

Dear Board of Education,

We are proud to be part of Perry High School, and you should be proud of the education system that you have helped to create here. The AP courses that we are able to take and the block scheduling at Perry allows for students to accelerate to very high levels of education for a school as small as ours. This higher level of education has come at a cost for some students. Students with disabilities are often tucked away into their own classes, not seen by their typical peers outside of the hallways or some electives. Because of the 7:45 start for school, many students, including ourselves, come to school feeling exhausted, and the first block can be a wasted opportunity because students are not engaged. Rather than start so early, we suggest a 9-3 school day. A later start will give students a healthy amount of sleep, and can help student engagement in their first block classes. On the topic of block scheduling, we also have a suggestion that could greatly improve student test scores. Though some of our ideas may sound outlandish or impossible to achieve. We can promise you that these suggestions are attainable and will greatly help student test scores and mental health.

The beginning of school, 7:50am, is far too early for the average high school student to engage in learning. According to the *Natural Sleep Foundation*, an adolescent needs 8 ½ hours to 9 ¼ hours of sleep per night in order to maintain their cognitive functions during the day (Carskadon et al., 1980). Not only would a later start day help with student attention spans, but a change in how the school schedule is later out could help students as well. Rather than have a 90 minute lecture block, a 30 minute block, 10 minute break period, and another 30 minute block would greatly benefit students. This 10 minute break will give students a time to collect their thoughts and have some much needed mental rest so they can remain more engaged during their classes. A study by Karrie E. Godwin suggests that after 30 minutes, “on-task behavior declined” (Godwin, 1). Though this study was on elementary school students, the idea that students still need a break from mentally tasking classes has been shown to carry on into college, with CSUN suggesting breaks for classes over 75 minutes long. This break will help for students to rejuvenate their minds and they will be able to study harder during their class. Personally, a 90 minute lecture at the start of the day over chemistry often made me dissociate, and because I had no time to take a break, my focus declined and my notes became sporadic.

<https://www.sleepfoundation.org/articles/background-later-school-start-times>

<https://www.learningliftoff.com/an-exercise-tip-that-may-improve-test-scores/>

