Andrews Academy
A School of Excellence
Both Heart and Soul
Block Scheduling:
Planning For Excellence

Mr. Bradley W. Sheppard, Supervising Instructor
THE PROCESS OF CHANGE
Anticipatory Set

Goals and Objectives
Identifying a Problem
What is Block Scheduling
Variations on a Block
Student Demonstrations in a Block
Results and Research in Block Scheduling
Making the Block Work
Players and Considerations for Implementation
The Problem Identified

From the halls of Congress to the marketplace, from large urban factories to small suburban shops, from institutions of higher learning to family owned businesses, one hears the call for reform of the American educational system. In an effort to respond to the demands of a rapidly changing world, educators across the nation have conceded that schools must be restructured. The long, unsettling process is not smooth, but it is essential.
Does AA Need to Restructure???

- Teachers deal with a large number of students every day
- Teachers teach for six periods/several preps
- AAPT and Gifted
- Collaborative Efforts are non-existent
- Schedule Problems (Govt. & Heath)
- Need a more selective curriculum (Science)
- Attendance could be improved
- Too much stress on teachers and students
- Students have a large number of classes
- Students have too much homework
- ACT Scores
Would Block Scheduling Help Resolve These Issues?

A Brief Overview of Block Scheduling in the American High School Setting
Block Scheduling
Working Definition

- Block scheduling simply addresses the allocation of time and Time on Task
- It increases Allocated & Instructional Time
- It decreases Routine Time
- It facilitates increased Engaged Time
- The Block is simply a delivery system
Schedule Comparison

- Traditional

- Basic Block (4X4)
Block Variations

- Basic
- A/B Block
- Split Block
- 5 Period Block
Block Variations

- Encore Period
A Block Period

Allocated Instructional Minutes

For a Five Day Class

\[
\begin{array}{cc}
50 & 90 \\
50 & 90 \\
x6 & x4 \\
300 & 360 \\
\end{array}
\]

60 min. per day X 180 days per year

= 10,800 minutes more per year

= 180 hours per year
Traditional VS Block (One Way)

Traditional 7 Period Day

Teachers teach six of seven periods each day (One plan period)
15 teachers $\times \frac{6}{7} = 13$ teachers teaching per period
300 students divided by 13 teachers = 23 students per class
Each teacher sees 138 students per day, all year long

Block 4X4 Day

Teachers teach three of four periods each day (One plan period)
15 teachers $\times \frac{3}{4} = 11$ teachers teaching per period
300 students divided by 11 teachers = 27 students per class
Each teacher sees 81 students per day, all year long

Net increase on class size because of block = +4 students per class
Total decrease = -57 students per teacher, per day, all year long
Traditional VS Block (Another Way)

Traditional Seven Period Day

Seven courses per student $\times 300 = 2100$ student courses
Six courses per teacher $\times 15 = 90$ course sections
2100 student courses divided by 90 course sections $= 23$ students/class
Each teacher sees 138 students per day

Block 4X4 Day

Eight courses per student $\times 300 = 2400$ student courses
Six courses per teacher $\times 15 = 90$ course sections
2400 courses divided by 90 sections $= 27$ students per section
Each teacher sees 81 students per day

Net increase on class size because of block $= +4$ students
Total decrease $= -57$ students, per day, all year long
Block Expectations

- Success & Failures
- Teacher Rejuvenation
- Teacher Maintenance
- Better Student Performance
- Knowing You Are Helping More Students
- Lots of Work and Stress Because of Change
- More Relaxed in Presenting Lessons
- Block Scheduling is not for the Faint of Heart!
Block Schedule Benefits

According To Research

- Lowered Failure Rate
- Improved Attendance
- Decreased Tardies
- Decreased Drop Outs
- Improved Time-On-Task
- Better Teacher-Student Relationships
- Eight Credits Instead of Six Give Students a Broader Knowledge Base
More Block Schedule Benefits

According To Research

- Less Stress on Students
- Improved Acceleration
- Improved Remediation
- Improved Variety of Teaching Strategies
- More Student Engaged Learning
- Decrease in Negative Discipline
- Less Homework Load
- Decreased Teacher Load
Other Block Advantages

Students

- More concentrated learning experience, less fragmented
- More individualized instruction/personalized attention
- Fewer teachers at a time
- Fewer courses at a time
- More opportunities to take elective classes
- Greater ability to accelerate/remediate
Other Block Advantages Faculty

- Fewer preparations (3 at most)
- Less fragmented day
- Able to focus more on individual students
- Fewer students
- Reduced administrative work (record keeping, clerical, etc.)
- More time for parental contacts
- Longer uninterrupted planning periods
Other Block Advantages

School Climate

- Fewer classes reduce stress for both students and faculty
- Routines are less hurried for both students and faculty
- Time is provided for socialization (10 minute passing times)
- Improves student/teacher morale
Other Block Advantages

In Classrooms

- Instruction driven by concepts and Thinking skills; less time spent on memorizing facts
- Learning is more intensified
- Variety of teaching strategies used with a 90 minute class
- Classes are more student directed; students more active in the learning process
- More labs, projects, applications
- Able to try alternative forms of assessment
- Students gain access to more academic, trade & tech prep courses
# Statistics and Comparisons

- **Mansfield High School (SAT)**

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<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Verbal</th>
<th>Math</th>
<th>Composite</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1992-'93</td>
<td>411</td>
<td>462</td>
<td>873</td>
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<tr>
<td>1993-'94</td>
<td>431</td>
<td>477</td>
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<tr>
<td>1994-'95</td>
<td>447</td>
<td>512</td>
<td>959</td>
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<tr>
<td>Block</td>
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Block Puzzle Logistics

- Type of Block (Basic, AB, etc.)
- Integration with Other Sites (RMES, etc.)
- Duration of School Day
- Lunch Periods
- Staff Development
- Computer Scheduling Capabilities
- Accreditation
- Lake Union Policies
Policy Building Blocks

- Attendance
- Tardies
- Mid-Term & Final Exams
- Suspension Duration
- Transfers (In & Out)
- College Enrichment
- Report Cards & Frequency
- Activity Absences (Tours, etc.)
- AAPT Students
Block and the Faculty

- Develop Staff Awareness, Information, Personal, Management, Consequences, Collaboration, Refocusing
- Visitations to Other Block Sites
- Block Teachers In-service Our Teachers
- Total Staff Vote and Adoption of Block
The Community Process

- School of Education as Committee Members on Initial Look at Block
- Parent Members on Block Steering Committee
- Parents Present with Staff to Community
- Community Open Forums for Q & A
- Student Forums About the Block
- School Publications With Block Information
You’re Invited!

Andrews Academy is hosting a community open forum on Block Scheduling. Come and hear answers to:

- What is Block Scheduling?
- How Does Block Scheduling Work?
- What Does it Mean for My Teenager?
- Ask Your Own Questions!

The community open forum will take place in the RTO Chapel.

Thursday, May 3, 7pm
Staff Development

- Teaching Strategies
- Sample Lesson Plans
- Block Site Visitations
- Share Fairs
- Time Management
- Teaching With Technology
- Block Teachers In-service Our Teachers
- High Expectations
- Learning Styles
- Cooperative Learning
- On-line Research Skills
Sample Lesson Plans
Four Models

Model A:
1. Opening
2. Direct Instruction
3. Breakout: Interactive/Cooperative Learning

Model B:
1. Transition Activity
2. Two Main Activities
3. Closure
Sample Lesson Plans

Model C:
1. Teacher Input
2. Student Groups
3. Debriefing
4. Guided Practice/Independent Practice

Model D:
1. Opening/Reading
2. Discussion
3. Direct Instruction
Success of the 90-Minute Block
Effective Teaching Strategies
The High School Magazine
Strategy 1

- **WARM UPS:** As the students walk into class, have some kind of activity waiting for them. Journal entries, ACT preps, review activities from the previous day, or preview activities for today’s lesson make great warm ups. These warm ups can be turned in daily, weekly, or monthly at the teacher’s discretion.
Strategy 2

**MOVEMENT:** Plan opportunities for students to move around during the class period. Changing seats, turning in papers, moving to another area of the school, all give students the much-needed time to stretch their legs.
COOPERATIVE LEARNING: Group activities offer time for sharing ideas as well as socialization. Any of the cooperative learning structures are effective, especially midway through the class period.
Strategy 4

MEDIA CENTER:
Use the media center as a diversion and “change of scenery” whenever the curriculum renders it appropriate.
Strategy 5

- **COMPUTER LAB:** Use the computer lab and available programs to enhance your classroom activities whenever appropriate. Have students use word processing programs to type reports, journal entries, or other large projects. If used in investigative activities during math, science, or other classes, have some type of written accountability along with the computer activities.
Strategy 6

- **VIDEOS**: Use videos when appropriate, but do not plan to show a film for the entire 90 minutes. Always have some kind of written work to accompany the video.
Strategy 7

- OTHER MEDIA:
  Use recorded music, speeches, poems, plays, novels, and drills whenever appropriate. Filmstrips, pictures, and transparencies help keep student attention and make the lesson “come alive.”
LARGE GROUP DISCUSSIONS:
Teachers guide the discussion with challenging, higher level questions, but may need to pull the more reluctant students into the discussion. Students are more willing to participate when they know the focus ahead of time and can come thoroughly prepared.
Strategy 9

INTERACTIVE LECTURES COUPLED WITH DISCUSSION: The teacher lectures, stopping at intervals to discuss the material with the students.
Strategy 10

INTEGRATION:
Plan integrated activities with other departments in the school. Natural connections often occur: English and History, Science and Math, etc. Team teaching can also be used during integrated activities.
Strategy 11

- **PEER TEACHING:**
  Use the higher achieving students in your class to tutor low achievers. Remember: “teaching is learning twice.” The tutors will be practicing their skills and at the same time helping other students in the class.
Strategy 12

**GUIDED PRACTICE:** After teaching a new skill, have the students practice the skill during class so they can obtain assistance if necessary. Guided practice that isn’t completed during class can easily become homework.
DISCOVERY METHOD/CREATIVELY PROJECTS: Have students research topics of their choice related to the curriculum and present their projects to the rest of the class. Give students an array of different methods of presentation and allot class time for research.
Strategy 14

- GAMES AND PUZZLES AS TRANSITIONAL ACTIVITIES: Use these diversions after tests or when moving from one concept to the next. These activities can be used to reinforce skills, practice for the ACT, or review previously learned material.
ASCD Thinking Skills
8 Most Important Skills to All Learning

- Focusing Skills
- Information-Gathering Skills
- Remembering Skills
- Organization Skills
- Analyzing Skills
- Generating Skills
- Integration Skills
- Evaluating Skills
Skills ASCD Thinking

FOCUSING

Attending to selected pieces of information and ignoring others.
ASCD Thinking Skills

INFORMATION GATHERING

Bringing to consciousness the relevant data needed for cognitive processing.
ASCD Thinking Skills

REMEMBERING

Storing and Retrieving Information
ASCD Thinking Skills

ORGANIZING

Arranging information so it can be used more effectively.
ASCD Thinking Skills

ANALYZING

Clarifying information by examining parts and relationships
ASCD Thinking Skills

GENERATING

Producing new information, meaning, or ideas.
INTEGRATING
Connecting and combining information.
ASCD Thinking Skills

EVALUATING
Assessing the reasonableness and quality of ideas.
Teacher Outcomes

- Continuity of teaching within a block
- Time for individualized instruction
- Utilize many teaching methods and strategies
- More effective evaluation in student achievement, progress and needs
- Rejuvenation and increased pedagogy
- Curriculum review and audits
- Decreased teacher load
Student Outcomes

- Increase in student academic achievement
- Increase in student attendance
- Better student-teacher relationships
- More opportunity to take elective courses
- Relaxed warmer climate, less stress
- Fewer courses per day = focused energies
- Fewer home work assignments per day
- Students earn more credits every year
“No student should go through school not being expected to perform. Just being there is not enough.”

Dr. Timothy Dyer, NASSP
Related Articles/Books: Restructuring

- **Educational Leadership**  
  An ASCD Publication  
  Issue: November 1995  
  Call: 703/549-9110  
  The focus of Nov.’s issue is, “Using Time and Space Productively.” It has many excellent articles on restructuring and alternative scheduling.

- **NASSP Bulletin**  
  1995 Issues: Mar, Ap, May, Nov. Dec. and Jan. 1996. The May issue has innovative scheduling as the focus for the month so there are several relevant articles. The December publication has a Research Brief covering the impact on student achievement in the specific areas of Algebra and Geometry. The January issue tells how a large high school in Virginia, Woodbridge Senior high School, journeyed through change.
Related Articles/Books: Restructuring

- *The Education Digest.* Published by Parakken Pub. Issue: Feb. 95. call: 800/530-WORD. By Roger Schoenstein. This article is written in a question-response format. Wasson High School, Colorado Springs, had four years of experience with the block when Mr. Schoenstein wrote these responses. It is very informative, easy to read and straightforward.

- *Block Scheduling: Options & Opportunities.* Compiled by Jackie Jenkins, PhD. Spring 95. Texas Educational Service Center Region 12. 817/666-0707. A collection of alternative schedules, explanations, etc. adopted by schools in the area.

- *Block Scheduling: A Catalyst For Change in High Schools.* Published by Eye On Education. 609/799-9188.