

Dear Mr. Porcello,

I realize the COVID-19 pandemic has forced us to make a safer schedule, and I want to applaud your transition into this new shorter block schedule. It was very easy to understand and it has made me feel safer in class, having less exposure to other students. However, when we come to the point where COVID-19 is no longer the main concern on everyone's minds, I feel we should resume our 80-90 minute block schedule. While making small adjustments to lengthen ICE. This will reduce stress for both the students and the teachers by slowing down the pace of school. Lengthening ICE will allow the school to explore activities that we couldn't do with our previous 17 minute ICE.

One drawback of the 60 minute classes is losing about a whole class period worth of time every week, and that adds up. A lot of teachers have scheduled their classes to fit into 80 minute blocks. My financial management teacher Mr. Sarvis, for example, is several lessons behind because of the time we lost. He mentioned cutting out lessons and projects so he doesn't have to rush the most important topics. The sudden change in time is a big adjustment for teachers, and it puts a lot of stress on them.

Another program that was heavily impacted by the change was the Art department. As a student taking A.P. Studio Art, I can rightfully say time is valuable. I am responsible for producing 15 different works of art by May 20, which puts a lot of stress on me to keep moving in that class. Having 60 minutes to work including setup and clean up, gives me less than 50 minutes a day to work. Changing class time from about 85 to 50 minutes and increasing my workload, puts a lot of stress on me which can affect the quality of art I create.

Denise Pope, a senior lecturer at The Stanford Graduate School of Education, believes a block schedule with 80 minute classes helps relieve stress on students. She also believes it can improve the quality of teaching because the pace of the classes is slower, and it allows the teachers to go more in depth in their lessons.

Admittedly, classes like PSL seem to benefit from the 60 minute classes because that class fits better in the time frame. In the five classes I currently have this semester, PSL seems to be the only one benefits from the time change. In some classes, the main struggle is test days because it is difficult to finish in the given time frame. I've had to stay after class or take the test over two class periods to finish it. It's mostly due to having to take tests that were previously made for an 80-90 minute class in 60 minutes.

I feel the pandemic gave us a chance to fix at least one problem of the original block schedule which is ICE. The past two years ICE was 17 minutes long. If you actually needed to get work done it was too short. Since we have these huge 80-90 minute classes, I suggest we take 2-3 minutes from each block and add it to ICE which would make it 25-30 minutes long. If we want to keep the open campus aspect of this year, we will need a longer ICE. It could also actually benefit students who need it instead of just being a short little break. We could also use it for more assemblies or short pep rallies to help with school spirit. Maybe, we could even have

a talent show, just for fun. I am confident that these changes are small enough not to throw off any other activities while still improving the quality of ICE.

In conclusion, I feel we should go back to our old schedule with slight adjustments to help ease stress and create a more productive ICE. As a student myself, I believe these changes will benefit the future classes of Perry High School.

Thank you for your consideration.

Work Cited

Walker, T. (2016, April 3). Are Block Schedules the Stress-Buster Students Need?
Retrieved November 18, 2020, from
<https://www.nea.org/advocating-for-change/new-from-nea/are-block-schedules-stress-buster-students-need>