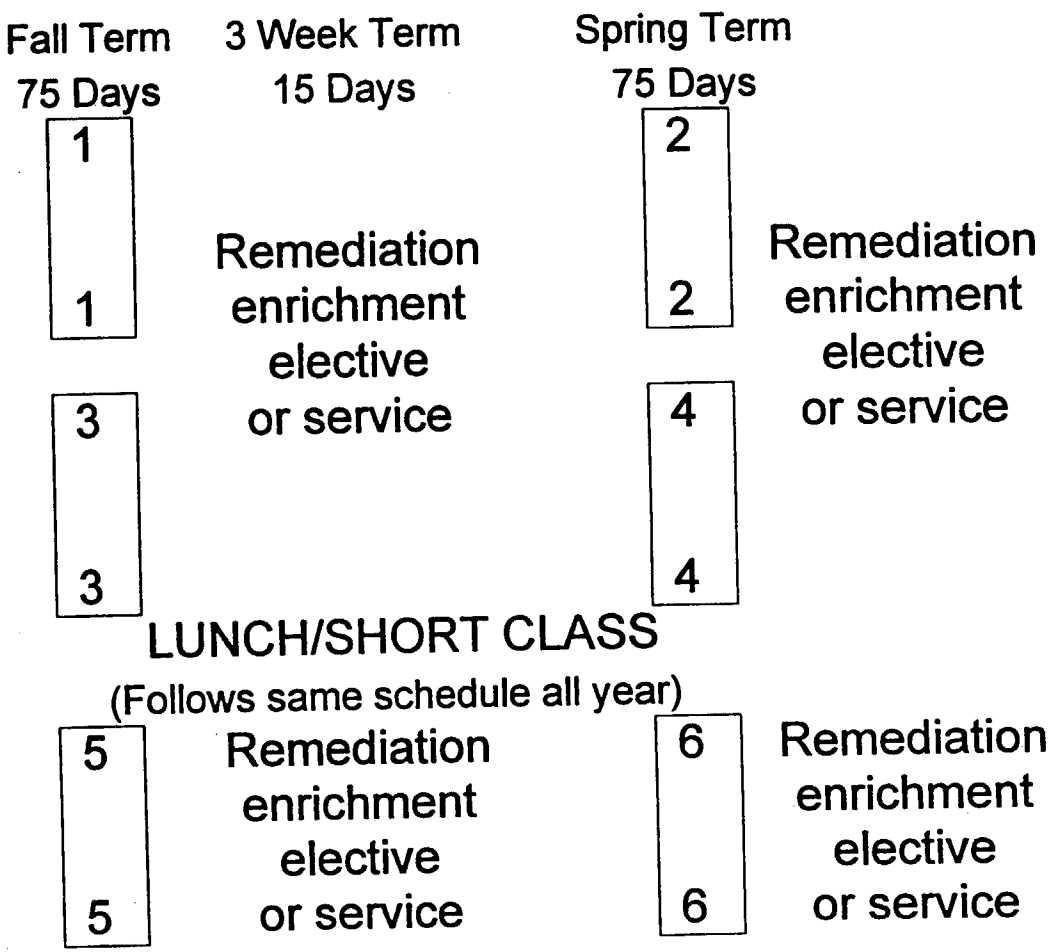
Block	Semester 1	Semester 2
1	*Honors Chemistry 1 Credit	AP Chemistry 1 Credit
2		
3		
4		

*Students have the option of taking AP Chemistry 2nd semester.

Advanced Placement Alternative #2 (English—also an option with History, Govt.)

Block	Semester 1	Semester 2
1	Advanced Placement English (27 Weeks) 1 1/2 Credits	Novels (9 Weeks) 1/2 Credit
2		
3		
4		

75-15-75-15 Terms



HATBORO-HORSHAM SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL

TEACHER SCHEDULE

Period	Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4
1	CLASS		CLASS	
2	PREP		PREP	
3	L U N C H	L U N C H	L U N C H	L U N C H
	AVAILABLE	AVAILABLE	AVAILABLE	AVAILABLE
	AVAILABLE	AVAILABLE	AVAILABLE	AVAILABLE
4	CLASS		CLASS	
5	CLASS		CLASS	

HATBORO-HORSHAM SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL

STUDENT SCHEDULE

Period	Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4
1	SOCIAL STUDIES		HEALTH & PHYS. ED.	
2	MATHEMATICS		FOREIGN LANGUAGE	
3	L U N C H	L U N C H	L U N C H	L U N C H
4	ENGLISH		SCIENCE	
5	STUDY HALL		COMPUTER SCIENCE	

Appendix B
Research Instrument

School Name_____

BLOCK SCHEDULING SURVEY

Block scheduling is an alternative to the traditional scheduling system. I am interested in teacher attitudes towards this concept. Please take a few minutes to complete the following survey. Thank You for your time.

****

1. What is your subject area? (Please check one)

a.___English	e.___Health/Physical Education	i.___Arts
b.___Math	f. ___Home Ec./Industrial Arts	j.___Science
c.___Social Studies	g.___Special Education	k.___Business
d.___Business	h.___Languages	l.___Other_____

2.How long have you been teaching?

a.___0-5 years	d.___16-20
b.___6-10	e.___21 and up
c.___11-15	

3. Which teaching method(s) do you most often use? (You may check two)

a.___Lecture	d.___Cooperative Learning
b.___Demonstration	e.___Outside Sources
c.___Project Work	f.___Written or Seatwork

4. Would you be in favor of a block scheduling change?

____Yes ___No

5. If yes, which type?

a.___4x4 - Four courses per semester that last ninety minutes. Each teacher instructs three courses and one for planning.

b.___Trimester- This requires students to take two core courses and related subjects every sixty days.

c.___Quarter on/Quarter off- This allows an inter-disciplinary team to work with one group of students for the first forty-five days of a semester and with another group for the remaining forty-five days. In the second semester the pattern is repeated.

6. If no, why not?_____

Appendix C

Administrative Approval

DIANE TUCKER
VICE PRINCIPAL OF STUDENTS
SACRED HEART HIGH SCHOOL
VINELAND, N.J. 08360

July 2, 1998

Dear ,

This is to confirm our phone conversation concerning a survey to be given to your faculty in early September for my Master's thesis at Rowan University.

Thank you for your approval and cooperation. I will shortly send you a copy of the survey and instrument and give further details concerning it's distribution.

Sincerely,

Diane Tucker
Vice Principal of Students
Sacred Heart High School

July 22, 1998

Dear _____,

I have included a copy of the survey that I intend to distribute to your faculty for my Master's Thesis. I hope you find it appropriate. I will drop them off in envelopes to you on _____. Please distribute these as soon as they return to school in September or sooner. Directions for the survey are included in the individual envelopes. Thank You for your cooperation. Any questions please call me at 691-1539 or 691-4491.

Sincerely,

Diane Tucker

DIANE TUCKER
ROWAN UNIVERSITY
GRADUATE STUDENT

August, 1998

Dear Faculty Member,

For my Master's Thesis I selected the topic area of block scheduling. The purpose of my study is to determine teacher attitudes towards block scheduling, who are presently teaching in a traditional scheduling format.

The information will be compared for relevancy in subject area, years of experience, teaching methods and attitudes. All collected information will be strictly confidential, no individual will be identified by his or her responses.

Your response is extremely important for the success of this evaluation. It should take no longer than five minutes to complete the questionnaire. Please complete this survey and return in the included addressed and stamped envelope by September 25th.

Thank you for taking time out of your busy schedule.

Sincerely,

Diane Tucker

Diane Tucker

Biographical Data

Name	Diane Tucker
High School	Midland Park High School Midland Park, N. J.
Undergraduate	Bachelor of Arts Health and Physical Education Glassboro State College Glassboro, N.J.
Graduate	Master of Arts Curriculum/Supervision Rowan University Glassboro, N.J.
Present Occupation	Vice Principal of Academics Sacred Heart High School Vineland, N.J.