

**WAYNESBORO AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT  
Waynesboro, PA 17268**

The Waynesboro Area Board of School Directors held a special meeting to discuss block scheduling on Tuesday, November 16, 2010, at 5:30 PM, prevailing time, in the board room, 210 Clayton Avenue, Waynesboro, PA.

The following board members were present: Edward Wilson, Pat Heefner, Bonnie Bachtell, Chris Lind, Firmadge Crutchfield, Billie Finn, Marilyn Smith, and Sherry Cline (telephonically). Leland Lemley was absent. Others present were: James Robertson, superintendent; Evan Williams, assistant superintendent; Bobbi Trostle, recording secretary; Tyler Bowders, student representative, and Stephanie Harbaugh, Record Herald.

The block scheduling committee consisted of Darwin Seiler (Social Studies), Concetta Maryjanowski (English), Sandy Beaumont (Health/Phys. Ed.), Kelly Dietrich (Foreign Languages), John McCann (Science), Caroline Tassone (Business), Valerie D'Amico (Mathematics), and Karen Papouschek (Art).

Mr. Wilson said the board wants to insure that students are getting a quality education and they aren't sure if block scheduling is the way to go and asked for teacher input.

Darwin Seiler said that he was opposed to the change at first. He felt that the process that was entered into was flawed and the teachers were not told the whole story. However, he is a convert. Talking points for the block include more instructional time, more transition time, students can internalize more, more in-depth activities, and less disciplinary issues. He said there is no disconnect. Last year he took his students on walking tours of Waynesboro to learn more about local history and to appreciate it more, which could not be done in a traditional schedule. He reminded the board that if they go back to a traditional schedule, there would be a concern about the cost of additional textbooks.

Concetta Maryjanowski said she is not a proponent of block scheduling. She said there are valid points, but there are also negatives, such as more discipline problems. She said the block allows more flexibility and students can take more courses, but doesn't allow her to cover all the necessary coursework in a school year. She stated that when the block was started, teachers were not given what they were promised. She said it is hard to judge about testing.

Sandy Beaumont said if the district would go back to a traditional schedule, the phys. ed. department would lose the fitness portion of the classes. She said there are not enough lockers to accommodate for the whole year and there would be an issue of sharing. In the block, students can take more classes and there are more early-to-college opportunities. She said in the block, there is more flexibility with schedules. Teachers are being pushed for more and more activities; in the block you can do that. There is less instructional time lost, less discipline problems, a lower dropout rate, and lower failure rate. She said she would like to see the data of why it should be changed.

Kelly Dietrich said she enjoys teaching in the block format, but she doesn't cover all the material that is required. She said we are a full year behind in languages than other districts working on a traditional schedule. She said certain students going to college are not testing as high as they should be. Students cannot retain words, so she spends double the amount of time on material. She said students will take a level one language the beginning of the year and sometimes not get the second level until the following year. She said this impacts the students because of the retention level.

John McCann said he was very much opposed to the block since a lot of science material was cut out, but says that students do better on tests when actively engaged. He has a lot more students taking physics than ever before. If you go back to traditional, you will take out AP programs in the science department. In order to maintain the AP programs, you need a full block for the entire year. He said he doesn't like it, but it's better for the students and they do very well. He said he is a walking contradiction.

Caroline Tassone said that on a personal note, she teaches individuals. Block scheduling makes a big difference. In order to reach a student, you need to reach the person. She said that as a teacher she is able to teach a student more quickly in the block. Students can take the material and use for the rest of their lives. She said the one thing she's learned - you can't hold a student's interest for 82 minutes, so she does different activities in one block, which addresses the different learning styles. With longer periods, you can reach the different types of learners.

Valerie D'Amico said that under traditional scheduling, she taught 150-170 students per day (another district). In the block, she is teaching 50-60 students per day (WASD). She said it took a lot longer in traditional to know the students' math abilities. In the block, she knows their abilities in a couple of weeks. Under traditional, she did not have time to assist students within the class time; you only had time to teach the lesson. With block, you have built-in time to help students. She said immediate feedback is extremely important. In the traditional setting, it took a couple of days to grade papers. With block, students get papers back the next day and see what they didn't understand. In the block, students are ready to take tests and are able to complete homework assignments. There is plenty of guided practice.

Karen Papouchek said in the traditional, you had a 45-minute class (maybe). It would take five minutes plus to get materials together, and projects took much longer to complete. Under the block you have time to get supplies out, 60 minutes for projects, and clean up time. In traditional, you can't take AP art classes. In the block, she's had the opportunity to add enrichment classes, such as crafts and 3-D design. She wants to continue with the block scheduling system.

Mr. Robertson said he had several questions for the committee.

1. How has your teaching style changed as a result of block scheduling?

Mr. Seiler said it gives him the opportunity to keep students engaged – more flexibility. There is more in-depth teaching and can examine different avenues. Mr. McCann said in the block, you can do the recommended labs. He said the block is extremely important to keep because of AP programs. Ms. Maryjanowski said she supports the AP programs, but the regular classes need to be addressed also. Mr. Seiler said he thought students in regular classes do better in the block. Ms. D'Amico said that in traditional, she would have to refresh each day. She said the block is good for continuity for lessons. She is very relaxed teaching in the block. Mrs. Beaumont said you get to know the students in the block.

Mr. Lemley arrived at 6:18 PM.

2. What difference do you see in students in block scheduling as opposed to traditional scheduling in terms of:
- a. Behavior
  - b. Academic Achievement
  - c. Attention Span
  - d. Attitude towards school

Mrs. Tassone said she varies her teaching style and that regular students need a varied approach. She surveyed three classes to see what their preference was. Only one student didn't like the block. Most of the students said they can focus better in the block. Mrs. D'Amico talked with her students and they like the block. They also liked the feel of the class – more relaxed and they got to know the teacher better. She said she had no negative comments. Ms. Dietrich said there is more saturation (brain needs time to process) and that she doesn't have process time. Mrs. Beaumont said she has more time with lower level students and thought that these students are doing better academically. Mrs. Papouschek said there is no time in traditional. In the block you can talk with every student, every day and get to know them and visa-versa. There are more group activities and students are more accepting of other students. Ms. Maryjanowski said it is a sign of the times (attention span) and that it has nothing to do with the setting.

3. How has block scheduling affected the amount of curriculum you are able to teach?

Mr. Seiler reminded everyone that when there was traditional scheduling, you didn't have PSSA testing. Ms. Dietrich said students are not getting where they should be (placement tests). Ms. Maryjanowski said you can't cover material – less time in the block minute-wise.

Mr. Lind questioned kids on the margin. Mrs. Beaumont said she has implemented a lot of new strategies. You teach differently to make them better readers. Mr. Seiler said kids learn differently and in the block you can implement modality. He said the block is more beneficial for students who are struggling. Mr. McCann we are in a state of transition from PSSAs to Keystone tests, which will be a major benefit. He said this will be breaking down what the reality is and what they will be accountable to and for. It is concentrated learning. He said he doesn't want to purchase textbooks – would rather see more lab equipment. Ms. D'Amico said you can work one-on-one with students during class time. In the traditional, students would have to come in after school for help. She reminded everyone that curriculum is constantly changing. Mr. Seiler said all of them care about the education of children and there will always be a difference of opinion. Mrs. Beaumont said the staff morale at the High School is the best she has ever seen and that Mr. Dennis is a great leader. She said this is not the right time to switch.

Mr. Crutchfield told the committee that all of them are extremely motivated and very helpful. He said he continues to hear this internal disconnect – less topics, but more intensive focus. Wanted to know if we are doing a disservice as they narrow the focus.

Mrs. Beaumont said the block blends itself. She said the major focus should be on students becoming better learners.

Meeting adjourned at 6:45 PM.

/s/ Edward Wilson, President                      SIGNED                      /s/ Patricia F. Heefner, Secretary

***Approved December 7, 2010***