

## **Block Scheduling Resources**

Coming down the pike: The 8-block schedule. "Restructuring schools" reform in the domain of the public schools has taken flight in many school districts across the country with the 8-block schedule. The basic plan is for students to take 8 classes, attending four 80-90 minute periods each day (with two breaks for homeroom and lunch in between). Thus, classes meet every other day, but for double the normal 40-45 minute meeting pattern. Those schools who have implemented the schedule over a number of years remain highly enthusiastic: more student success, more teacher creativity, better overall academic climate, fewer daily preparations for students and teachers, more time for teachers with common responsibilities to meet together in a significant planning block, etc.

Of course a school can experiment with the block scheduling notion without full conversion by finding one or more pairs of teachers in core courses interested in the concept and scheduling their classes back to back. Thus, if all ninth graders took English 9 and world history and those two teachers were willing to experiment, then by scheduling their 45-minute classes back to back, the two would have many options for their time: they could separately initiate a 90 minute blocks by alternating double periods (Mon/Wed/Fri/Tues/Thurs for teacher A and the alternate days for teacher B over a two week stretch), they could combine classes for interdisciplinary team-teaching, or some combination of the two approaches.

ISACS schools in the process of experimenting with or converting to the 8-block schedule (or some other variation of block scheduling) include Evansville Day School (IN) (since 1992), Lake Forest Academy (IL) (since 1994), Marian Heights Academy (IN), Whitfield School (MO), Sayre School (KY).

Block Scheduling Commentary from the ISED-L listserv on the Internet:

### **BLOCK SCHEDULING QUICKSHEET**

The questions of "What do we do about \_\_\_\_\_?," "Who can help us with \_\_\_\_\_?," and "Where do we go for \_\_\_\_\_?," come up so frequently on discussion lists that I compiled this quick reference to must-read, must-visit, and must consult resources on block scheduling.

## BOOKS:

Canady, Robert Lynn, and Rettig, Michael D. **BLOCK SCHEDULING: A CATALYST FOR CHANGE IN HIGH SCHOOLS** Eye on Education, Inc. Princeton, NJ: 1995

Probably the most comprehensive resource available today, with detailed treatment of alternate day, 4x4, intensive scheduling, and blended models. An excellent chapter on teaching in the block and designing a professional development to prepare staff. The authors provide a strong evaluation matrix, planning checklist, and indicators of achievement list.

Caroll, Joseph M. **THE COPERNICAN PLAN**, The Regional Laboratory for Educational Improvement of the Northeast and Islands Andover, MA: 1989

This book makes a case for intensive learning and has served as an impetus for schedule change in schools around the country. Schools who have applied Carroll's model have reported that students feel they learned more, worked harder, and were better known by teachers.

Fogarty, Robin J. **THINK ABOUT...BLOCK SCHEDULING**, IRI Skylight Training and Publishing, Inc. Palatine, IL: 1995

An excellent resource for school boards, community members, and other policymakers. Fogarty provides succinct comparisons of traditional bell schedules and various models of block scheduling. Her coverage of instructional strategies associated with block scheduling and curriculum approaches that work well is concise and to the point.

Kosanovic, Gerald E. **RETOOLING THE INSTRUCTIONAL DAY** National Association of Secondary School Principals, Reston, VA: 1994

Practical examples of modified traditional schedules, block of time schedules, modified block of time schedules, and modular schedules.

## JOURNAL ARTICLES:

Canady, Robert Lynn "Parallel Block Scheduling: A Better Way to Organize a School  
PRINCIPAL January 1990, pp. 34-36

Hinckley, June "Blocks, Wheels, and Teams: Building A Middle School Schedule," MUSIC  
EDUCATORS JOURNAL February, 1992, pp. 26-30.

Traverso, Henry P. "Scheduling: From Micro to Macro" THE PRACTITIONER National  
Association of Secondary School Principals Reston, VA: 1994.

## RELATED PRACTICES AND POLICIES: A KEYWORD CHECKLIST

case study method  
cooperative group learning  
critical thinking skills  
exhibitions  
graphic organizers  
integration of technology  
interdisciplinary curriculum  
multiple intelligences  
performance assessment  
portfolio assessment  
problem-based learning  
project-based learning  
process education  
senior projects  
teacher advisor  
teamed instruction  
thematic units  
Socratic questioning  
student-centered

## OTHER RESOURCES:

Bellanca, James DESIGNING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR CHANGE  
IRI/Skylight Publishing, Inc. Palatine, IL: 1995

ERS InfoFile SCHOOL SCHEDULES FILE # 195. An annotated bibliography and collection of articles providing an overview and general understanding of professional information and thinking about school schedules. Educational Research Service 2000  
Clarendon Boulevard Arlington, VA 22201 (703) 243 2100 (703) 243 1985 FAX

Fleming, Douglas S. "What To Look for in a Block-Scheduled Classroom," School Strategies & Options Lunenburg, MA 01462 (508) 582 4217 (508) 582 7925 FAX E-MAIL:  
dfleming@tiac.net

Sturgis, Jeffrey "Block Scheduling and Student Achievement" University of Maine College of Education Occasional Paper Series No. 20 May 15, 1995 - a review of six studies on the effects of block scheduling on student achievement

## PERSON-TO-PERSON CONNECTIONS

Dr. Robert Lynn Canady Department of Education Leadership & Policy Studies Curry  
School of Education, 405 Emmet Street South University of Virginia Charlottesville, VA  
22903-2495 (804) 924 0861 (804) 924 0747 FAX

Michael D. Rettig School of Education James Madison University Harrisonburg, VA 22807  
rettigmd@jmu.edu

Roger Schoenstein, Latin-English Department Roy J. Wasson High School 2115 Afton Way  
Colorado Springs, CO 80909 (719) 520-2900 - WassonHS@aol.com -or- rajscho@rmii.com

Author: Unknown, ISED-L Listserv, 10/16/97