

Covid-19 Bell Schedule

Dear Mr. Porcello,

Thank you for taking the time to consider our proposal addressing the new scheduling system that has resulted from COVID-19. Although some students are experiencing difficulties while adjusting to the changes, the new class schedule is something students would like to keep. In previous years, our blocks have been 90 minutes long with 45 minute elective courses including band, choir, arts and media pro. Along with other adaptations made within our school day during this pandemic, our new schedule now includes 65 minute blocks with approximately 30 minute long elective blocks. This revised schedule allows students to remain engaged for the entirety of their class block and encourage students to be involved in their learning.

According to the article, “High School Pressure: Why Students Need Shorter Days” written by the Huffington Post, students tend to lose interest while trying to control themselves during long class periods, resulting in plummeting grades. Shortened classes allow students to fit in more study time throughout the school day, alleviating after-school stress and giving students time to work, spend time with family, and participate in extracurriculars. Students would not feel as stressed when it comes to homework, tests, and completing classwork. As stated in the article, “By the time [students] are finished with the school day and their activities, there isn’t much time for them to complete homework assignments and study for exams.” With extra blocks for study time, this will give students the opportunity to work on time management and complete their work. This provides students more time outside of school for clubs, sports, work and family. With shorter class blocks, this allows students who struggle to find time outside of the school day to have sufficient time for studying and completing homework during the newly available study halls.

In addition to keeping our COVID-19 adapted schedule, we also propose to make all classes equal in length. Since elective classes are shorter than all other classes, the importance of these classes seems to be undermined. Not allowing students equal time in their arts/creative classes causes an imbalance within their day. According to Education Week, “electives classes reveal the skill sets of some students that might not be obvious in their other classes, helping them see their strengths and affording them opportunities to be of value to their classmates.” Students who are passionate about these classes should be given the same opportunity to express their passion as those who are passionate about core class subjects. Giving these students equal opportunity allows students’ self-confidence to rise while they are at school. This also doesn’t force students to take unwanted classes to fill their partnering short, or “skinny” blocks. Many students have taken classes they have no interest in just to fill the time, and may feel unmotivated in such classes.

In conclusion, some might argue that longer blocks can be beneficial to students as teachers spend more time teaching material, but this causes an overload of information in a small time span. According to the article, “Normal Attention Span Expectations By Age”, the average attention span of an average teenager is only between 32 to 48 minutes, and by having longer class blocks the attention spans of students are constantly stretched which can be detrimental to their retainment of knowledge. This causes stress, considering students will drift off in long classes and will have to attempt to re-learn loads of information on their own time. If we continue to implement shorter blocks within our high school, issues such as these can be avoided and students can partake in many more opportunities. Shorter blocks and equal-in-length elective courses at Perry High School will allow students to continue to remain engaged throughout the school day and ultimately will cause students to be more involved in their learning.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
PSL Students

Works Cited

Balance, Brain. "Normal Attention Span Expectations By Age." *Brain Balance Achievement Centers Parent Blog*, blog.brainbalancecenters.com/normal-attention-span-expectations-by-age.

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Rambo, Ernie. "Why Electives Matter." *Education Week Teacher*, 19 Feb. 2019, www.edweek.org/tm/articles/2011/04/13/tln_rambo_electives.html.