

Block Scheduling Final Report
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The block scheduling study received 229 responses from 307 agricultural education programs in Illinois. After reviewing the responses, it was determined that there were 219 usable surveys for a response rate of 71%. Ten surveys were eliminated, because of duplicated responses from the same program indicating the program was not on a block schedule. Seventy-eight responses (35%) of 219 usable responses indicated that they were currently using block scheduling within their school system. The most popular block scheduling system among respondents was the eight-block schedule (A & B days) as well as several modified versions of the eight-block schedule.

The on-block respondents were asked the question if they were in support of the concept and 84% of the 25 respondents indicated they supported block scheduling. The most popular response for this support was that block scheduling allowed for more lab activities/hands on experiences. The second most popular response in support of block scheduling was the flexibility in class schedules making it easier for electives. The biggest negative response for non-support of block scheduling was the communication barrier. Teachers indicated that they had trouble communicating with all of their students on a daily basis.

There were 39 non-block respondents (28%) who indicated that their school was considering block scheduling in the future and 99 non-block respondents (72%) indicated that their school was going to remain on a traditional scheduling system. However, when the non-block respondents were asked if they were in support of block scheduling, 86 (67%) indicated that they would support the scheduling change and 42 (33%) would not. The popular responses for the support of block scheduling were more time for lab opportunities, more students in agriculture classes, and more time on task. The popular responses for non-support were couldn't see the students on a daily basis, causes problems with FFA, hard to prepare for CDE's, and too long for classroom work.

The schools, which adopted block scheduling, tend to reside in smaller towns. Respondents were asked the town size in which their school resided. A one represented a town size of 2,500 or less, a two represented a town size of 2,501 to 10,000, a three represented a town size of 10,001 to 25,000, a four represented a town size 25,001 to 50,000, and a five represented a town size of 50,000 plus. The average town size for schools utilizing block scheduling was 1.46 and the average town size not utilizing block scheduling was 1.82. This is an indication that smaller schools are utilizing block scheduling more to compensate for the increase in high school graduation requirements. The concept of block scheduling is to increase course offerings, lower class sizes, better utilization of staff, and decrease daily class preparations. All of these factors can occur with the adoption of block scheduling within similar financial parameters.

District comparisons can be made as well. Table 1 outlines the frequency of the utilization of block scheduling in each district. The greatest adoption rate of block scheduling among districts has occurred in District 1 according to the respondents. Twenty-nine percent of the on-block respondents indicated they were from District 1 whereas only 9 percent of the on-block respondents were from District 5, which was the lowest adoption rate. Table 2 outlines by district the frequency and percentage of schools considering block scheduling and support levels for block scheduling. District 1 has the greatest percentage (35%) of schools considering implementing block scheduling, while District 3 has the lowest percentage (17%) of schools considering the implementation of block scheduling. District 4 and District 2 has the greatest percentage (76% & 75% respectively) of support for block scheduling, while District 5 has the lowest percentage (56%) of support for block scheduling.

When the data was analyzed, respondents were categorized by teaching experience. Teachers were broken down into three groups based upon teaching experience. These three groups were 1-10 years of teaching experience, 11-20 of teaching experience, and 21 plus years of teaching experience. Teachers were also broken down into the districts. There were four significant variables when analyzed by teaching experience. They were covering more subject matter, using multiple methods of presentation, more integration of subject matter, and FFA viewed more positively as a co-curricular of the agricultural program as outlined on Table 3.

Teachers with 11-21 years of experience tended to agree that block scheduling helped them cover more subject matter, while teachers with 21 plus years of teaching experience tended to disagree. Teachers

with 1-10 years of teaching experience were neutral on the subject. Teachers with 11-20 years of teaching experience strongly agreed that block scheduling allowed them to use multiple teaching presentations, while teachers with 21 plus years of teaching experience tended to just agree. Teachers with 1-10 years of teaching experience were in the middle. Teachers with 11-20 years of teaching experience were in stronger agreement that block scheduling helped integration of subject matter, while teachers with 21 plus years of teaching experience tended to have less agreement. Teachers with 1-10 years of teaching experience tended to be in the middle. Teachers with 11-20 years of teaching experience tended to agree that block scheduling helped in FFA being more positively viewed as a co-curricular component of the agricultural program, while teachers with 1-10 years of teaching experience tended to be more neutral. Teachers with 21 plus years of teaching experience were in the middle.

When the teachers were categorized by districts, significant differences were also found as outlined in Table 4. Differences were found in building a better rapport with students, multiple presentations, preparing for CDE's, and more time for recordkeeping. Teachers in District 3 agreed that block scheduling helped in building a better rapport with students, while teachers in Districts 2, 4, and 5 were more neutral in their responses. Teachers in District 1 were in the middle. Teachers in Districts 1, 3, and 5 were in strong agreement that block scheduling helped in multiple methods of presentation, while teachers in District 4 tended to just agree. Teachers in District 2 were in the middle. Teachers in Districts 1 and 3 were in agreement that block scheduling helped in preparing for CDE's, while teachers in Districts 4 and 5 tended to be more neutral. Teachers in District 2 were in the middle. Teachers in District 3 agreed that block scheduling helped in finding more time for recordkeeping, while teachers in Districts 1, 2, 4, and 5 tended to be more neutral.

Teachers were also asked to elaborate on their responses through three open-ended questions. The most popular responses for "What do you like most about block scheduling?" were: more time for class, labs, and/or field trips; more time for preparation and planning; and depth of information is much deeper. The most popular responses for "What do you like least about block scheduling?" were: not seeing the same students everyday; students miss a lot if they miss one day; nothing; and student attention span too short. Finally, the most popular responses for "If block scheduling is better, then why is it better?" were: increased class/lab/shop time; students can focus on fewer subjects per day; allows for more teaching techniques; and more time spent together with students.

Overall, teachers were in general agreement that block scheduling helped their programs on a majority of the variables. They especially thought that block scheduling helped the most in the area of classroom instruction. Teachers were generally well receptive and supportive to the implementation of block scheduling.

Table 1 Respondent Demographics

Block Respondents		Non-Block Respondents	
District	Frequency	District	Frequency
1	29%	1	14%
2	23%	2	24%
3	21%	3	19%
4	18%	4	23%
5	9%	5	20%
Totals	100% (N=78)		100% (N=142)

Table 2 Considering & Supporting Block Scheduling (Non-Block Respondents)

School Considering Block Scheduling				Do You Support Block Scheduling			
District	Yes	No	% Yes	District	Yes	No	% Yes
1	7	13	35%	1	11	7	61%
2	9	24	27%	2	24	8	75%
3	4	20	17%	3	13	9	58%
4	9	23	28%	4	22	7	76%
5	8	19	30%	5	14	11	56%
Totals	37	99	27%		84	42	67%

**Note: Some respondents did not identify their district, resulting in their exclusion from this table.

Table 3 Significant Differences When Compared by Teaching Experience at .05 Alpha Level

Variable	Teaching Group	Mean	Significance
Cover more subject matter	1-10 years of experience (N=39)	.02	In Middle
	11-20 years of experience (N=20)	.50	* Positive Neutral
	21 + years of experience (N=19)	-.63	* Negative Neutral
Using multiple teaching methods	1-10 years of experience (N=39)	1.51	In Middle
	11-20 years of experience (N=20)	1.85	* Strongly Agree
	21 + years of experience (N=19)	1.47	* Agree
Integration of subject matter	1-10 years of experience (N=39)	.87	In Middle
	11-20 years of experience (N=20)	1.30	* Agree
	21 + years of experience (N=19)	.63	* Positive Neutral
FFA co-curricular component more positively viewed	1-10 years of experience (N=39)	.44	* Neutral
	11-20 years of experience (N=20)	1.00	* Agree
	21 + years of experience (N=19)	.58	In Middle

Table 4 Significant Differences When Compared by Districts at .05 Alpha Level

Variable	District	Mean	Significance
Building a better student rapport	District 1 (N=23)	.78	In Middle
	District 2 (N=18)	.05	* Positive Neutral
	District 3 (N=16)	1.06	* Agree
	District 4 (N=14)	.07	* Positive Neutral
	District 5 (N=7)	.43	* Positive Neutral
Using multiple teaching methods	District 1 (N=23)	1.74	* Strongly Agree
	District 2 (N=18)	1.61	In Middle
	District 3 (N=16)	1.69	* Strongly Agree
	District 4 (N=14)	1.07	* Agree
	District 5 (N=7)	1.86	* Strongly Agree
More time to prepare for CDE's	District 1 (N=23)	.74	* Agree
	District 2 (N=18)	.05	In Middle
	District 3 (N=16)	.94	* Agree
	District 4 (N=14)	-.14	* Negative Neutral
	District 5 (N=7)	-.14	* Negative Neutral
More time for recordkeeping	District 1 (N=23)	.52	* Positive Neutral
	District 2 (N=18)	.22	* Positive Neutral
	District 3 (N=16)	1.31	* Agree
	District 4 (N=14)	.29	* Positive Neutral
	District 5 (N=7)	.14	* Positive Neutral