

EDITORIAL

BUILD BLOCK SCHEDULE BACK BETTER

The new block schedule has been quite the hot topic among students and teachers alike this year. The majority of the conversation greatly criticizes the implementation. When asked about the schedule and their desires for improvements, students practically jump out of their seats to voice their opinions. And it's clear many students, as well as teachers, feel the block schedule diminishes the learning process.

First, let's talk about the obvious. A 90-minute period is absolutely too long. It's draining. It's exhausting. It's painful. There are inconsistencies in how time is being used to best benefit students. Sometimes you hear a 90-minute lecture, while other days are spent staring at your computer screen until your eyes bleed. There is little-to-no balance of work and it affects the retention of information. According to allconnect at Harvard University, "Modern best practices strongly suggest limiting the length of a lecture to 15-20 minutes, or breaking up a longer lecture with hands-on activities, as research shows that 20 minutes is about as long as humans can maintain their attention on one source of information."

If the lengthy block periods aren't going to go away, we at least need lessons that will actually benefit our learning and accommodate our needs as students. The schedule, biologically, is not working for the majority of staff or students.

Aside from learning in the long classes being difficult, it's a daily battle just to stay awake. Sitting and working for that long is an incredibly exhausting task. The lack of breaks is killing students' ability to focus and participate. Teachers complain about a lack of students who want to speak up and share ideas or answer questions, but how can you blame them when they've arrived in their fourth-period class after already sitting through three 90 minute lectures?

Another issue with such class periods, is that when

students are absent they miss so much more than they did with the previous schedule. It's almost the equivalent of missing two class periods and there is an insane amount of make-up work. This is especially concerning, as we continue to be in the grips of a global pandemic and coming to school sick is highly discouraged.

Assistant Principal Ryan Miwa, says informal talks with staff and students show some people love the block schedule, while others are having a hard time with it. On the positive side, he says, it has lowered the number of classes for some students and that it can provide teachers with more flexibility. But he concedes figuring out ways to promote breaks during long periods of time has been a challenge.

"In education, we always look at continual improvement," Miwa says. "I think that that's one of the things that we want to do: try to make our schedule better not only for students, but for our staff as well. So there may be some tweaks next year. We're in the process of having those discussions."

The complaint heard most often throughout the halls and classrooms is that students really don't feel heard or that their concerns are being taken into consideration. Administrators do collaborate with staff and students, but in the end, it just feels like lip service. The decisions being made seem to be more convenient for the people implementing the schedule than for the students. If the administration is going to continuously send out the message that the schedule is what works best for everyone, then they should actually listen to and enact the changes students are calling for. It's a very defeating feeling for students when they feel their needs and wants are not being respected; because after all it is their education at stake. Credit convenience and other technical factors should not come before the learning itself.

This editorial represents the views of the majority of The Herald staff. Do you have any opinions about the editorial? Feel free to email us at ahsjournalism@lpsk12.org