

Exploring the Absenteeism and Tardiness Rates Between
the Traditional and Block Schedule at Shelton High
School

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Nathan Grygorcewicz

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FACULTY APPROVAL

Exploring the Absenteeism and Tardiness Rates Between
the Traditional and Block Schedule at Shelton High
School

Approved for the Faculty

_____, Faculty Advisor

ABSTRACT

The researcher investigated the effect of schedule changes in regards to school attendance at Shelton High School. In the 2005-2006 school year Shelton High School operated on a four period trimester block schedule. In the 2006-2007 school year Shelton High School switched to a six period semester schedule. The researcher analyzed attendance data and found that there were higher rates of absenteeism with the use of the six period schedule compared to the use of the block schedule.

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Background of the Project

The goal of public education throughout the nation's history has been modified but the key premise has remained constant. Education has always been the future of the nation's success. President George W. Bush stated, "Public schools are America's great hope, and making them work for every child is America's great duty" (Bush, 2003). The American public education system has thrived in many areas throughout the years. There have also been many areas that were restructured and thoroughly examined to maintain growth and continued success. The goal has remained clear but the direction to maintain the goal has changed.

Public education has been a central focal point ensuring success in American society. "The success and survival of public education is essential to the success and survival of democracy and civil society in America. In fact, just as American democracy created

public schools, one could say public schools have created America's democracy" (Puriefoy, 2004). Public schooling has changed and will continue to change. Problems that have perplexed educators, ensuring student and school success, continue to develop. However, those problems do not complicate the simplicity of the main goal of the public education system. One of the world's most successful businessmen stated, "We need to ensure that all our kids are ready for school, ready for college, and ready for work. That should be our vision" (B. Gates, public presentation, November 23, 2006).

The goal for public education has remained clear and simple. Obstacles in education have been evident and linger on in the educational path. The Secretary of Education, Margaret Spellings, raised a growing concern about high school dropouts. Spellings noted that, "Every year approximately one million students drop out of high school, costing the nation more than \$260 billion dollars in lost wages, taxes and productivity over the students' lifetimes"

(M. Spellings, public presentation, March 30, 2006).
The Washington State Superintendent of Education, Dr. Terry Bergeson, explained that Washington loses 25 percent of students every year for different reasons (T. Bergeson, public presentation, November 17, 2005). The goal of educating America's youth to continue the success of our nation was a simple principle. Successfully educating every youth in America remained to be problematic.

Statement of the Problem

The absenteeism rates at Shelton High School have been a major concern. The reported absences and tardiness to classes needed to be examined in order to plan effective measures to curb the problem. The school changed from a block schedule used in the 2005-2006 school year to a traditional six period schedule in the 2006-2007 school year. Absenteeism and tardiness rates increased from the school year 2005-2006 to 2006-2007 school year. The increase of absenteeism and tardiness has impacted student learning.

Purpose of the Project

The purpose of this study was to investigate the effect of schedule changes in regards to school attendance at Shelton High School. The major objective was to study the differences in absenteeism and tardiness at Shelton High School using data from the 2005-2006 and 2006-2007 school years. The data collected from the 2005-2006 school year was taken while a block scheduling system was in use. The data collected from the 2006-2007 school year were taken while a traditional six period scheduling system was in use. The intention was to find out if there were any differences in absenteeism and tardiness reported between the two scheduling systems in use.

Delimitations

The study took place at Shelton High School during the 2006-2007 school year. The data used in the study incorporated absenteeism and tardiness rates of sophomores, juniors, and seniors in 2005-2006 and 2006-2007. During the 2005-2006 year a four period block schedule was used by the school. In the

2006-2007 school year a six period traditional schedule was used by the school. The data was collected using an electronic attendance system called Skyward. Absenteeism and tardiness records were compiled from the months of September through the month of March for both school years.

Assumptions

All students at Shelton High School went to school to learn and wanted to be successful. Teachers and administrators were prepared or had the resources to teach all students. Students did the best they could to be present and on time to classes. Teachers took accurate attendance daily. The Skyward attendance system accurately displayed attendance totals daily. The students and teachers adjusted to the change in scheduling.

Hypothesis

Shelton High school will see a significant difference in absenteeism and tardiness reporting. There will be a significant difference from the 2005-2006 school year using the four period block schedule

compared to the 2006-2007 school year using the six period schedule.

Significance of the Project

Shelton High school has seen a dramatic rise of attendance issues. Over the past year student attendance has decreased. Students needed to be on time and in their classes to be successful. Students that were in class were learning and students that were absent from class were not learning. The high school recently changed the scheduling system from a block to a traditional schedule. Absenteeism and tardiness continued to be an ongoing problem. The study of the two scheduling systems in relation to student attendance gave an understanding of attendance patterns. The study also showed the differences in attendance rates in relation to the different schedules.

Procedure

The study took place at Shelton High School during the 2006-2007 school year. The Skyward attendance system was used to gather absenteeism and

tardiness numbers during the months of September through March. The numbers representing absenteeism and tardiness were collected for the 2005-2006 and 2006-2007 school years. The data were then compared for each month of each year in regards to student absenteeism and tardiness. Graphs were constructed to show the difference in absenteeism and tardiness percentages for each month. The data were used to show differences in attendance in relation to the scheduling system used for each school year.

Definition of Terms

Skyward. An electronic attendance system used by Shelton High School to record absences and tardiness for classes.

truancy. An unexcused absence from school for no legitimate reason.

CHAPTER 2

Review of Selected Literature

Introduction

The public schooling system has always wanted the most successful learning environment for students. However, schools dealt with many obstacles that interfered with student success. Throughout the history of the school system, schools dealt with many issues that impacted success. The issues that interfered with the success of schools were numerous. The selected literature reviewed for this study focused on the impact of absenteeism, scheduling, and school climate related to school success.

Absenteeism

Schools always have addressed the problem of students being absent. Students were absent from school for a variety of reasons. Those absences were defined into two categories. The categories included excused absences and unexcused or truant absences. Excused absences were defined as absences that had a legitimate reason. Truancy or unexcused absences were

defined as absences that had no legitimate reason (Reid, 2005, p.60). Regardless of the type of absence from school, schools addressed the impact and consequences of the issue. "It has been estimated that an average of 6% of students in public high schools are absent on a typical school day" (Lounsbury, Steel, Loveland, Gibson, 2004, p.457). School absences were found to impact achievement levels, funding by state and federal agencies, risks for dropout, teacher preparation, and the effects on all student learning (Smink & Reimer, 2005, p.5).

Academic success was correlated to student attendance. Students that were chronically absent or tardy to classes were more likely to struggle academically and score lower on standardized tests (Cash & Duttweiler, 2005, p.7). Several factors caused students to be absent or tardy to school classes. The main causes attributed to absenteeism were the influence of friends or peers, relations with teachers, content of classes, family aspects, bullying, and learning disabilities

(Reid, 2005, p.61). Students that missed class, regardless of the reason, lost the opportunity to gain skills and knowledge needed to be academically successful.

The dropout rate for students in public schools that did not receive any high school credentials was ten percent in 2004 (U.S. Department of Education, 2006). Students that were chronically absent from school had a greater chance of becoming a dropout statistic (Martin, Tobin, Sugai, 2002, p.11). Schools faced accountability consequences for increased absenteeism, graduation, and drop rates. The No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act and funding by state and federal agencies had effects on schools with those issues (Black, 2006, p.47). Schools needed to investigate and research better ways to curb absenteeism.

Absenteeism was a problem in the public education system. Schools had to identify what ways were appropriate to start to solve the problem. One study suggested that personality traits had a direct

relation to school absenteeism. The study concluded there was a correlation between personality traits in four aspects that related to absenteeism. Those four areas included aggression, optimism, tough-mindedness, and work drive. Students that were less aggressive, had a more positive outlook on school, dealt well with adversity, and had a solid work ethic were more likely to be present and successful in school (Lounsbury et al, 2004, p.459). Schools took that information into consideration and more easily identified students that were more at risk to miss classes.

Schools had different approaches trying to eliminate chronic absenteeism and tardiness to classes. Some schools tried to help those students that were typically absent from school through intervention programs (Reid, 2005, p.61). Many of those intervention programs were universally used. Those programs included student advisory programs, extracurricular programs, and school to work programs (Martin et al, 2002, p.13). Increased enforcement of school policies, changing state laws regarding truancy

and accountability for parents was approached by many schools (Christie, 2006, p.486). Schools used those programs or interventions but were most successful addressing students individually to best meet their needs. Schools used individual plans for students that include behavior change programs, tutoring, teacher advocates, partnerships with businesses, truancy court advocates, and counseling for students and parents (Martin et al, 2002, p.14).

School absenteeism was not a simple problem. Absenteeism had continued to be a major problem in public schools. Schools had used prevention and intervention programs to help curb the situation. Many schools had experienced success controlling absenteeism but many had also continued to struggle. Schools had different situations and circumstances relating to absenteeism. However, evidence had suggested that all circumstances relating to absenteeism must be effectively addressed to assure academic success for students.

Scheduling

Schools had used many different schedules to try and maximize student learning and achievement. Different studies had suggested the benefits for using types of schedules for schools to be successful. Some schools had used traditional single period schedules and others had used non traditional block scheduling. Regardless of the type a schedule a school had used, the main aim was to find a schedule that benefited both staff and students. Successful schools had used schedules that allow more time for instruction (Billig, 2005, p.8). The great debate had always been what schedule provided that opportunity.

The beginning of the twentieth century was an exciting and troublesome time for American high schools. Throughout the country enrollment rates in high schools were rising and schools started to expand. The expansion of high schools and the greater number of students resulted in more possible college recruits. As college applicants rose, the need for

evaluating high school programs and structure arrived (Shedd, 2003, p.6).

The increasing enrollment numbers in high schools and potential college applicants, created the need for standard measurements. The establishment of national standards for high schools was the first immediate measure taken to ensure students were receiving adequate preparation for college. Standardizing high school curricula ensured that students would study subjects in the same manner (Holcomb, 2006). The development of the Carnegie unit was another measure that helped with equity in high schools. The Carnegie unit used time based references to measure educational attainment (Shedd, 2003, p.7). The unit required students in high schools to have at least 120 hours of contact time with their teacher throughout the year in the subject area. Standardizing curriculum and the development of the Carnegie unit established common high school practices and helped admission policies for colleges (Shedd, 2003, p.8).

School scheduling was established using the Carnegie unit principle. The most common school schedule that was used by schools was referred to as a traditional schedule. A traditional schedule may not be the same for every school but it did contain the same components. A traditional schedule usually had six to eight periods during a school day that averaged about 45-60 minutes in length. The traditional schedule usually followed a trimester or semester system and aimed at allowing students to have multiple classes throughout the day in a shorter period of time. Issues associated with the traditional schedule included discipline problems, truancy, and low academic performance (Childers & Ireland, 2005, p.47).

Over the years schedules had changed in schools just as curriculum changed aimed at reaching higher student achievement. Schools explored different schedules that went away from the six period 60 minute traditional schedule derived from the Carnegie unit (Shedd, 2003, p.9). New non traditional schedules aimed at reducing discipline problems and truancy,

improving achievement scores, promote smaller learning environments, and reduce stress for teachers and students. The implementation of non traditional schedules were also used by schools to provide teachers more time to incorporate student activities, reduce student numbers in classes, and increase graduation rates (Zepeda & Mayers, 2006, p.142).

There were many studies that had concluded similar findings relating to the use of non traditional block scheduling. A study by Evans, Tokarczyk, Rice, and McCray showed schools that utilized the block schedule had fewer discipline problems, truancies, tardiness to classes, allowed more time for teachers to work individually with students, and students focused more because they had fewer classes (Evans et al, 2002, p.321). However, the study by Evans also revealed that using the block schedule had concerning issues. The non traditional schedule allowed for fewer class options for students. Many teachers had the inability to fully engage students for an extended period of time. Students had

more difficulty catching up if they were absent from class. There were also inconsistent results regarding academic achievement on standardized tests (Zepeda & Mayers, 2006, p.144). Another study found that class sizes were not any smaller, climate sometimes deteriorated overtime, and academic pacing was a problem (Lewis, Dugan, Winokur, Cobb, 2005, p.75).

The changes schools made with scheduling had to be taken into consideration. There were different variables that related to the outcomes for schedules. The traditional schedule provided more opportunity for discipline problems, absenteeism and tardiness. Curriculum and teaching strategies had to be included in student achievement equations and research could be found to support all types of schedules (Rettig & Canady, 2003, p.30). While schools continued using traditional or non traditional scheduling models, many schools adopted mixed practices of both.

Schools wanted to find the ideal schedule for their students, staff, and parents. Finding that ideal schedule involved using practices from both

traditional and non traditional schedules. According to Ron Veldman, "Good instructional strategies are effective in any type of schedule" (Veldman, 2002). Schools had to find ways to effectively reach the needs of their populations. All classes did not need extended time for students. Schools used mixed schedules that blocked some classes while maintaining a traditional schedule feeling. The results varied among different schools using the mixed practice (Childers & Ireland, 2005, p.48). The main indicators attributed with a schools' success in scheduling related to proper planning and preparation, clear communication, and clear goals (Rettig & Canady, 2003, p.33).

School Climate

Successful schools had qualities that were more than high standardized test scores. Schools that were successful possessed qualities that could not be tested but were easily observed. Those observations had common traits associated with the schools. The climate of a school had an influence on attendance,

discipline, expectations, and culture. Schools that had a good school climate had fewer issues with discipline, lower truancy rates, higher expectations, and higher morale of students and staff (Billig, 2005, p.7).

Schools set clear standards and expectations for all students. Attendance policies were well defined and set clear standards with high expectations for students. The attendance policies were understood by all staff and students. The policies aimed at changing behaviors that were attributed to absenteeism. There were clear tracking systems for attendance and record keeping. The most important factor was effective communication protocol for contacting parents regarding absenteeism (Smink & Reimer, 2005, p.10-11).

Schools that had successful climates had many intervention programs to help students. Schools used those interventions to help struggling students before major problems occurred. Family involvement was a key intervention schools used. Families of students were

encouraged to be part of their students' learning and involved in decision making. Schools developed mentoring programs to support students. Many schools incorporated student advisories to help students with emotional, personal, and academic support (Smink & Reimer, 2005, p.12). Many schools emphasized accountability and developed different ways to assess struggling students (Billig, 2005, p.8). According to Dr. William Glasser, "students are more likely to be successful at school if they feel teachers care and respect them" (Nelson, 2002, p.94). Teachers were given opportunities to develop new ways to reach out to struggling students and make connections.

School climate was also a result of quality teaching. Teachers were well prepared and managed their classrooms with efficiency and clear expectations (Skiba & Petersen, 2003, p.67). Teachers were supported and felt appreciated by the administration. Teachers were empowered and part of the decision making process in the school (Vail, 2005, p.8). Professional development opportunities were

made available to all staff. Teachers worked collaboratively with one another and made efforts to increase student achievement (Kent, 2004, p.428). Schools were more successful retaining students who wanted to be at school. Drop out rates were significantly lower in schools where students felt appreciated and respected (Hoff, 2007, p.6). School climate had a direct result on the success of schools.

Effective leadership was a key factor for successful schools. Administrators set the tone for their schools. These leaders were responsible for showing respect to students and staff, fairness, support, and setting challenging but reachable goals (Beckerman, 2005, p.44). Leaders were not just administrators. Successful schools had all take leadership roles. Effective leaders showed concern for students, staff, and the school community (Whitaker, 2004, p. 20). Committed students and staff were effective achieving an environment that fostered success. Dr. William Glasser observed that the success of a school derived from the simple belief

that all students could be successful. Students that felt they were cared about and could be successful created a stronger school community. The results were more students succeeded, less discipline problems, and lower absentee rates because students loved their school (Nelson, 2002, p.95).

Summary

Schools had to address many issues to achieve success. Students needed to be at school and in class in order to learn. Different approaches were used to curb absenteeism and keep students in class. Schools explored different ways to set their schedules. The schedule a school used depended upon their situations. Schedules had to fit the school and work for the students and staff. School climate had been a significant factor related to school success. Thriving schools were not just defined by scores on tests. However, quality schools had climates that promoted student achievement. Those climates had well defined policies that helped students understand clear expectations. Schools experienced fewer problems with

absenteeism, issues with discipline, and higher school morale. The public schooling system has always had imperfections but schools found ways to address these problems.

Chapter 3

Methodology and Treatment of Data

Introduction

The purpose of the study was to investigate the effects of schedule changes in regards to school attendance at Shelton High School. Shelton High School revamped the daily operational schedule. During the 2005-2006 school year, the high school operated under a four period block trimester schedule. During the 2006-2007 school year, the school changed to a six period day and a semester schedule. Absenteeism was a concern for the two schedules.

The researcher examined attendance records to find out if absenteeism rates changed using the separate schedules. The Skyward attendance system was used to gather absenteeism and tardiness rates from the months of September to March during the 2005-2006 and 2006-2007 school years.

Methodology

The researcher used a descriptive study to examine the absenteeism concerns at Shelton High

School. The researcher used attendance data from the 2005-2006 school year and the 2006-2007 school year. The study used self-report research to collect data used to find a relationship between absenteeism and schedules.

Participants

The students during the 2005-2006 and 2006-2007 school year were the participants of the study. The population consisted of 1,186 students in 2005-2006 and 1,216 students in 2006-2007 in grades 10-12. In both school years the ethnic diversity remained similar. The population consisted of the following: 54% were male, 46% were female, 81.4% were Caucasian, 8% were Native American, 6.2% were Hispanic, 2.6% were Asian, and 0.6% were African American. From the student population, 32% qualified for free and reduced lunch, 9% were in special education, and 4.5% were classified as migrant students. Every student was included in the study and followed the same attendance guidelines and procedures.

Instruments

The data collected in the study were compiled using the Skyward attendance program. The attendance records of the 2005-2006 students were compared to the attendance records of the 2006-2007 students. Data retrieved from both school years were used to analyze the attendance rates in both schedules.

Both schedules had issues that dealt with reliability and validity. Under the four period day schedule, there were concerns with truancy issues throughout the system. Those concerns included: teacher attendance taking accuracy, timeliness for administrators to conference with student trancies, change of classes throughout the trimester, attendance computer program errors, and a number of various daily schedules used. Teachers had four periods a day and changed classes every three months.

Under the six period semester schedule, teachers remained with the same classes for about four months and received new classes one time. Truancy concerns were a concern using the six period day schedule.

Teachers had to maintain attendance records for five classes, take accurate attendance daily, manage computer program errors, and operate under a new schedule system. Administrators had to account for more opportunities for students to miss class and the timeliness addressing those instances. Regardless of the schedule used, teachers were mandated by state law to take accurate daily attendance.

Design

Attendance percentages were taken from the 2005-2006 school year and the 2006-2007 school year. A descriptive study was conducted using self-report to determine if a relationship existed between the different school schedules used and the absenteeism rates. The objective of the study was to find out if there were any changes in student attendance switching from a block schedule in 2005-2006 to a six period schedule in 2006-2007.

During the 2005-2006 school year, Shelton High School used a four period block schedule. Teachers took attendance for three classes each day. After 60

school days teachers received new classes. The 2006-2007 school year used a six period semester schedule. Teachers took attendance for five classes each day. After 90 school days teachers received new classes.

Students that were not present in class after ten minutes were considered absent. Students that were late to class, up to the first ten minutes, were considered tardy to class. Both schedules used these parameters for attendance procedures.

The researcher mined attendance data from the Skyward system for the months of September through March for both school years. The rates of absenteeism and tardiness were compared for each month.

Procedure

The study was conducted at the beginning of the 2006-2007 school year at Shelton High School. The researcher collected and reviewed many resources regarding school schedules and attendance. The background information collected gave the researcher knowledge about the block and traditional schedules in relation to attendance. The collection of data were

the next phase of the study. The attendance data from the 2005-2006 school year were mined from the Skyward attendance program. The rates of absenteeism and tardiness were found for the months of September to March. The absenteeism and tardiness rates for the 2006-2007 school year were also ascertained from the Skyward system at the conclusion of each month from September through March.

The researcher constructed trend line graphs to represent absenteeism and tardiness percentage rates for each month for both school years. After all trend line graphs were constructed, the researcher analyzed the data to determine if there were any relationships between the two schedules. The researcher then presented the results of the study.

Treatment of the Data

The self-report study used monthly attendance rates to compare the two school years using separate daily schedules. Trend line graphs were made to analyze the attendance data for each month during both school years. The trend line graphs were constructed

using the Microsoft Office Excel 2003 program. The researcher used trend line graphs to indicate change in absenteeism and tardiness rates for each month, with regards to the schedule, used during the school years.

Summary

The researcher used attendance data from the 2005-2006 and 2006-2007 school years at Shelton High School. A descriptive self-report study was used to examine the rates of absenteeism and tardiness for each month for each school year. The Skyward attendance program was the component used to mine attendance rates. The researcher used the absenteeism and tardiness rates to construct trend line graphs representative of each school year using a separate daily schedule. The trend line graphs were analyzed to determine findings for the study.

Chapter 4

Analysis of the Data

Introduction

The study was conducted to find out if there was a difference absentee and tardiness rates at Shelton High School using different schedules. The researcher wanted to find out if attendance rates differed using the six period schedule versus the block schedule.

Description of the Environment

The study conducted used the attendance rates of sophomores, juniors, and seniors at Shelton High School. The researcher gathered attendance information from the 2005-2006 and 2006-2007 school years from September through March. In 2005-2006 Shelton High School operated using a four period block schedule and a six period traditional schedule in 2006-2007. The attendance data collected was taken from the Skyward attendance system for both school years.

The participants in the study consisted of 1,186 students in 2005-2006 and 1,216 students in 2006-2007.

The ethnic diversity remained similar in both school years. The population consisted of the following: 54% were male, 46% were female, 81.4% were Caucasian, 8% were Native American, 6.2% were Hispanic, 2.6% were Asian, and 0.6% were African American. From the student population, 32% qualified for free and reduced lunch, 9% were in special education, and 4.5% were classified as migrant students.

Hypothesis

Shelton High school will see a significant difference in absenteeism and tardiness reporting. There will be a significant difference from the 2005-2006 school year using the four period block schedule compared to the 2006-2007 school year using the six period schedule.

Results of the Study

The researcher found that there was a significant difference in attendance rates in the 2005-2006 school year compared to the 2006-2007 school year. The block schedule used during the 2005-2006 school year had fewer absenteeism and tardiness rates compared to the

six period schedule used during the 2006-2007 school year.

Figure 1 data were collected in the months of September through March the in 2005 and 2006 school years focused on absenteeism rates. The absenteeism rates for September 2005 were 7.41% and 8.82% in 2006. The absenteeism rates for October 2005 were 9.7% and 11.71% in 2006. The absenteeism rates for November 2005 were 10.36% and 14.09% in 2006. The absenteeism rates for December 2005 were 9.67% and 13.68% in 2006. The absenteeism rates for January 2006 were 10.46% and 12.93% in 2007. The absenteeism rates for February 2006 were 10.22% and 11.20% in 2007. The absenteeism rates for March 2006 were 10.29% and 12.33% in 2007.

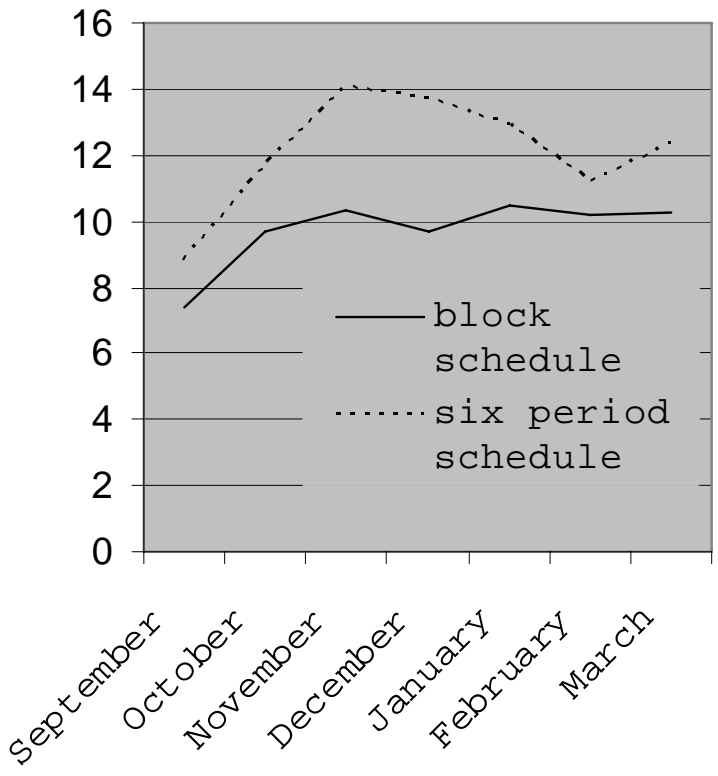


Figure 1, Absenteeism rates between the block and six period schedules.

Figure 2 data were collected in the months of September through March the in 2005 and 2006 school years focused on tardiness rates. The tardiness rates for September were 1.96% in 2005 and 6.74% in 2006. The tardiness rates for October were 1.62% in 2005 and 6.74% in 2006. The tardiness rates November were 4.94% in 2005 and 1.61% in 2006. The tardiness rates for December were 1.15% in 2005 and 3.54% in 2006. The tardiness rates for January were 1.50% in 2006 and 1.16% in 2007. The tardiness rates for February were 0.63% in 2006 and 2.36% in 2007. The tardiness rates for March were 2.99% in 2006 and 3.12% in 2007.

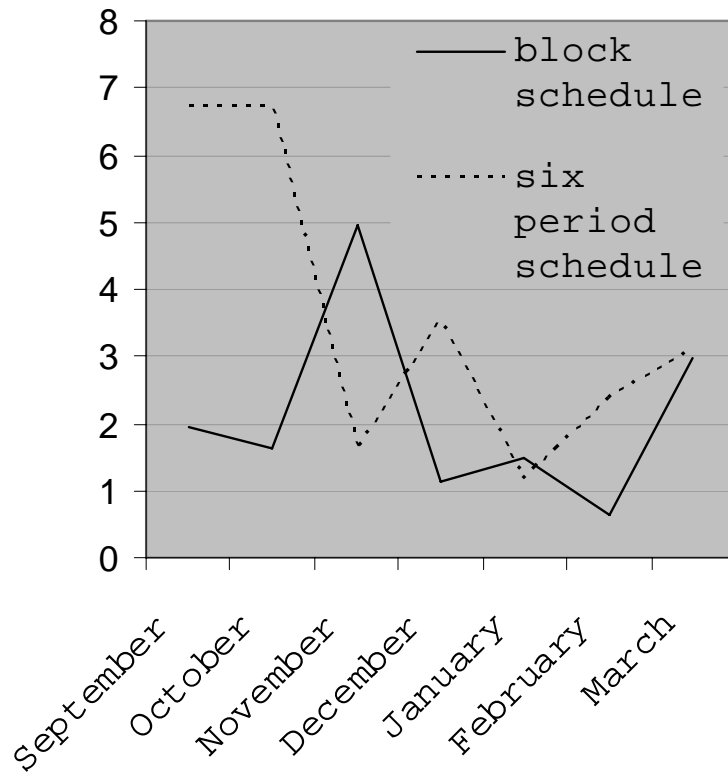


Figure 2, Tardiness rates between the block and six period schedules.

Findings

Analysis of the data showed that there was a difference in absenteeism and tardiness rates comparing the use of the four period block schedule to the six period traditional schedule. The researcher found that absenteeism rates averaged 12.11 percent per month in the 2006 school year using the six period schedule and the average absenteeism rates were 9.73 percent during the 2005 school year using the block schedule. The researcher found that tardiness rates averaged 3.61 percent per month in the 2006 school year using the six period schedule and the average tardiness rates were 2.11 percent during the 2005 school year using the block schedule. Through the months of September to March the absenteeism trend line showed higher rates in the 2006-2007 school year in which the six period schedule was used. The tardiness trend line showed that six period schedule had the highest tardiness rates in all months except November and January.

The researcher found that the six period schedule impacted student learning more compared to the block schedule. An average of 2.4 days of instructional time was lost per month during the 2006 school year compared to the loss of 1.95 days of instructional time during the 2005 school year. The increase in tardiness rates in 2006, resulting in the loss of instructional time, were 1.5 percent higher compared to the 2005 school year. The increased loss of instructional time was greater using the six period schedule. Studies have concluded that the loss of instructional time impacts student learning, retention, teacher preparation and planning (Childers & Ireland, 2005, p.49).

Discussion

The researcher hypothesized that there would be a significant difference in attendance rates between the four period block schedule and the six period traditional schedule. The review of other studies indicated that the six period schedule provided more opportunities for students to be absent or tardy to

class and thus had higher rates of absenteeism compared to a block schedule (Lewis et al, 2005, p.75). The results of the study confirmed that there were differences in absenteeism and tardiness rates between the two scheduling systems. The six period schedule did have higher rates of absenteeism and tardiness.

The findings of the study were consistent with other studies. Similar studies have concluded that absenteeism and tardiness rates were higher using the traditional schedule compared to the block schedule (Zepeda & Mayers, 2006). However, the study was conducted only using two school years. The researcher would expect more or less percentage differences relating to absenteeism and tardiness rates overtime. The researcher would expect adaptations by students to the newly introduced six period schedule, changes in attendance policies, and a longer period of study may produce different outcomes. The researcher would expect school officials to make changes to decrease the loss of instructional time by strengthening

attendance policies and taking proactive measures to increase attendance rates. Although, the six period schedule provided more opportunities for students to be absent and tardy from class, the outcomes of further studies would most likely result in similar findings if conditions were consistent.

Summary

The researcher found that there were differences in absenteeism and tardiness rates between the two schedules used at Shelton High School in the 2005-2006 and 2006-2007 school years. The attendance data collected from September through March showed higher rates of absenteeism during the use of the six period schedule in 2006-2007. The attendance data collected showed higher rates of lost instructional time during the use of the six period schedule. The researcher hypothesized that a difference would be reported and the results of the study supported the hypothesis.

Chapter 5

Summary, Conclusions and Recommendations

Introduction

The study was conducted to find out if absenteeism rates at Shelton High School changed with the introduction of a new schedule system. Shelton High School changed from a block schedule used in the 2005-2006 school year to a traditional six period schedule in the 2006-2007 school year. The researcher compared absenteeism and tardiness rates from the two school years to see if the different schedules had an impact on attendance rates.

Summary

Shelton High School had attendance concerns using the block schedule in 2005-2006. Absenteeism rates were concerning to the high school and a six period traditional schedule was adopted for the 2006-2007 school year which raised even greater concern for the absenteeism problem. The study was conducted to see if there were significant differences in absenteeism using the two schedules.

The researcher gained a better understanding of several components that related to attendance rates. The use of different schedules showed varying rates of absenteeism. Attendance procedures and policies had an impact in relation to absenteeism. Also, the leadership of a school and the school climate made an impact in attendance rates.

A descriptive self-report study was used to examine the rates of absenteeism and tardiness for each month for each school year. The data were collected using the Skyward attendance program. The researcher used the absenteeism and tardiness rates from Skyward to construct trend line graphs representative of each school year using the different schedules. The trend line graphs were analyzed to determine findings for the study.

After analyzing the data, the researcher found that there were differences found in absenteeism and tardiness rates between the two school years. The results confirmed that there were higher rates of

absenteeism and tardiness using the six period schedule.

Conclusions

The study concluded that there were higher rates of absenteeism and tardiness at Shelton High School operating on a six period schedule. The data collected in all the figures showed that absenteeism rates were higher during the 2006-2007 school year compared to the 2005-2006 school year. Rates of tardiness also increased during the 2006-2007 school year. The researcher would expect similar findings in subsequent years if the study was lengthened and the school maintained the same practices. The researcher concluded that changes, regarding to attendance procedures, must be made in order to make a difference in the absenteeism trend line at Shelton High School. The researcher found that the loss of instruction time was greater using the six period schedule. The researcher would suggest that Shelton High School immediately address the absenteeism rates using a school improvement committee to suggest

recommendations that must be addressed before the next school year. The researcher found that the tardiness trend line became more consistent overtime. However, the researcher can not contribute this to students becoming more familiar with the use of the traditional schedule or other environmental factors. The tardiness trend line may or may not even out overtime and should be investigated by the school to improve upon on time attendance.

Recommendations

The researcher acknowledges that more depth and investigation must be conducted prior to future studies. The researcher recommends that future studies should include unexcused and excused absenteeism rates to provide a clearer picture of the statistics. Future studies should take place over a longer period of time to find if trends are evident. The study of school programs, interventions, policies, and school climate should be clearly investigated prior to a future study to gain a better understanding of past practices and future consequences. Human and

computer attendance errors should be identified to make adjustments to attendance rates. School environment factors relating to activities, athletics, and curriculum changes should be part of future studies to acknowledge legitimate school absences. The researcher would suggest that a school improvement committee investigate avenues to decrease absenteeism and tardiness rates before the start of the next school year.

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