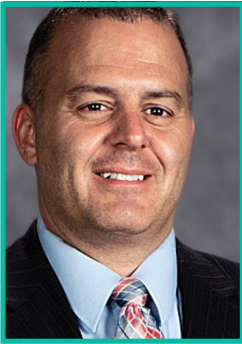


# How a High School on Block Scheduling Can Help Solve Staff Shortages

By Dr. Jason E. Pappas



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The shortage of staff in high schools is a common problem across the United States. The reasons for this shortage vary, including budget constraints, teacher burnout, and a decline in the number of people entering the teaching profession. The result is often overcrowded classrooms, overworked teachers, and decreased student engagement. One solution to this problem that has gained popularity is block scheduling.

At Frazier High School, block scheduling is a system where students have longer class periods but attend fewer classes per day. This schedule involves students taking four classes each semester, with each class meeting for 79 minutes per day. This type of scheduling has been shown to have several benefits, including increased student engagement, better student-teacher relationships, and improved academic performance (Canady & Rettig, 2008).

One of the most significant benefits of block scheduling is how it can help solve staff shortages. With fewer classes per day, teachers can teach more students, reducing the number of teachers needed to cover all classes. This allows schools to operate with fewer teachers, which can save money and help avoid teacher burnout. Furthermore, with fewer classes, teachers can have more time for planning, grading, and professional development.

Another advantage of block scheduling is that it allows for more collaboration between teachers. With longer class periods, there is more time for teachers to work together and plan interdisciplinary projects. This can lead to increased teacher satisfaction and better student outcomes (Casper, 2004).

While block scheduling has many benefits, it is not without its challenges. One of the most significant challenges is that it requires a significant shift in teaching strategies. Teachers need to be prepared to teach longer lessons and find ways to keep students engaged for extended periods. Additionally, students may struggle with the longer class periods and need support to adjust to the new schedule.

Despite these challenges, many schools have found success with block scheduling. For example, a study of a high school in Texas found that block scheduling improved attendance rates, reduced discipline issues, and increased student engagement (Holmes, 2015). Finally, Reams and Bradshaw (2009) found that block scheduling led to increased collaboration among teachers and improved student performance on standardized tests.

In conclusion, the shortage of staff in high schools is a challenging problem that has several negative consequences for students and teachers. Block scheduling is one potential solution that has gained popularity in recent years. With longer class periods and fewer classes per day, block scheduling can help schools operate with fewer teachers, reduce teacher burnout, and improve student outcomes. While it is not without its challenges, Frazier High School has found success with block scheduling, making it a potential solution for schools facing staff shortages.

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