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A FEASIBILITY STUDY ON BLOCK SCHEDULING
AT EGG HARBOR TOWNSHIP HIGH SCHOOL
EGG HARBOR TOWNSHIP, NEW JERSEY
1997-1998

by
Joetta M. Surace

A Masters Thesis

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the
Master of Arts Degree in The Graduate School
of Rowan University
April, 21, 1998

Approved by

Dr. Ronald Capasso

Date Approved April 21, 1998

ABSTRACT

Surace, Joetta M.

A Feasibility Study on Block Scheduling at Egg Harbor Township High School, Egg Harbor Township, New Jersey 1997-98. Internship in Educational Leadership, Department of Educational Leadership, Rowan University,
Project Advisor: Dr. Ronald Capasso

The purpose of this internship in Educational Administration at the Egg Harbor Township High School in Egg Harbor Township was to provide the intern with experiences which enhance the skills that are vital to achieving success as a school leader. The purpose of this study in the area of change was to conduct a feasibility study on block scheduling by involving all constituent stakeholders in the process during the 1997-98 school year. The intern researched various block scheduling plans, attended workshops on block scheduling, organized a Block Scheduling Study Committee, visited various block-scheduled schools, and made information available to constituent stakeholders-- teachers, students, parents, administrators, and school board members through discussions, presentations, and surveys. As a result of this project, the intern gained meaningful and practical knowledge in involving stakeholders in change. The intern was able to recommend to the superintendent the continuation of the feasibility study on block scheduling during the 1998-99 school year with plans for implementation at Egg Harbor Township High School during the 1999-2000 school year.

In addition, the intern was able to develop leadership skills by utilizing strategic planning in a block scheduling feasibility study in order to bring about organizational change at Egg Harbor Township High School..

MINI-ABSTRACT

Surace, Joetta M.

A Feasibility Study on Block Scheduling at Egg Harbor Township High School, Egg Harbor Township, New Jersey 1997-98. Internship in Educational Leadership, Department of Educational Leadership, Rowan University, Project Advisor: Dr. Ronald Capasso

The purpose of this study in the area of change was to conduct a feasibility study on block scheduling. As a result of implementing this study, constituent stakeholders supported the continuation of a feasibility study during the 1998-99 school year for block scheduling with plans for implementation at Egg Harbor Township High School during the 1999-2000 school year.

As a result of this study, the intern gained meaningful and practical knowledge in using strategic planning skills for managing change.

Acknowledgments

Completion of this Master Program would be impossible to achieve successfully without the support and encouragement of many individuals. It is with gratitude that I acknowledge those individuals for their time, support, patience, sense of humor and overall support through my internship experience.

First, I wish to thank my family for their continued support in yet another graduate program. My husband, John, spent a great deal of time without me, in an effort to let me work on my internship projects. He allowed me to vent when I was stressed and he offered support when I needed it. My children, Cara, Erica and J.C., happy to be away at school, yet supportive in late-night phone calls. My mom, Virginia Palmero, for her constant prayers. And to my sister, Virginia A. Palmero, for being a great sounding-board with lots of patience.

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Chapter I

Introduction: Focus of the Study

Product Outcome Statement

Egg Harbor Township High School is currently functioning under the traditional 45-minute class period with eight instructional periods and a homeroom period each school day. Since most secondary schools have been engaged in efforts to improve, Egg Harbor Township High School is no exception. Beginning in 1993, the district has been actively training teachers in the instructional approach of cooperative learning. As a result, many of the high school teachers view the traditional 45-minute class period to be an obstacle when they attempt to include in their classes various instructional approaches such as cooperative learning, long term group projects and interdisciplinary lessons. One solution to address this problem would be to simply lengthen class periods. With longer periods of time in each class, students and teachers would be able to concentrate and focus their use of time and energy further on one subject (Canady, 1990).

In addition, one of the high school's goals is to reduce the number of out-of-school suspensions. Since Egg Harbor Township High School presently has a population of 1342 students who are released into the hallways approximately ten times a day, an extended-

period schedule would reduce some discipline problems. Conflicts often arise in crowded hallways and these conflicts often carry into the classroom. As a result, there are disruptions, which can result into discipline referrals and a loss of instructional time. With less students in the hallways, and longer breaks between classes, the result would be less stress for both students and teachers.

Purpose of the Study

The intern intends to conduct a feasibility study on block scheduling by involving all constituent stakeholders in the process during the 1997-98 school year.

The intern will research various block scheduling plans, attend workshops on block scheduling, organize a Block Scheduling Study Committee, visit various schools using block scheduling, and make block scheduling information available to constituent stakeholders--teachers, students, parents, administrators, and school board members through discussions, presentations, and surveys. The data will be collected and analyzed, and recommendations will be made to central administration. As a result of implementing this project, constituent stakeholders will support the continuation of a feasibility study during the 1998-99 school year for block scheduling with plans for implementation at Egg Harbor Township High School during the 1999-2000 school year.

Definitions

The following is a list of terms that relates to this study of Block Scheduling:

1. **Block Scheduling**--a reorganization of the school day or year to allow students and teachers more time on each subject.
2. **4 x 4**--Students enroll in four 90-minute courses that meet every day for 90

days. Teachers teach three courses each semester. Year-long courses are completed in one semester. Students enroll in four new courses in the second semester.

3. **A/E or B-Block**--Each semester, students take eight 90-minute classes, but classes meet every other day--four on Day A and four on Day B.

4. **Block Schedule and Extended Periods**--A mix of block scheduling for part of the week with more traditional scheduling.

5. **Copernican Plan**--Four 10-week semesters enable students to undertake intensive study in two subject areas for 2.5 hours each day in each class. At the end of the semester, students move on to two new courses.

6. **75-15,75-15**--Students take four classes for a 75-day fall term, followed by a 15-day intercession for enrichment activities or remedial work. The cycle repeats in the Spring Semester.

7. **Trimester Plan**--Students take two or three courses every 60 days to earn 6 to 9 credits per year (Winans, 5).

Limitations

This feasibility study is limited by the fact that it is the first year of a three year study that will be conducted to determine if Block Scheduling will be implemented at Egg Harbor Township High School. This study is also confined only to the high school, therefore, the conclusions of the study can not be generalized to the entire school district. However, other high schools considering change from the traditional high school schedule to block scheduling may benefit from the research findings of this study.

Setting of the Study

The Egg Harbor Township School system is a district that is rapidly on the move. The population of the township has tripled in the past twenty-five years. The industries of the Atlantic City casinos and the Federal Aviation Administration Technical Center have sparked tremendous growth and provided a suburban influence to this once rural community. In the past five years, the district has shown an average increase in enrollment of approximately 100 students between June and September of each year. The continual increase in student population has created new challenges for the school district. In meeting these challenges, both the community and staff enthusiastically work together to provide a fine educational system.

Egg Harbor Township Community

The Township of Egg Harbor is located in the southeastern part of Atlantic County, bounded on the south by the Great Egg Harbor River and Bay and on the east by Atlantic City. The township's 68 square miles contains several communities, which in 1996 accomplished a consolidation from seven zip codes to one with the opening of its own long-awaited postal service. Serving close to 33,000 residents, the township includes a full spectrum of socioeconomic backgrounds. Forty percent of the residents are considered to be in the lower income bracket which includes welfare recipients and hourly wage workers. Forty-five percent are considered middle class with fifteen percent in the upper-middle to upper class.

According to the 1990 United States Census, Egg Harbor Township is a lower to middle class community with 73% of the population completing high school. The

population is 86.9% white, 9.3% black, .2% American Indian, 2.5% Asian, and 1.1% other. The majority of residents are married (55.1%), while 18.7% are widowed, separated or divorced. Over 75% of the population owns their own residence. Sixty-six percent of the housing units are single family dwellings, 14% multi-family units, and 20% are mobile home units. The average mortgage is valued at \$108,246. The average rent in the Township is \$587.00 (New Jersey State Data Center, 1992, p.9). The median household income in 1989 was \$37,594, the per capita income that year was \$15,863 and 5% were living in poverty (Hornor, 1995).

Egg Harbor Township is governed by a Township Committee form of municipal government with an elected mayor, and it is the largest community by population in Atlantic county. Over half the residents are of voting age and the majority of residents are registered Democrats (New Jersey State Data Center, 1992, p.7). Despite national and state political results, the Democrats manage to hold the majority of seats on the Township committee. This will continue to be a benefit to the school system since the former and still present committee is very supportive of education. In fact, a committee member acts as a liaison to school board meetings.

Egg Harbor Township School District

In the late 1700's, when Egg Harbor Township was incorporated, there were neighborhood schools. From 1919 to 1920, the district's outlying schools were constructed. These small elementary level schools were seen as an upgrading of the older, neighborhood schools. These schools continued to operate providing contemporary educational programs in a small, nurturing environment until 1992, when an intermediate

and middle school were constructed. This was in answer to the substandard ratings by the New Jersey Department of Education on the district's seven neighborhood-based schools, and a rapidly increasing population. The opening of the two schools provided for a shift from the neighborhood school to the grade-based school. Since the buildings have been in operation for five years, it is apparent that a total community spirit and effort exists rather than an isolated, local concern. There are currently six school buildings in operation--five elementary schools and one high school. The majority of teachers and principals tend to like the climate of the schools that are grade-based rather than neighborhood-based. They feel it allows for more overall community spirit. However, due to an increase in student population at the first through fourth grade level, a restructuring of schools may again take place within the next year. At the present time, the district is having a feasibility study done to investigate the building of a second high school for grades 9 and 10 only. There is some apprehension by the high school staff concerning this study. Many feel that having the high school divided by grade level will result in a feeling of isolation and a loss of school spirit. The majority of staff would rather see an addition to the present facility.

The Board of Education consists of nine members, three are elected annually by the voting public to serve three year terms. The Board of Education members are not paid in the State of New Jersey. The requirements for these positions include American citizenship, at least 18 years of age, able to read and write, are registered voters and have resided in the municipality for at least one year. The current board includes nine white males. The board develops district policy and is responsible for the operation of the

school district (Garwood, 1994).

During the past twelve years eight school budgets have been passed and four defeated. Prior to this time every budget failed. This recent success may indicate the influence of an increase in the number of young families and white-collar workers, as well as an active Home and School Association. The 1996-97 budget which passed totaled \$42,655,347.

The Egg Harbor Township School District possesses a political climate that is highly professional and motivated by a philosophy of doing what is best for children. This positive political climate exists despite the unusually difficult times that have occurred in the district during the past two years. The district suffered severe budget cuts, which resulted in the loss of staff and programs for the 1996-97 school year. Administrators took a one year wage freeze and the teaching staff worked for approximately six months without a contract. In addition, the tenured superintendent of twelve years and the assistant superintendent of business were given buy-outs. Despite the fact that the district has two well-qualified and experienced assistant superintendents, who have each provided a first class approach in their areas of responsibility, the school board selected an outsider as superintendent. He will join the district as of December 1, 1997.

Also instrumental in contributing to the district's positive political climate is the Home and School Association, booster clubs and high school athletic programs. The positive force behind each of these groups is a continuation of the community and district philosophy: acting with the best interest of what is good for the children.

Despite the reorganization of the central office administrators, a strong

administrative flow chart is in use and clearly delineates who is responsible for what within the district. The central office administrators and Board of Education committees have well-defined roles. The administrative structure is utilized, effectively providing consistency with policy and procedure.

Just as there exists an appropriate degree of order within the administration of the Egg Harbor Township School District, there is also a great deal of human respect within the system. Family crisis, personal illness, and other difficult times for staff members are handled most appropriately with the best interest of the staff member in mind. The Board of Education and Central Office Administration maintain a healthy balance between humanism and the business of education which further contributes to the staff and community enthusiasm, that makes the district work so well.

Egg Harbor Township High School

One of the most politically charged problems occurred in the early 1980's, when the township withdrew from the Greater Egg Harbor Regional School District in order to build its own high school. 12.4 millions dollars was allotted for this project. The Board of Education at that time did not have enough budgeted, and thought they could save money. At the same time, casinos were being built and the better contractors in the area were unavailable. With no one watching the construction management, there was soon a four million dollar override of costs. The final project totaled sixteen million dollars. Although the high school finally opened its doors in September 1983, the district is still plagued with construction problems and several law suits.

The 1997-98 school year began with a new principal, formerly the school's

assistant principal for nine years. The principal is aided by two assistant principals who are primarily disciplinarians and each handles two grades of students. In order to encourage familiarity with students and insure continuity, the assistant principals follow each grade from freshman year to graduation. Additionally, the high school is further divided into departments, with supervisors heading each. They are responsible for direct supervision of staff and curriculum within their departments. These supervisors also oversee curriculum coordination between the elementary and secondary programs. Additionally, there is a Director of Guidance and an Athletic/Activities Director. A Child and Youth Study Team is also housed at the high school.

The secondary curriculum includes the basic components of English, history, math and science. A student may plan his schedule to focus on : Advanced Placement, college preparatory, business or vocational training, and or remedial services. In addition, the high school offers services to the students in the library/media center, computer services, guidance staff, food and health services and a well-rounded program of physical education, including swimming.

An extensive extracurricular program is in operation at the High School. These activities are under the supervision of the Athletic/Activities Director. The high school is a Group III school and also participates in the Cape-Atlantic League. It has consistently earned itself distinction with state titles in both athletics and performing arts endeavors. The school's Key Club received international recognition, when they were named #1 Key Club in the world during the 1994 and 1995 International Conventions.

Student policies are continually under review and subject to revision. Most recent

changes have occurred in the area of discipline, with the formation of the Board of Education Disciplinary Review Committee. This committee reviews the cases of students who are continual discipline problems. Students are issued a Student Handbook at the beginning of each school year. This handbook establishes school policy and serves as a guide for student discipline.

Of the 1352 students enrolled in the high school, there is great ethnic diversity. According to data assembled for the 1997 Fall report, 73% are white, 13% are black, 8% are Hispanic, and 6% are Asian. The most significant change has been an increase in the Hispanic student population. This has resulted in the high school administration realizing a need for Hispanic role models, especially for the Hispanic student who is college bound. Since, the district has no such resource in the high school, a Mentoring program has been developed in cooperation with Rutgers University/Camden and Rowan University for support for these potential college bound students.

The most recent High School Proficiency Test, administered in 1996 shows that 84.2% of the 11th Grade students passed the reading section, 90% passed the mathematics section, and 93% passed the writing section. Egg Harbor Township was the second highest performing school within Atlantic County in the area of Reading, third in Mathematics and second in the area of Writing. In addition, every senior successfully passed the state mandated test.

Mean scores from the Scholastic Aptitude Test results for the class of 1997 were 495 on the verbal section and 498 on the math section. As a result of the Guidance Counselor's and Faculty's emphasis and efforts in the area of encouraging students to

pursue higher education, the school has increased the average number of students taking the SAT I. During the last five years the number has increased from 116 per year to 177, while class size has continued at an average of 281 senior graduates. In addition, 64% of the 1997 graduating class took the SAT compared to only 41% in 1992.

The Class of 1997 had a graduation rate of 77% from its freshman year. However, this figure does not account for student mobility or rapid growth in enrollment figures. Of the students who graduated in 1997, 47% planned on continuing their education at a four-year college, another 39% planned on attending a two-year college, and 7% had plans for other post-secondary study. This is an increase of 3% over the 88% of the Class of 1996. Additionally, the number of students receiving financial assistance in the form of grants and scholarships has consistently increased since the school's opening in 1983. The scholarships offered to 1997 graduates exceeded approximately 3.2 million dollars.

The high school currently has a certificated staff of 140 people. The age of the staff ranges from age 23 to 62. The staff consists of people right out of college and teachers that have taught many members of the new staff. This diversity enables the newest staff members to gather the experience and wisdom of the older teachers, while the experienced teachers have a chance to tap into the enthusiasm and new methods and ideas that comes with the younger teachers. It is this combination along with the supportive administrative staff that allows this staff to educate the high school student in a most productive and professional manner.

Importance of the Study

Today, more and more US schools are experimenting with block schedules.

However, since many US schools have followed block schedules for only a few years, more observational and anecdotal information exists rather than student-performance data.

In general, studies of block-scheduled schools show some improvements over traditional schools. Many schools report fewer dropouts, fewer discipline problems and a less hectic school atmosphere after switching to block schedules. Teachers say students' attitudes toward learning improve and attendance rates increase (Canady and Rettig, 1993). Many teachers also report that with the new schedules less time is lost in transitions, therefore, there is an increase in quality of instruction and innovative use of instructional time. They also note advantages such as, improved student and teacher morale; increased opportunities to take elective courses; more individualized instruction and personalized attention for students; lower student-teacher ratios; fewer preparations and longer planning time for teachers; reduced administrative time for teachers because they teach fewer students per day; and more interaction and professional growth time for teachers (Canady, 1990). As a result, teachers are provided with more opportunities for teaming and /or interdisciplinary education (Williamson, 1993).

Egg Harbor Township School District has the desire to provide its high school teachers with the opportunity to use more innovative instructional approaches. The district also wants to provide its students with increased opportunities for learning and success in a safe-environment. Therefore, the feasibility study for Block Scheduling at Egg Harbor Township High School with implementation in the school year 1999-2000 is a worthwhile study.

Organization of the Study

This paper will be organized in the following manner in order to present the feasibility study on block scheduling for Egg Harbor Township High School. Chapter two will present a review of the literature on block scheduling as a positive change from the traditional high school schedule. Chapter three will focus on the design of the study. It will include: a general description of the development and design of the research instruments used in the study, a description of the data collection approach and a description of the data analysis plan. Chapter four will explain the information found as a result of the study. And finally, Chapter five will describe the study's major conclusions and their corresponding implications. It will also address the intern's leadership development, how the organization changed as a result of the study and any need for further study.

Chapter 2

Review of the Literature

Effective use of instructional time has been a major issue in education for decades. More specifically, high schools have periodically altered master schedules in order to combat the research observation presented by the National Commission on Time and Learning that “time is learning’s warden” (Canady, 1994). Learning is indeed driven by the clock, and educators are still looking for the most effective and efficient schedule within which teaching and learning will improve.

Although there appears to be no “typical” schedule in American schools, traditionally the single-period format has been used by the majority. In the early 1960’s, J. Lloyd Trump developed the flexible modular schedule (FMS) (Canady & Rettig, 1995) which was designed to relax the rigid single-period approach and to vary instructional times, thereby thought to address the individual needs of students. Utilized primarily in the 1960’s and 1970’s, problems arose with the modular schedule involving students’ unstructured time, teaching methods and teacher behavior, as presented by J.J. Goldman in a synthesis of more than two dozen studies (1983). Although the flexible modular schedule was received positively by teachers and students when first introduced as an

educational reform, by the early 1980's, teachers were blaming the schedule and other educational innovations for the larger problems in education during those decades. As a result, by the later 1980's and early 1990's, educators had abandoned the modular schedule and once again began to examine the high school time structure.

As educators and researchers began to reassess the use of time in American high schools, the 1984 report published by the national Commission on Excellence in Education, entitled, *A Nation At Risk*, had a great impact on many aspects of education (Canady & Rettig, 1995). Once again, a major focus was on the effective use of time. Recommendations were offered suggesting that the school day be lengthened, yet the emphasis quickly turned not to the specific length of time, but to how that instructional time was being utilized--how was learning occurring within any given time frame.

Scheduling, therefore, has become a catalyst for restructuring and improvement in schools. Researchers are finding that fewer, yet longer, blocks of time within a school day result in many positive aspects. According to the National Study of High School Restructuring report, block scheduling is being used in some fashion by one in ten high schools (Cawelti, 1994). As Canady and Rettig state, "We realize that block scheduling is not a panacea for the many problems of the American high school. A school schedule can, however, have an enormous impact on a school's instructional climate" (1995).

Since block scheduling is a relatively recent innovation, most of the research is anecdotal rather than empirical. Based on this small body of research, however, three major questions are repeatedly addressed: does block scheduling have a direct effect on academic performance? Will a restructuring of instructional time cause teachers to move

from a teacher-centered instructional approach to a more student-centered style involving varied strategies? Does block scheduling result in a more positive and productive classroom atmosphere?

In a study conducted by the Office of Educational Research and Regional Improvement (Taylor, 1996), It was resolved that block or intensive scheduling did have a positive effect on learning because of a shift in classroom climate. Longer class periods allow for an improvement in teacher-student relationships, which in turn, fosters confidence in students with regard to instructional tasks. This educational improvement equation was confirmed in a report published by the Virginia-based Educational Research Service (Taylor, 1996). In that study, Dr. William Pollock, principal of High Technology High School in Monmouth County, New Jersey, states, “Learning and teaching can be the total control of the teacher without worrying about the bell ringing and everyone running to their next class when block scheduling is in effect” (Taylor, 1996). When the pressure of time constraints is lifted, a more focused atmosphere exists, one resulting in more varied and, in some cases, more interesting teaching strategies.

The same Educational Research Service study does, however, highlight the difficulty associated with the transition from a traditional schedule to a block, noting that this tough transition has actually discouraged many educators from implementing a block schedule. In fact, at present, only 11% of the nation’s schools are operating within a block schedule, and 61% have no plans to restructure (Taylor, 1996).

Focusing on instructional techniques utilized in school systems, a more substantial research study was conducted by George, Buis, Robinette, and Chai in Tennessee during

the 1994-95 school year (1995). The purpose of the study was to compare and contrast instructional strategies used in schools operating in a block schedule as opposed to those focusing within a more traditional seven-period day. Four high schools in East Tennessee were involved, and 133 questionnaires were distributed. The overall response rate was 71% (Taylor, 1996).

Survey questions asked teachers their opinions of the scheduling models with regard to effective teaching and student learning, time spent in evaluation of student work outside class, and teacher preparation time. The instructors were then asked to indicate the frequency of utilization of various teaching strategies using a four-point Likert scale. These techniques included interdisciplinary approaches, video presentations, cooperative learning, library research projects, lecture, computer-based activities, in-class practice, and out-of-class assignments (George, et al, 1995).

The results of the research study disclosed that teachers working within a block schedule did not appear to be doing things in the classroom much differently from their counterparts in a seven-period day schedule. With regard to specific instructional strategies, the increased use of video presentations, cooperative learning groups, and in-class practice within a block schedule was the only significant difference between the experimental groups. In conclusion, the study found that while specific teaching techniques within the two scheduling models did not differ greatly, the teachers' perception of the effectiveness of a block schedule was substantial. Nearly 87% of teachers using the block felt it to be most effective, while 40% of those working within the traditional seven-period day also thought block scheduling superior (George, et al, 1995).

Although the innovative block schedule has only been implemented in American schools for about six years, the model has been in place in Canada for over a decade. Canadian schools report that the most commonly shared advantages are decreases in dropout rates and discipline problems, along with increases in attendance and grade-point averages.

Despite these reported advantages, opponents of block scheduling cite several Canadian studies to support their case against block scheduling. Two studies were conducted by Dr. David J. Bateson in 1990 and 1995. He concluded that students in traditional schedules outperformed students in a block schedule on national math and science exams administered to tenth graders. Bateson's study also determined that, overall, teachers were not changing the way they delivered instruction. There was no significant increase in the utilization of teaching techniques designed to foster higher order thinking skills (Sommerfeld, 1996).

In another Canadian study, Drs. Dennis Raphael, Merlin Wahlstrom, and L.D. McLean examined the effect of block scheduling on mathematics courses in Ontario schools. They found that academic achievement was significantly lower under block scheduling and found either adverse effects or no benefit in student attitudes about mathematics (Raphael, Wahlstrom, and McLean, 1986). Raphael's findings were much the same as Bateson's. In a smaller study of science results, Raphael and Wahlstrom again found that traditional full-year courses resulted in better achievement in biology and chemistry classes, with no statistically significant difference for physics. However, attitudinal scores for science courses did show some gains due to block scheduling, since

more students said they enjoyed the courses or thought they were worthwhile. The authors suggest that there may be some benefit of block scheduling for attitudes about science, but it will not help academic achievement in the science areas (Raphael & Wahlstrom, 1986).

A recent report issued by the Canadian Ministry of Education and Training also found that a block schedule had no impact on student performance. This conclusion was reached by examining the reading test scores of 130,000 ninth graders. A similar study conducted in North Carolina, where 38% of all high schools operate within a block schedule, reached the same conclusion. There was neither an increase nor a decrease in student scores on state tests in schools using a block schedule (Sommerfeld, 1996).

Building on this research finding regarding academic achievement in schools in North Carolina, educators have a specific concern in mathematics. Even though overall academic achievement remained equivalent or slightly better over the course of the year-long study involving a pre-test/post-test research design, the math scores reflected a decrease. More specifically, Algebra 2 and geometry test scores that had not been statistically adjusted for socioeconomic status or homework time were decidedly lower. A sampling of North Carolina students felt that “block scheduling was least useful and interesting in mathematics” (“Building block,” 1996).

To further support a case against block scheduling, is the College Board’s September 1996 report concerning advance placement tests. The College Board had received many requests for January and late May or June examinations to accommodate intensive semester block scheduling in secondary schools. Therefore, they decided to

gather information through six questionnaires, telephone surveys, open forums with AP teachers, discussions at regional meetings and workshops, and analysis of examination performance. As a result of their study, the College Board reported that students in schools that use block scheduling who take advanced placement tests “tend to do poorly” in most subjects when compared to students from high schools that don’t use block scheduling. The only exception is English, where there’s no significant effect. The difference is “more than half a standard deviation,” which in terms of SAT scores it would mean a difference of more than 50 points (The College board, 1996).

In addition, the report states that teachers of advanced placement courses “overwhelmingly oppose” block scheduling, and that the opposition “appeared to be strongest among teachers in block scheduling schools.” However, the board states that it makes no recommendations on block scheduling itself and cautions that the generally weaker performance of AP students who prepared for the examinations through intensive semester courses cannot be generalized to non-AP courses offered in that format. The board recommends a need for controlled, longitudinal studies of the impact of block scheduling upon learning especially its effect on non-advanced-placement courses (The College Board, 1996).

In reviewing the , as of yet, limited amount of quantitative research findings, Clarence Edwards, Curriculum Coordinator at Orange County High School in Virginia, provides results of a pilot program conducted at his school. Twenty-one students participated in the year-long pilot program. The students involved were ones who had failed from three to seven classes the prior year. They were placed in a daily schedule that

included a block-scheduling approach for half the day and traditional-length classes for the other half. Seven of the 21 students involved passed all of their classes during the 1991-92 pilot year. Three students failed only one class, and six failed two classes. In summary, 76% or 16 of the 21 students, improved their academic achievement over the previous year (Edwards, 1993).

Edwards contends that a block schedule would surely benefit those students who have difficulty in a more complex traditional schedule. Within the block, these “at-risk” students would experience a less complicated schedule and would receive more individualized attention. During the pilot project, 3% of the total student body participated, and the school’s graduation rate increased by five percentage points. Also, grades of “C” or better increased by five percentage points over the previous year (Edwards, 1993). These results contribute to the growing body of knowledge advocating restructuring and its relationship to academic performance.

Similar statistics have been reported by Roger Schoenstein, a foreign language supervisor from Colorado Springs, Colorado (1995). Wasson High School has been functioning within a block schedule since 1991. After five years of implementation, the daily attendance rate increased from 92% to 94%, and the percentage of honor roll students rose from 21% to 22%. Also of note is the fact that in 1990, 40% of Wasson High School’s graduation seniors went on to four-year colleges, while now over 50% enroll in four-year college and universities (Schoenstein, 1995).

Schoenstein also examined SAT scores over the first five years of block scheduling. Average scores on the verbal portion of the test dropped from 455 to 428,

and average math scores fell from 493 to 482. Immediately, opponents of block scheduling cited this as an example of its failure. However, what Schoenstein pointed out about these decreases and what he warned others to include in the interpretation of data is the fact that many intervening variables have an effect on these statistical changes. For example, during the five-year study period, total school enrollment went from 980 students in three grades to 1600 in grades 9-12, and the minority population increased from 22 % to 34%. All of these factors make it difficult to isolate specific results, but Schoenstein contends that “the block schedule has changed more than the time of our bells, it has changed the entire culture of our school” (1995).

Perhaps the front-runner of block scheduling in our tri-state area is David Hottenstein, Principal of Hatboro-Horsham High School in Pennsylvania. He reported statistics in 1993 after the first year of implementation based on data gathered from “a quantitative and qualitative survey from parents, students and teachers (Hottenstein & Malatesta, 1993).

The facts included an increase in attendance from 96% to 97%, a very marked increase in honor roll students from 244 to 534, and a decrease in final exam failures from 34% to 24%. For that first year of block scheduling, only one senior did not graduate, when usually that number was 10 to 15. Also, an end-of-the-year-survey indicated that 95% of students, teachers and parents supported block scheduling (Hottenstein & Malatesta, 1993).

According to Hottenstein, “The Canadians simply did it wrong” (Boldt, 1996). He acknowledges, that block scheduling won’t work unless you have parents and students

on board, and then train teachers extensively on how to use the longer periods. After four years on block scheduling, Hatboro-Horsham's results have been "extremely positive" (Boldt, 1996). Robert Canady, a University of Virginia professor and a recognized expert on the "block", agrees with Hottenstein. To be done right, block scheduling requires "involved teachers, staff development and an involved community," says Canady. He estimates that presently 50% of high schools are in or studying block scheduling (Winans, 1997).

In examining the need for further study in the area of effects of block scheduling, certain elements become clear. For example, although Hottenstein (1993) reported statistics after one year of block scheduling, he and other educators like L. John DeLaurentis, Principal of Upper Mooreland High School, advocated beginning with at least two years of base-line data under a traditional schedule. Those statistics could then provide the basis for comparison after at least two years of operation under a block schedule. Such an approach will naturally contribute to the body of quantitative research findings that, at present, is very limited.

To further support this theory, a study conducted by the Northwest Regional Educational laboratory (1990) reports that "imposing a scheduling model on a school will not ensue success." The lab recommends a minimum of two years planning time before implementation, to make sure the new schedule meets the needs of all the concerned stakeholders.

In addition, Douglas Fleming, a former teacher and now consultant on active learning strategies, says that schools that carelessly plan for block scheduling are

“dragging a chicken through hot water and calling it soup” (1997). In order to do it right, schools must allow staff and student input, adequate professional development and lots of community support (1997).

Throughout the review of the literature, researchers continually made references to the fact, that due to the relative “newness” of the block schedule, more observational information exists rather than specific student performance data. As a greater number of schools in America restructure instructional time, the body of both qualitative and quantitative research finding will expand.

Finally, as William Glasser warned, “If what you are doing isn’t working, you ought to seriously consider doing something else” (Edwards, 1993). If, indeed, block scheduling provides for more effective use of teacher time, student time and educational resources, more and more schools will be moving in that direction and certainly a greater amount of data will be generated.

Chapter Three

The Design of the Study

Educational change is often considered to be a whim--most educators view it negatively, as something that will eventually pass. Therefore, the involvement of all members of the school community is vital before any program change can be implemented. As a result of the high school staff's desire to see improved building climate, reduced discipline problems, and better attendance rates, the decision to conduct a feasibility study on block scheduling with plans for implementation at the high school during the 1999-2000 school year was made by the central office administration.

Research Design

After reviewing the literature on educational change and block scheduling, the intern and her mentor met in August to discuss the project. Together, they decided that in order to make any change successful, teacher input would be vital. During this meeting a general time line for conducting the first year of a feasibility study on block scheduling was devised. The plan was to form a committee made up of staff to initially study block scheduling, to make at least three visitations to districts with block scheduling, and to inform and update the staff, students, and Home/School Association on the committee's findings.

Next, the intern met with the newly appointed high school principal, to discuss the project. He had some reservations about the project, such as how will the schedule effect our half-day vocational students and special education students? However, he agreed with the intern. that as the building principal, he must philosophically support any restructured schedule. During the meeting, the principal requested to serve on the block scheduling study committee and he agreed to ensure that all interested parties were involved, and to assist the intern if necessary, in explaining the rationale for any change to the school board, teachers, parents, and students.

In September, the intern distributed a memo to the high school staff explaining the purpose for the study on block scheduling and asking for volunteers to serve on the committee. From a staff of 115 teachers and administrators, 15 people volunteered with representation from each department in the high school. In addition, the high school principal and the assistant superintendent volunteered to serve on the committee.

In October, a new superintendent was appointed to the district. However, his role did not officially begin until December 1, 1997. As a result, the intern's mentor asked her not to proceed with any committee meetings until we were able to review the intern's projects with the new superintendent. Therefore, the intern continued to review the literature, and to locate appropriate informational workshops on the subject. The intern soon realized that many of workshops were designed to aid schools already using block scheduling. Most of the conferences that would assist the intern in setting up a strategic plan for block scheduling were located out of state. Since the intern's project was on hold until the new superintendent could give his approval, no plans for an out-of-state

conference were made.

In late October, the intern and her mentor attended the Educational Research Service's New Jersey Briefing Session in Cherry Hill, New Jersey. During this session, block scheduling and managing educational change were discussed. Most of the information presented on block scheduling was not new to the intern. The presenter, however, stressed that not enough information on student-performance data was available, and that most of the research was based on observational and anecdotal information. During the break session, the intern met the Superintendent and Vice Principal of the high school for Cumberland Regional School District. They were in their second year of block scheduling. We discussed their success and failures, but overall they were pleased with the schedule and said that their teachers would never go back to the traditional schedule. During this time, the intern made tentative plans to visit their high school in December. They would accommodate a team of six for a fee of \$300.00. The Vice Principal explained that the money was put back into the staff development account. This not only rewarded teachers for their assistance, but kept a cash flow in an account that was important to both staff and administration.

Although the Block Scheduling Study Committee was not actively involved at this time, the intern decided it was important to keep the entire faculty informed of the group's progress as well as to get needed information from the faculty. In November, the intern sent a memo and a questionnaire to the high school staff, announcing the members of the block scheduling committee, explaining the committee's role, and asking them to complete an informational questionnaire on block scheduling. The questionnaire consisted of the

following three open-ended questions:

1. What do you presently know about Block Scheduling?
2. What would you like to know about Block Scheduling?
3. Please list any concerns, questions, or comments that you may have about Block Scheduling? (See Appendix A)

The intern was pleased to receive a fifty percent rate from the staff. As a result, many faculty members approached the intern with questions, articles, information about other schools, etc. Despite the fact that the intern's project was not progressing on schedule, the staff was aware of a proposed study for a schedule change, and they were actively talking about it.

In December, the intern met with her mentor and the new superintendent. The superintendent actively supported the study on block scheduling. In fact, he was already in the process of developing strategic planning committees for the district's six schools. Therefore, he wanted the Block Study Scheduling Study Committee to be a sub-committee of the high school's strategic planning committee. He shared his expertise on block scheduling with the intern. His previous district had successfully implemented the innovation for one year. He suggested that the intern make arrangements to visit a school that had successfully implemented the change for at least three years. Therefore, he suggested that I not visit Cumberland Regional High School at this time. Following the meeting, the intern made arrangements for a team visitation to the Hatboro-Horsham High School in Horsham, Pa on January 13, 1998. The school headed by principal, David Hottenstein, had successfully used block scheduling for the past six years. With the project back on schedule, the intern sent a memo to the committee to meet on December

17 for a brief organizational meeting. In preparation for this meeting, the intern spent several hours gathering information, photocopying articles, and assembling an information packet for each committee member.

During the initial meeting of the Block Scheduling Study Committee, the intern explained the goals and the role of each committee member. At this time, the new superintendent, Dr. Leonard Kelpsh, shared his vision for the school district and also his experiences with block scheduling. Dr. Joy Miller, assistant superintendent and committee member, welcomed the group and thanked everyone for volunteering. She also announced that our group would be a sub-committee of the district's strategic planning committee. Next, the intern reviewed the information packet with the group and encouraged them to read it over the winter break in order that they would have a good basis of understanding about block scheduling. She also wanted them to use that information and the questions asked by the staff to develop interview questions for our visitations. The intern announced that the committee would initially be divided into three teams for the visitations. The first group--the principal, the intern, director of guidance, an English teacher, and a special education teacher-- would make a visitation to Hatboro-Horsham Senior High School in Horsham, Pa. on January 13, 1998. The second group--the intern, an assistant principal, school psychologist, a foreign language teacher, a physical education teacher, a music teacher, and an English teacher --would make a visitation to Cumberland Regional High School, Cumberland, New Jersey on February 25, 1998. And the third group--the intern, the assistant superintendent, the principal, a social studies teacher, a mathematics teacher, and a science teacher--would make a visitation to

Burlington Township High School, Burlington, New Jersey on March 11, 1998.

On January 20, the committee met and the first team reported on their visitation to Hatboro-Horsahm. For the presentation, the intern prepared packets for each member, which included: a sample schedule, research data, evaluation plan, sample lesson plans, etc. It was decided that the intern would design a one-page, two-sided information sheet concerning the visitation, which would be distributed to the entire staff. We felt that the staff would tend to read the information if it was concise. The committee agreed that we would follow the same procedure after each visitation., A section in the library would also be made available to staff and students concerning block scheduling.

In addition to distributing information to the staff, the intern spoke at the monthly meeting of the Home/School Association on January 20, 1998.. She shared general information about block scheduling as well as the committee's findings at the block-scheduled schools. She answered questions and distributed general information packets about block scheduling to the membership. She reinforced that the district is conducting a feasibility study of at least two to three years before the possibility of implementation at the high school.

During the three month visitation period, the student newspaper featured an article on block scheduling. The student reporter interviewed the intern as well as various members of the Block Scheduling Study Committee. The article explained the concept, the district's plan, research findings, and visitation facts. As a result, students became aware of the concept, and discussions were not uncommon in the classroom. In addition, members of the committee presented mini-information sessions during department

meetings, which provided time for questions, concerns, etc., regarding block scheduling.

Data Collection Approach

In addition to providing journal research articles, workshops, and Internet sites to the committee members and staff, the intern networked with block-scheduled schools and coordinated teacher schedules for school visitations. It was decided that the three teams would greatly benefit from visiting schools that were in various stages of implementation. A school, such as Hatboro-Horsham Senior High School, that has been in block scheduling for six years gave a broader perspective by providing information on the process of institutionalization. Their teachers with years of experience with block scheduling gave important information on early implementation stages and how they tailored the schedule to get a good fit for their school culture. On the other hand,, schools in the early implementation years, the first three years, such as Cumberland Regional High School and Burlington Township High School, provided details on the first few months of teaching in the block.

It was decided that a teacher from each department would observe and report back to the committee. For example, a member of the social studies department would shadow a social studies teacher in a block-scheduled school, observing and interviewing teachers and students on teaching strategies and curriculum of the social studies department. The Block Scheduling Study Committee developed a list of questions that the team members used while interviewing administration, teachers, and students at block-scheduled school visitations. Interview questions:

1. Briefly, how does your block system work?

2. Do students retain information learned in these schedules?
3. Do the community, teaching staff, and students have to be involved in the planning process?
4. How will the schedule accommodate new students entering after a semester has started?
5. How will students transferring from this new scheduling approach during a semester be accommodated by a school running a traditional schedule?
6. With a 90-minute class, won't students find it difficult to pay attention to the same subject and the same teacher?
7. Since students miss the equivalent of two class period for each day of absence, are there plans for addressing extended absences because of snow?
8. Will students be able to earn more credits under the Block system than under a traditional schedule?
9. How do your Advanced Placement classes work?
10. How do you deal with the gap in sequential courses, such as foreign language?
11. Are you covering as much content now as you could before?
12. Has the block schedule had an effect on school climate?
13. How about results? Hard data? Statistics? What have you recorded?
14. Were there any other models that you studied and then decided against?
15. What was the biggest negative factor?
16. How important is staff development to the success of block scheduling?
17. How will the 4x4 block schedule affect the band and chorus programs that

have traditionally been year - long courses?

18. How does the block system affect the at risk students?

19. Did the change in scheduling require the same number of teachers as the previous schedule?

20. Would you go back to a traditional 7-period day?

The intern along with the members of each visitation team summarized the information on a one-page, two-sided information sheet, which was distributed to each staff member after each visitation. More detailed information of each visitation was made available in the library.

In addition, the teams collected ideas on effective instructional techniques and curriculum development for block-scheduled schools, and made them available to the district's curriculum revision committees. Six district Cooperative Learning workshops were also offered to all district members during the months of January and February. The intern prepared an inventory of what resources existed in the district in order to determine how to provide in-service opportunities for teachers' preparation for block scheduling.

In March, a ballot was distributed to 140 participants--the entire high school staff. Based on the information that the staff had received during the 1997-98 school year, they were asked to agree or disagree whether or not the planned feasibility study on block scheduling should continue during the 1998-99 school year. In addition they were asked to give three reasons why they support or do not support the continuation of the study. The data was collected, analyzed, and a recommendation was made to the superintendent.

Chapter Four

Presentation of the Research Findings

Purpose

The intern's product outcome statement in the area of change was that constituent stakeholders would support the continuation of a feasibility study during the 1998-99 school year for block scheduling at Egg Harbor Township High School. The purpose of this chapter is to explain the information found as a result of the 1997-98 school year feasibility study on block scheduling at Egg Harbor Township High School, and to explain what that information means.

Information Found

Based on data collected from the high school staff in November, the intern and members of the Block Scheduling Study Committee, were able to determine a baseline of the faculty's knowledge, and concerns about block scheduling. Since the intern received a fifty percent response rate from the staff, she was able to determine that the staff had an interest in block scheduling, but needed to know more about it. They were particularly concerned about the implications for special education students, testing, foreign language, and impact on staffing. Using this information, the intern and committee members made

three visitations to block-scheduled schools and made the results of these visitations as well as the general literature on block scheduling available to both staff, parents, and students.

Due to the change in the superintendency, the intern and committee members needed to wait until January before making any visitations. Although the intern was making information available to the staff from the onset of the study, the number of stakeholders involved was limited because of the need to await approval from the new superintendent.

In March, the intern distributed a questionnaire to 140 participants--the entire high school staff (see Appendix B). They were asked to agree or disagree whether or not the planned feasibility study on block scheduling should continue during the 1998-99 school year. In addition, they were asked to provide the intern and committee with three reasons why they support or do not support the continuation of the study. They were also asked if they would like to serve on the block scheduling study committee and if they would like to make a visitation to a block-scheduled school. The questionnaires were distributed in their mailboxes on a Monday morning and asked to be returned within three days. Response to this initial distribution was poor so the intern asked the principal to make an announcement on the following Friday, reminding staff to return their questionnaire by the end of the day.

In the final analysis, seventy-one percent of the questionnaires given were returned to the intern. Of those returned, 90% supported the continuation of the feasibility study on block scheduling, 10% did not support the continuation. The responses varied in terms

of individual recommendations and concerns. Those opposing the study expressed the following concerns:

- problems for low level/special needs students
- not practical for all subjects
- building is not conducive to block scheduling
- it's another fad
- teachers have not been trained to teach in longer blocks
- Staff supporting the continuation of the study, expressed the following:
 - need more information to be completely satisfied with this program
 - like the idea, need another year to work out the "kinks"
 - requires change
 - let's find out if it really works
 - would like to hear specifics from faculty members who teach in block-scheduled schools
 - forty-two minute periods are just too short
 - hopefully, some course that do not currently "run" would be regenerated in a semester schedule
 - keep more kids in school
 - positive results in students grades are compelling
 - the study should be in line with facilities planning
 - need to explore more schools
 - excellent preparation for post high school studies

- would work wonderfully in the arts and ceramics classes
- implemented only after careful preparation

In addition, 54 staff members expressed interest in making a site visitation to a block-scheduled school, and 22 staff members volunteered to serve on the block scheduling study committee.

Meaning of Information

From the results of the questionnaire, the intern and members of the block scheduling study committee made a recommendation to the superintendent to continue the feasibility study on block scheduling for the 1998-99 school year with plans for implementation of the four-block schedule in the 1999-2000 school year. It takes patience and hard work to gain faculty buy-in. Based on the data, the intern and committee members feel that it would be a mistake to make a major change by a simple majority vote. While this approach may be expedient, it is likely to produce people who will be resentful of the change. Since, data regarding block scheduling is plentiful and since a majority of the staff members are willing to become involved in the change and make site visitations, we decided that we should be careful not to move too quickly. Therefore, the intern and committee members must continue with the study during the remaining school year, and develop a plan for the continuation of the study during the 1998-99 school year with a vote to be taken in 1999 to implement the four-block schedule.

Chapter Five

Conclusions, Implications, and Further Study

Study's Conclusions

The intern's objective in the area of change was to conduct a feasibility study on block scheduling. A second objective was for the intern to use strategic planning skills in managing change. Due to a number of outside factors, such as a change in the superintendency and a cancellation of the high school's two in-service days, the study was not on schedule. Regardless, the intern was still able to develop and implement a plan with results. Throughout this project, the intern was able to enhance her strategic planning skills in managing change by implementing the following plan:

- Conducted research on block scheduling.
- Shared information initially with key groups of teachers whose support is vital to success in gaining staff support and trust.
- Formed a block scheduling study committee
- Visited block-scheduled schools with staff members
- Shared information on block scheduling with staff, parents, and students
- Conducted a presentation to the Home/School Association

- Distributed survey to staff to determine the need for further study

As a result of the study, constituent stakeholders supported the continuation of the study during the 1998-99 school year with plans for implementation of a four-block schedule during the 1999-2000 school year. This decision was based on the data received from seventy-one percent of the staff with ninety percent supporting the continuation of the study. The recommendation to continue the feasibility study for another year was made by the intern and members of the Block Scheduling Study Committee to the superintendent.

Implications of the Study

The intern initiated and effectively managed change as both a leader and member of the block scheduling study committee. The intern utilized an evaluation form adapted from Proficiencies for Principals (1986), a publication from the National Association of Elementary School Principals (see Appendix C). The mean scores earned by the intern in the area of change ranged from 4.7 to 5. The highest scores were given in the areas which assess the intern's skill in the process of applying effective human relation skills, developing an action plan, and analyzing information relative to problems, making decisions, and delegating responsibility as appropriate. All respondents either strongly agreed or agreed that this intern demonstrated effective leadership skills in change. In addition the respondents supplied the intern with positive narrative comments concerning her work. This indicated that the intern was perceived as successful in her ability to lead others as an administrator.

The above evaluations led the intern to conclude she achieved a successful

feasibility study on block scheduling for Egg Harbor Township High School. Through her research and implementation of this project, the intern was able to improve her skill at strategic planning in managing change.

Organizational Change

As a result of this study, the Egg Harbor Township School High School will continue its study of block scheduling for a second year with plans for implementation during the 1999-2000 school year. This study allowed both teachers and administrators to articulate clearly how they think block scheduling will provide the desired outcomes they hope to accomplish. It was determined in an earlier needs assessment that staff was interested in redesigning their courses to provide in-depth learning through projects as well as actively engaging students in learning. Since many teachers had been trained in various instructional approaches such as cooperative learning, long-term projects and interdisciplinary lessons, a need to look at blocks of time was determined to be necessary. From this point, the intern formed a block scheduling study committee in order to gather data about block scheduling. As a result of the committee's work, there has been much dialogue in the high school, such as faculty meetings, informal faculty gatherings, presentation to Home/School Association, classroom discussion, etc.. This process allows the stakeholders to immerse themselves in the information through shared interaction.

Need for Further Study

All change is painful, say Gerald Strock and David Hottenstein (1994), and often controversial. The process of making the transition is probably the biggest challenge: building support for altering such a "time-honored" tradition, and finding or creating the

planning time needed to make the change. “Imposing a scheduling model on a school will not ensure success,” states the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory (1990). The lab recommends a minimum of two years’ planning time before implementation, to make sure the new schedule meets the needs of all concerned.

Adequate staff development time is also essential, say Canady and Rettig (1995). Teachers who have taught in thirty-five to fifty-minute time blocks for years need help in gaining the necessary strategies and skills to teach successfully in large blocks of time. They observe that teachers who are most successful in block scheduling typically plan lessons in three parts: explanation, application, and synthesis. Most teachers have much less experience with the latter two phases than with the first. Teachers may also need training in cooperative learning, class building, and team formation.

The process of decision making is very time-consuming. Therefore the Egg Harbor Township School district has committed to continue the feasibility on block scheduling at the high school for another year. Since our goal is to improve the ways children learn and teachers teach, it is necessary that our approach include the following: involvement of all constituencies, leadership engagement, process reflection, information gathering and communication. For the second year of the study, the intern and the members of the block scheduling study committee will implement the following plan:

- Increase the dialogue sessions for this process, use faculty meetings and staff in-service days for data sharing. The theme of every faculty meeting might be some aspect of block scheduling, namely, curriculum development, scheduling issues, technology use, etc.

- Arrange time for student, parents, and interested community members to vocalize their anxieties. Presentations through the Home/School Association and Information Nights for parents and students will be organized.
- Arrange for a panel presentation by teachers and students from block-scheduled schools to the staff, students, and parents of the high school.
- “Brown-bag lunches” in the principal’s conference room, where four or five teachers are invited once a week to discuss block scheduling informally. This could be conducted until all staff have received an invitation.
- Offer professional development workshops for all teachers to experiment with various instructional strategies. Help teachers learn how to “teach in the block.”
- Allow sufficient opportunity for all participants to influence the decision to change to block scheduling.
- Plan for a consensus acceptance of the change to block scheduling to be completed by March, 1999 for implementation for the 1999-2000 school year..

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APPENDIX A
BLOCK SCHEDULING INFORMATION QUESTIONNAIRE

BLOCK SCHEDULING INFORMATION QUESTIONNAIRE

1. *What do you presently know about Block Scheduling?*
2. *What would you like to know about Block Scheduling?*
3. *Please list any concerns, questions, or comments that you may have about Block Scheduling.*

APPENDIX B
INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Briefly, how does your block system work?
2. Do students retain information learned in these schedules?
3. Do the community, teaching staff, and students have to be involved in the planning process?
4. How will the schedule accommodate new students entering after a semester has started?
5. How will students transferring from this new scheduling approach during a semester be accommodated by a school running a traditional schedule?
6. With a 90-minute class, won't students find it difficult to pay attention to the same subject and the same teacher?
7. Since students miss the equivalent of two class period for each day of absence, are there plans for addressing extended absences because of snow?
8. Will students be able to earn more credits under the Block system than under a traditional schedule?
9. How do your Advanced Placement classes work?
10. How do you deal with the gap in sequential courses, such as foreign language?
11. Are you covering as much content now as you could before?
12. Has the block schedule have an effect on school climate?
13. How about results? Hard data? Statistics? What have you recorded?
14. Were there any other models that you studied and then decided against?
15. What was the biggest negative factor?
16. How important is staff development to the success of block scheduling?
17. How will the 4 x 4 block schedule affect the band and chorus programs that have traditionally been year-long courses?

18. How does the block system affect the at risk students?
19. Did the change in scheduling require the same number of teachers as the previous schedule?
20. Would you go back to a traditional 7-period day?

APPENDIX C

ADMINISTRATIVE PROFICIENCIES EVALUATION

ADMINISTRATIVE PROFICIENCIES

Leadership Behavior Change/Strategic Planning

The intern will:

Key

5 - Strongly Agree

4 - Agree

3 - Undecided

2 - Disagree

1 - Strongly Disagree

1. apply effective human relation skills. _____
2. encourage the leadership of others. _____
3. involve stakeholders in strategic planning concerning block scheduling. _____
4. develop an action plan. _____
5. identify, scan and project from important data concerning block scheduling. _____
6. analyze information relative to problems, make decisions, and delegate responsibility as appropriate. _____
7. create a powerful esprit de corps, a strong sense of togetherness, through effective human relations techniques. _____
8. identify and creatively utilize human, material, and financial resources to achieve the school's goals. _____

COMMENTS:

APPENDIX D

BLOCK SCHEDULING FEASIBILITY STUDY SURVEY

BLOCK SCHEDULING FEASIBILITY STUDY SURVEY

_____ I support the continuation of the feasibility study on block scheduling.

1.

2.

3.

_____ I do not support the continuation of the feasibility study on block scheduling.

1.

2.

3.

_____ I would like to serve on the block study scheduling committee.

_____ I would like to make a site visitation to a block-scheduled school.

NAME (OPTIONAL) _____

Biographical Data

Name	Joetta Marie Palmero Surace
Date and Place of Birth	February 9, 1949 Meadville, Pennsylvania
High School	Meadville Area Senior High School Meadville, Pennsylvania
Undergraduate Degree	Bachelor of Science English Edinboro State College Edinboro, Pennsylvania
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