

BLOCK SCHEDULING

PRO'S & CON'S

TYPES OF BLOCKS

PEDAGOGY

STEPS TAKEN

- Spoke With Other Schools
- Researched Block Schedule
- Conducted Informal Conversations With Staff
- Attended Block Scheduling Seminar

PRO'S & CON'S OF BLOCK SCHEDULING

Advantages of Block Scheduling

Teacher

- Fewer Students to Teach
- Student Centered Classroom
- Differentiated Instruction
- Extended Learning Time
- Teacher Planning & Collaboration

Student

- Concentrated Focus
- Lower Anxiety
- Opportunities for Remediation
- More Checks for Understanding

Fewer Students to Teach

- **It allows teachers to spend more quality time with their students.**
- In a block scheduling format, teachers will see fewer students over the course of their day.
 - More individualized attention to students who may need extra help.
 - More opportunities to form positive relationships within the classroom environment that can make learning more fun.

Student Centered Classroom

- **It permits cooperative activities to be used in the classroom.**
- Instead of being forced into a lecture-based teaching style, block scheduling permits teachers to utilize small groups, cooperative activities, and skill-based practicums more frequently.
 - Students in a lecture-based environment may retain as little as 5% of the information they are presented.
 - When small groups can be used within an educational setting, up to 80% of the information presented may be retained.
 - Immediately practicing new skills can boost information retention as well.

Differentiated Instruction

- **It allows teachers to work with students all along the learning spectrum.**
- Added time in the classroom allows a teacher to adapt their teaching style to help all students instead of just a few.
 - Some students may have learning difficulties or disabilities in certain subject areas.
 - By having time for varied instruction, more students can stay in the traditional classroom environment, avoiding the stigma of being labeled a “special needs” student.

Teacher Planning & Collaboration Time

- **It gives teachers longer planning periods.**
- Teachers benefit from being able to stay focused for longer time periods as well.
- Because block scheduling provides longer planning periods to teachers, they can get more done within the confines of their regular schedule.
- That means less after-hours work and more time with their families.

Concentrated Focus

- **It permits students to stay focused on core daily subjects.**
- The human brain is not well-suited to multitasking.
- Just 2% of people have the ability to multitask without experiencing production loss.
- Within a block scheduling format, students have fewer classes to worry about each day, allowing them to stay focused on core materials without the need to change tasks repetitively.
- Every class change can cause a loss of productivity or information retention of up to 15 minutes.

Lowered Anxiety Levels

- **It creates less daily homework for students.**
- Students using the block scheduling format usually come home with less homework because they are in fewer daily classes.
- With a longer time in class, there is more time for teachers to work with students on the actual curriculum instead of being forced to have the students learn it at home.
- Less homework means there is more time for extracurricular activities or relaxation after a tough day at school, reducing overall student stress levels.

Opportunities for Remediation

- **It allows student grades to improve.**
- Block scheduling is more forgiving to students who may be struggling with their grades in certain courses.
- Students who fail in one semester or quarter often have the option to take a “trailer” course the next semester, allowing them to stay on-pace for graduation.
- They can catch up while staying with their peers

Disadvantages of Block Scheduling

Teacher

- Teacher Covers Less Material
- Block Schedule Does Not Mean Teachers Will Change Teaching Style
- Adversely affect AP courses

Student

- Loss of Continuity
- Impact of a Single Absence
- Can't Keep Up With Pace
- Student transfers

Continuity Issues

- **It causes students to lose continuity.**
- Students focus on core subjects and retain information based on their exposure to it on a frequent basis.
- By reducing student contact hours on a daily basis, some students can lose the continuity of their knowledge base during their off days.
- It's like the summer vacation reduction in knowledge retention that occurs at the end of one grade and the beginning of another.
- More class time in a day might be given to teachers in block scheduling, but more of it is used for review work, not teaching new materials

Absences

- **Absences force students to lose multiple days of work.**
- Students are going to need a sick day here and there. It happens.
Under the block scheduling format, a student who is out sick for the day is losing more than one day of learning materials from each class.
- They could be losing the equivalent of two days, three days, or even more, depending upon the structure of the class.
- That can put students at a disadvantage, especially if the sick days occur near a period of testing

Lost Time

- **It means teachers cover less material instead of more.**
- Even if all students attend every class under a block scheduling format, the reality is that the teacher spends more time in review to ensure everyone is on the same page.
- When the time over a semester is added up for each class, most teachers under this time format structure cover fewer materials and teach less information to their students.
- In modified block schedules, this problem grows even worse

Problems with Pacing

- **It can speed up the class process to the point students forget what they have learned.**
- In some block scheduling formats, an entire class may need to be taught in a single semester or quarter instead of over the whole school year.
- In high school, there may be sports-related interruptions, committees, band, choir, and other interruptions that take students out of class in an authorized way.
- That means teachers lose the time they'd normally gain with their students, forcing both to work after hours anyway to catch up on the required course materials

Pedagogy

- **It does not encourage teachers to change their teaching style.**
- Proactive teachers can do a lot of good stuff with a block scheduling format in their classroom.
 - In reality, many teachers don't take advantage of this opportunity.
 - One of the biggest complaints that students have with block scheduling is that their teachers do the "same boring things" for longer periods of time

Advanced Placement

- Students who take AP courses in the Fall Semester may not retain sufficient information to do well on the exam.
- Loss of contact time with students.

Student Transfers

- **Transferring in the middle of the school year from a school with block scheduling to one without it poses many problems for students.**
- They may have missed half a year of material in required courses that they would have taken in the second semester under block scheduling, and they may needlessly repeat half a year of material for courses already taken.

COMMON TYPES OF BLOCK SCHEDULES

4x4 Block Schedule

TRADITIONAL SCHEDULE Daily Schedule, Year-Long	4X4 BLOCK SCHEDULE Fall Semester	4X4 BLOCK SCHEDULE Spring Semester
PERIOD 1	COURSE 1	COURSE 5
PERIOD 2		
PERIOD 3	COURSE 2	COURSE 6
PERIOD 4		
PERIOD 5	COURSE 3	COURSE 7
PERIOD 6		
PERIOD 7 (Optional)	COURSE 4	COURSE 8
PERIOD 8 (Optional)		

2x8 Alternating Block Schedule

TRADITIONAL SCHEDULE Daily Schedule, Year-Long	2x8 BLOCK SCHEDULE Monday A Day	2x8 BLOCK SCHEDULE Tuesday B Day	2x8 BLOCK SCHEDULE Wednesday A Day	2x8 BLOCK SCHEDULE Thursday B Day	2x8 BLOCK SCHEDULE Friday A Day	2x8 BLOCK SCHEDULE Monday B Day
PERIOD 1	COURSE 1	COURSE 5	COURSE 1	COURSE 5	COURSE 1	COURSE 5
PERIOD 2						
PERIOD 3	COURSE 2	COURSE 6	COURSE 2	COURSE 6	COURSE 2	COURSE 6
PERIOD 4						
PERIOD 5	COURSE 3	COURSE 7	COURSE 3	COURSE 7	COURSE 3	COURSE 7
PERIOD 6						
PERIOD 7 (Optional)	COURSE 4	COURSE 8	COURSE 4	COURSE 8	COURSE 4	COURSE 8
PERIOD 8 (Optional)						

3x5 Block Schedule

TRADITIONAL SCHEDULE Daily Schedule, Year-Long	3X5 BLOCK SCHEDULE 1 st Term	3X5 BLOCK SCHEDULE 2 nd Term	3X5 BLOCK SCHEDULE 3 rd Term
PERIOD 1	COURSE 1	COURSE 6	COURSE 11
PERIOD 2			
PERIOD 3	COURSE 2	COURSE 7	COURSE 12
PERIOD 4			
PERIOD 5	COURSE 3	COURSE 8	COURSE 13
PERIOD 6			
PERIOD 7 (Optional)	COURSE 4	COURSE 9	COURSE 14
PERIOD 8 (Optional)	COURSE 5	COURSE 10	COURSE 15

75-75-30 Block Schedule

TRADITIONAL SCHEDULE Daily Schedule, Year-Long	75-75-30 Block Schedule 1 st Term – 75 Days	75-75-30 Block Schedule 2 nd Term – 75 Days	75-75-30 Block Schedule 3 rd Term – 75 Days
PERIOD 1	COURSE 1	COURSE 4	Course 7
PERIOD 2			
PERIOD 3			
PERIOD 4	COURSE 2	COURSE 5	
PERIOD 5			
PERIOD 6			
PERIOD 7 (Optional)	COURSE 3	COURSE 6	
PERIOD 8 (Optional)			

CHANGE IN PEDAGOGY

What Does Block Scheduling Mean for Teachers?

- Effective Classroom Management/Engagement
- Use of Multiple Activities/Teaching Strategies
- Frequent Checks For Understanding
- Performance Based Tasks/Tests
- Opportunities for Remediation
- Fewer Preps/More Time for Collaboration
- Change

Next Steps

- Getting Input From All Stakeholders (Open Dialogue)
- Building Consensus
- Pre-planning Is Vital For All Involved
- Professional Development That Is Appropriate and Sustainable
- Targeted Instructional Strategies

Exploring Block Schedules

B	L	O	C	K
BACKGROUND Information:	What I LEARNED From the Lesson:	My OPINIONS :	Personal CHANGES :	KNOWLEDGE Check:
<p>What do you already know about CCSS/NGSS and Block Scheduling?</p> <p>Pros & Cons?</p> <p>Types of Block Schedules?</p> <p>Instructional Shifts?</p>	<p>Take notes throughout the presentation.</p>	<p>List your thoughts and feelings about anything you hear during the presentation.</p>	<p>As you listen to the presentation, list things you would plan to do in order in order to transition to a 90 minute class period.</p>	<p>Look back at what you listed under “Background Information”-was all your information correct?</p> <p>Add to what you now know about CCSS/NGSS and Block Scheduling.</p>

Pro's & Con's of Block Scheduling

- Divide your Pro/Con Poster into FOUR quadrants.
- Label each quadrant like the chart below.
- List 2-3 advantages and disadvantages of having a 90 minute class period for both teachers and students.

Teacher Pro's	Teacher Con's
Student Pro's	Student Con's