

## AN ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION OF

Kris J. Olsen for the degree of Doctor of Education in Education presented on March 30, 1999. Title: Time is the Key to Reform: A Study of Teacher Perceptions Regarding a Change in a Middle School Schedule.

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Barbara McEwan

Time is the educational resource educators most desire, but which is in shortest supply. Educators cannot add more days to the 12-month calendar year, or minutes to the day. Whatever control is to be had over the calendar and clock rests in the way time is managed by those in the position of decision-maker.

This study examined the change in one middle school's schedule, from a traditional seven period to a four period extended block, as it related to teacher perceptions about time for staff development, instructional preparation, and staff collaboration. Additionally, the study examined teacher perceptions regarding student achievement, student contact overload, and school climate as a result of the change in the school schedule.

Subjects for the study were drawn from practicing classroom teachers and other licensed personnel employed at the site school. Two research instruments, the School Schedule Questionnaire Survey and School Schedule Interview Survey, were used to gather data. The School

Schedule Questionnaire Survey used a Likert Scale, which asked each subject to respond to a series of statements by indicating whether they strongly agreed, agreed, were undecided, disagreed, or strongly disagreed.

This study concludes that teacher perceptions about time available for staff development, instructional preparation, and staff collaboration are greatly influenced by their perceptions about the degree to which they control that time, and can make decisions about its use. It also concludes that teacher perceptions about student achievement is difficult to assess without quantitative measures, and that although teachers felt the schedule had a positive impact on student achievement, most were concerned about the lack of objective measures when making such an assessment. And finally, it concluded that class size may not be the determining measure to assess teacher perceptions about student contact overload, that the total number of students a teacher comes into contact with each day has a greater impact on their perception in this area.

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**Time is the Key to Reform:  
A Study of Teacher Perceptions  
Regarding a Change in a Middle School Schedule**

**by**

**Kris J. Olsen**

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Kris J. Olsen, Author

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This dissertation is dedicated to my girls  
***Susan Denise, Karli Erin, and Molly Anne***  
who are the inspirations in my life.

**Time is the Key to Reform:  
A Study of Teacher Perceptions  
Regarding a Change in a Middle School Schedule**

**Chapter I**

**INTRODUCTION**

**Statement of the Problem**

Of all the educational resources in short supply - money, materials, equipment, and time - time is by far the resource that educators consider most desired. Those in decision-making positions can affect access to some resources. Funding allocations can be altered to increase or decrease money, which in turn may be used to purchase materials and equipment, but the passage of time is fixed. Educators cannot add more days to the 12-month calendar year, or minutes to the day. Whatever control is to be had over the calendar and clock rests in the way the time allotted to us is managed.

Unfortunately, little has changed in the way this allotted time is scheduled since the beginning of public education in America (Special Committee on Time Resources [SCTR], 1994). Our school calendar is based on an agrarian society that no longer exists in the form and function that it did in the early 1900's. Students are not required for farm labor as they once were. Machinery has all but eliminated the need for students to

do heavy physical labor. However, with all the changes in technology and social structure, little if any change has been made to the archaic use of the farm calendar as the standard for school calendars (SCTR, 1994).

What seems even more out of tune with our times is the use of, and dependence on, the clock. With few exceptions, secondary schools open their doors at approximately 8:00 a.m. Monday through Friday, organize their days around seven 50-minute periods of instruction, allow minimal time for the students to transition from one location to the next, provide nutrition breaks that address the terms of the collective bargaining agreement with the teachers, as opposed to the physiological needs of the students, and close their doors at approximately 3:00 p.m. to end their instructional day (National Education Commission on Time and Learning [NECTL], 1994).

Today's challenge, to create strategies that can support the individually appropriate teaching needed to produce high levels of success for diverse learners, was not the goal of the last century's reformers. They wanted to use methods that could teach "without regard to persons," and to a remarkable extent they did. Their quest for the "one best system" drew upon the then popular scientific management techniques and modern bureaucratic organizational models to centralize decision making, specialize staff roles, and develop rules governing production (Tyack, 1974).

Schools today continue to operate according to the scientific management techniques of the factory production model, which is a reflection of the organizational theories of Frederick Taylor. Taylor's scientific management theories viewed human beings as little more than isolated extensions of machines (Geiger, 1993). The application of scientific management to U.S. schools followed the rush of excitement about the efficiencies of Henry Ford's assembly-line methods (Darling-Hammond, 1997). Schools were expected to be the most effective means to produce a product whose uniformity and quality could be programmed by carefully specified procedures. The habits of punctuality, regularity, attendance, and silence were viewed by superintendents and college presidents as the most important for eventual success in an industrial society (Harris and Doty, 1874).

Yet today, very little work is done in isolation. Workers interact, team plan, collaborate, and group problem solve. Their dependence on each other to solve complex problems and achieve high standards is more critical today than at any other time in our country's history (NECTL, 1994). As the United States moves from a simpler society dominated by a manufacturing economy to a more complex world based largely on information technologies and knowledge work, its schools are undergoing a once-in-a-century transformation. Never before has the success, perhaps even the survival, of nations and people been so tightly tied to their ability to learn.

Consequently, our future depends now, as never before on our ability to teach (Darling-Hammond, 1997).

Our schools, however, still operate as though students are independent, isolated entities - empty vessels. The process of teaching and learning is accomplished in individual classrooms, by individual dispensers - teachers - not unlike the turn-of-the-century manufacturing process Frederick Taylor envisioned. We ring a bell approximately every 50-minutes to send the vessels off to the next station, assuring that the assembly line is moving along at the appropriate pace. It has been said that if Rip Van Winkle awoke today, the one modern institution he would recognize would be the school (SCTR, 1994).

### **A Personal Perspective of Time Management**

Today, educators are frustrated by pressures to deepen student engagement and understanding, while at the same time they are excited by new technologies that cast them as coaches, not lecturers. More teachers than ever are protesting that they just don't have enough time in the day to accomplish everything they are expected to do (Cushman, 1995). The significance of this problem became all too apparent to me when I made the transition from a classroom teacher to a school administrator in September 1991.



In a period of three school years, from 1991 to 1994, I left the security of a middle school classroom where I was responsible for the instruction of mathematics to six classes of approximately 25 students per classes, and traded it for the challenging, and many times insecure, role as building principal with a school population of approximately 675 students in grades 6, 7 and 8, and a staff of 65 adults.

The problems I faced in my own classroom prior to this transition, such as not having adequate time to ensure that my students were engaged and comprehending the material I was presenting, were nothing compared to the systemic problems I have encountered as a principal faced with a school's schedule and structure which fails to address the needs of its students and teachers.

My initial transition from the classroom to an administrative position in September of 1991 was as an assistant principal at a suburban middle school. At that time, the school served students in grades 6, 7 and 8, and its student population was approximately 525 students, with a licensed staff of 32 classroom teachers and specialists.

Although the school was referred to as a middle school, it functioned in every manner and form as a traditional junior high. It lacked the essential elements recommended for middle schools in The Report of the Task Force on Education of Young Adolescents, Turning Points: Preparing American

Youth for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century (Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development [CCAD], 1989). The task force calls for middle schools that:

- **Create small communities for learning** where stable, close, mutually respectful relationships with adults and peers are considered fundamental for intellectual development and personal growth. The key elements of these communities are schools-within-schools or houses, students and teachers grouped together as teams, and small group advisories that ensure every student is known well by at least one adult.
- **Teach a core academic program** that results in students who are literate in all academic areas, the sciences, who know how to think critically, lead a healthy life, behave ethically, and assume the responsibilities of citizenship in a pluralistic society.
- **Ensure success for all students** through elimination of tracking by achievement level and promotion of cooperative learning, flexibility in arranging instructional time and adequate resources (time, space, equipment, and materials) for teachers.
- **Empower teachers and administrators to make decisions about the experience of middle school students** through creative control. Educators would have control over the instructional program linked to greater responsibilities for students' performance, governance committees that assist the

principal in designing and coordinating school-wide programs, and autonomy and leadership within sub-school or houses to create environments tailored to enhance the intellectual and emotional development of all youth.

- **Staff middle schools with teachers who are expert at teaching young adolescents** and who have been specially prepared for assignment to the middle school.
- **Improve academic performance through fostering the health and fitness** of young adolescents by providing a health coordinator in every middle school, access to health care and counseling services, and a health-promoting school environment.
- **Reengage families in the education of young adolescents** by giving families meaningful roles on school governance, communicating with families about the school program and student's progress, and offering families opportunities to support the learning process at home and at the school.
- **Connect schools with communities**, which together share responsibility for each middle school student's success, through identifying service opportunities in the community, establishing partnerships and collaborations to ensure students' access to health and social services, and using community resources to

enrich the instructional program and opportunity for constructive after-school activities.

Table 1 is an example of a school schedule that addresses many of the essential elements for middle schools as defined in Turning Points: Preparing American Youth for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. The schedule establishes small communities of learners at each grade level assigned to a common group of teachers. It provides for advisory time where every student is known well by at least one adult. It ensures that every student receives instruction in the core academic areas of mathematics, science, social science, reading and writing, as well as health and physical education. It allows for the flexible use of time during a majority of the school day. It allows time for teachers responsible for a common group of students to collaborate, design, and coordinate school-wide programs. It allows time for community service opportunities where students can participate in service-learning, and engage in activities that promote values for citizenship.

Unlike that called for by the Task Force on Education of Young Adolescents, the school schedule at the middle school where I initially served as the assistant principal was designed around a master schedule of approximately seven 50-minute periods of instruction. Bells rang at precise intervals signaling teachers to stop instruction and students to transition to the next class. The curriculum was delivered in a departmentalized format: mathematics, science, social science, reading, writing, etc. The majority of

Table 1

Flexible School Schedule Designed for Middle Schools

Instructional Teams	Teachers	Block 1	Block 2	Block 3		Block 4	Advisory	
	6 <sup>th</sup> – 1	Team Planning	Core	6 <sup>th</sup> Lunch	Core			
	2							
	6 <sup>th</sup> – 3							
	4							
	6 <sup>th</sup> – 5							
	6							
	6 <sup>th</sup> – 7							
	8							
	7 <sup>th</sup> – 1	Core	Team Planning	7 <sup>th</sup> Lunch	Core			
	2							
	3							
	4							
	7 <sup>th</sup> – 5							
	6							
	7							
	8							
	8 <sup>th</sup> – 1	Core			8 <sup>th</sup> Lunch	Team Planning		
	2							
	3							
	4							

Table 1, Continued

	Teachers	Block 1	Block 2	Block 3			Block 4	Advisory	
	8 <sup>th</sup> – 5	Core				Lunch 8 <sup>th</sup>	Team Planning		
	6	↓					↓		
	7								
	8	↓					↓		
Exploratory Team	E – 1	6 <sup>th</sup> Exploratory	7 <sup>th</sup> Exploratory	Team Planning & Lunch			8 <sup>th</sup> Exploratory		
	2	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓		
	3								
	4								
	5								
	6								
	7								
	8	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓

teachers were licensed and trained as secondary school instructors, with little if any training specific to the development and emotional needs of young adolescents. And very little if any integration of subject matter occurred between disciplines or colleagues.

The teachers at this school felt pressed to accomplish the high instructional standards of student achievement in their 50-minute instructional time frame. Students often saw the small segments of instruction as unrelated fragments. There seemed to be little or no continuity between what students learned from one class to the next. In this process, students were sorted, most eventually were promoted, and far too many failed to achieve adequately to be prepared for the demands of an ever-changing society.

Table 2 is an example of a school schedule that is typical of a traditional junior high, and similar to the one used while I was the assistant principal. It does not allow for flexibility in time as a bell rings approximately every 50-minutes signaling all-school movement. It departmentalizes instruction with the result of preventing common grouping of students and teachers for extended periods of time. It does not allow time for advisory and the establishment of small communities of learners. It does not allow for common time for teachers responsible for like groups of students because preparation periods are distributed throughout the seven periods of instruction. And it does not allow adequate time for service-learning and

Table 2

Traditional School Schedule Designed for Junior High Schools

Period		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Teacher	Rm							
		LA 6	Lit 6	Soc St 6	Prep	LA 6	Lit 6	Soc St 6
		LA 6	Lit 6	Soc St 6	Prep	LA 6	Lit 6	Soc St 6
		LA 6	Lit 6	Prep	Soc St 6	LA 6	Lit 6	Soc St 6
		LA 6	Lit 6	Prep	Soc St 6	LA 6	Lit 6	Soc St 6
		Adv Math 6	Math 7	Math 6	Sci 6	Sci 6	Sci 6	Prep
		Math 6	Sci 6	Math 6	Sci 6	Sci 6	Sci 6	Prep
		Math 6	Sci 6	Pre Alg 8	Adv Math 6	Pre Alg 8	Prep	Pre Alg 8
		Math 6	Prep	Math 7	Math 6	Pre Alg 7	Math 7	Pre Alg 7
		Math 7	Prep	Sci 7	Sci 7	Math 7	Sci 7	Math 7
		Sci 7	Sci 7	Sci 7	Prep	Sci 7	Sci 7	Sci 7
		Soc St 7	Prep	Soc St 8	Soc St 8	Soc St 7	Soc St 8	Soc St 7
		Prep	Soc St 7	Soc St 7	Soc St 7	Soc St 7	Soc St 7	Soc St 7
		Prep	LA 7	Lit 7	LA 7	Lit 7	LA 7	Lit 7
		LA 7	Lit 7	LA 7	Lit 7	LA 7	Lit 7	Prep
		Prep	LA 7	Lit 7	LA 7	Lit 7	LA 7	Lit 7
		Alg 1	Pre Alg 8	Pre Alg 8	Alg 1	Alg 1	Pre Alg 8	Prep
		Sci 8	Sci 8	Math 7	Sci 8	Sci 8	Prep	Sci 8
		Well 7/8	Prep	Sci 8	Well 7/8	Sci 8	Sci 8	Sci 8
		Soc St 8	Soc St 8	Soc St 8	Prep	Soc St 8	Soc St 8	Soc St 8
		LA 8	Lit 8	Prep	LA 8	Lit 8	LA 8	Lit 8
		LA 8 Adv	Lit 8 Adv	Prep	LA 8	Lit 8	LA 8	Lit 8
		Prep	LA 8	Lit 8	LA 8	Lit 8	LA 8	Lit 8



Table 2, Continued

Period		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Teacher	Rm							
		Well 7/8	Well 7/8	Well 6	Well 7/8	Prep	Well 7/8	Well 6
		Well 7/8	Well 7/8	Well 6	Well 7/8	Prep	Well 7/8	Well 6
		Math 6 Lab	ERC Skills	Prep	Test	LA Lab 6	Lit Lab 6	Tutorial
		Test	Prep	ERC Math	LA 7 Lab	Lit 7 Lab	Math 7 Lab	Tutorial
		Prep	Test	Math 8 Lab	ERC Writ.	Tutorial	LA 8 Lab	Lit 8 Lab
		Life Skills	Life Skills	Life Skills	Life Skills	Life Skills	Life Skills	Life Skills
		ESL LA	ESL Lit	Spanish	ESL Math	ESL LA	ESL Lit	Prep
		Alt Ed	Alt Ed	Alt Ed	Alt Ed	Alt Ed	Alt Ed	Prep
		Art 7/8	Art 6	Prep	Art 6	Art 6	Art 7/8	Art 7/8
		Prep	LA 8	Lit 8	Drama 6	Drama 7/8	Drama 6	Drama 7/8
		Prep	Tech 7/8	Tech 7/8	Tech 7/8	Comp 6	Comp 6	Comp 7/8
		Comp 7/8	Comp 7/8	Comp 7/8	Comp 7/8	Comp 7/8	Comp 7/8	Prep
		Int Band	Beg Band	Adv Band	Prep	Beg Choir	Int Choir	Adv Choir
		Media	Media	Media	Media	Media	Media	Media
		Leadership	Counselor	Counselor	Counselor	Counselor	Counselor	Counselor
		Counselor	Counselor	Counselor	Counselor	Counselor	Counselor	Counselor

community-based experiences as students are responsible for transitions every 50-minutes.

Since that initial administrative experience as an assistant principal during the 1991-92 school year, and prior to accepting my current position as a principal of a middle school in September 1994, I served as the assistant principal at a high school for two school years, 1992-93 and 1993-94. The problems associated with a lack of time to meet the instructional demands in the classroom have been all too consistent in each setting. My experiences in working with middle school and high school teachers and their students have only strengthened my convictions regarding the need for systemic restructuring of the daily schedule.

### **The Influence of Reform**

In addition to the adjustments I was having to make during this time of transition from a classroom teacher to a building principal, I was also having to respond to the demands associated with State's school reform initiative, The Oregon Educational Act for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century (House Bill 3565: The Oregon Educational Act for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, 1991).

The Act, enacted by the People of the State of Oregon during the 66<sup>th</sup> Oregon Legislative Assembly, declares that:

- All students can learn when offered appropriate learning opportunities, held to rigorous intellectual standards and expected to succeed;
- Access to a quality education must be provided for all of Oregon's youth regardless of linguistic background, culture, gender, capability or geographic location; and
- A restructured educational system is necessary to achieve the state's goal of the best educated citizens in the nation by the year 2000 and a workforce equal to any in the world by the year 2010.

To begin this massive restructuring effort, ten task forces were created to explore ways to initiate the reform and provide guidance for implementation. Of these ten, the Extended School Day/Year Task Force focused on a redefinition of the use of time in order to enable every individual within the educational system to realize his or her highest potential (House Bill 3565: The Oregon Educational Act for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, 1991). Included in this group of individuals are obviously school personnel - teachers, counselors, instructional specialists, classroom assistants, administrators, and other support staff - all of whom are significantly influenced by the time for, and type of professional development available.

If Oregon's public schools are ever going to achieve the state's goal of the best educated citizens in the nation by the year 2000, then time for staff development, instructional preparation, and staff collaboration must be

at the essential core of successful implementation of The Oregon Educational Act for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

### **Purpose of This Study**

In this study I examined the effects of a change from a traditional seven period to a four period extended block schedule at one middle school in a small community located in the Pacific Northwest. The schedule change was examined as it related to teacher perceptions about time for staff development, instructional preparation, and staff collaboration.

Additionally, I examined relevant teacher perceptions regarding student achievement, student contact overload, and school climate as a result of a change in school schedule.

### **Research Questions**

The following questions were addressed in this study:

- 1) How does a school's schedule effect teacher perceptions about time for staff development, instructional preparation, and staff collaboration?
- 2) How does a school's schedule effect teacher perceptions about student achievement, student contact overload, and school climate?

## **Chapter II**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **Introduction**

Our system for keeping time is characterized by linearity expressed in hourly ordinates translated into the western view of time as "monochromatic." In typical western cultures, one learns to do "one thing at a time," which leads to the important cultural value of "being on time" (Hall, 1969). Our schools are a reflection of this cultural value. Information is divided into units of study called, "disciplines", such as history, mathematics, reading, writing, or art. We allow students the opportunity to access this information in clearly defined segments called, "periods." The content of these periods is specific to the goals and objectives of the separate disciplines with very little cross-discipline integration occurring. We expect students to transition from each unit of study in a consistent and prescribed period of time, mastering the goals and objectives of each as they navigate their way through years of information retrieval.

This literature review explores the relationship between time and its effect on teaching and learning. It examines the Psychology of Exceptional Learning (Walberg, 1988), the major time dilemmas facing teachers and other school employees, restructured educational time issues, and the principal's role when instituting a change in the school's schedule.

## **Psychology of Exceptional Learning**

Time is one of the most important correlates of academic learning, and its linkage with learning is one of the most consistent findings in educational research (Walberg, 1993). A 1980 review of 35 learning studies, for example, revealed that 86 percent of the studies showed a positive influence of time on learning, and a 1990 review of more than 100 studies showed positive influences of time in 88 percent of the studies (Walberg and Frederick, 1991).

In the widely-noted report, A Nation at Risk, the National Commission on Excellence in Education (1983) pointed out that a short school year and meager study time are among the major reasons for poor U.S. standing on international achievement comparisons. Still, Americans have yet to follow the obvious and long standing implications of this research, and the American school year generally remains about 180 days - the second shortest among 27 countries surveyed (Barrett, 1990).

During the first 18 years of life, American students spends only about 13 percent of their waking hours in school (Walberg, 1984). Six hours a day during a nine-month school year, or 1080 hours. According to Walberg (1984) this amounts to only about half of an adult's work year. What consumes the 87 percent of waking time spent outside of school? Television, to a large degree. Televisions are on continuously in more than 35 percent of American households during the afternoon, dinner, and

evening hours. American students report watching an average 28 hours of television per week during the school year - almost as much time as they spend in school (Walberg, 1984).

Walberg (1988) reveals that the accomplishments of eminent people are matters of opportunity and of continuous, concentrated effort over many years. He goes on to state that psychological studies of eminent painters, writers, musicians, and scholars of previous centuries reveal early, intense concentration on previous work in their fields, often to the near exclusion of other activities. Studies of prize-winning adolescents of our times also show intensive and extensive devotion to their chosen fields. It would seem apparent then, that it would be necessary for schools to establish and foster opportunities where students and staff members can concentrate for extended periods of time on meaningful, relevant content. These opportunities should not be to the total exclusion of other activities, but to the extent that connections between curriculum, instruction and assessment are strengthened.

### **Time Dilemmas**

The government-sponsored report, Prisoners of Time by the National Education Commission on Time and Learning (1994), calls for radical reorganization of the school day to support increased learning by both students and teachers. One reorganizational practice, a move to longer-

block schedules is sweeping this country, with surprisingly little resistance from even the most conservative camps (Cushman, 1995).

Across this nation, districts are engaged in transforming their schools into more effective learning institutions, the issue that has emerged as the most intense and the one that dominates discussion is time. As educators are working to change schools to better meet the needs of the students in the 21st century, time constraints are posing the most serious problems. In an Education Week series on educational reform (Sommerfeld, 1993), time was identified as one of seven key areas where change must occur for school reform to succeed. In the series, Sommerfeld asserts the traditional use of the school calendar and clock has failed to provide adequate time for staff development, teacher planning time, staff collaboration, and most importantly, student achievement. In addition, the traditional use of the daily schedule, customarily seven periods of approximately 50-minutes each, creates a condition of student contact overload for teachers, and a climate of chaos within the school environment which prevents the natural assimilation of information by staff and students.

Educators are besieged by a multitude of demands that preclude adequate time for planning, reflecting, collaborating, researching, and assessing. This shortage of time is a constraint in all schools and is one of the most complex and challenging problems facing educators today. Time



limitations impact the working lives of all school personnel, causing frustration, and inhibiting necessary change.

Unlike other enterprises that shut down to redesign, retool, and re-inventory, schools must continue to provide effective learning experiences for students without interruption while changes in pedagogy, curriculum, and organization are being constructed, implemented, and assessed (NECTL, 1994).

The current contractual agreements between school districts and their employees contribute to this dilemma in that teachers' work years begin in late summer and concludes in early spring, amounting to approximately 190 work days. Very few, if any, school districts have altered this arrangement so as to capture the available time during the customary non-paid summer months of June, July, and August for professional development and training.

In 1992, a Special Committee on Time Resources was established by the National Education Association and directed by its Board to address the issues of time as a resource (SCTR, 1994). The Committee's findings and recommendations were to be presented at the 1993 Representative Assembly. The Time Committee was appointed and began its deliberations early in 1993. The Committee reviewed a vast amount of research and great many status reports, heard testimony, conducted interviews, and considered several time innovations. The Committee identified several

issues. While not totally inclusive, the following have the greatest impact on teachers and other school employees (SCTR, 1994).

**Time Limits.** Time is a finite resource. It must be planned and allocated efficaciously, both for adults in the school system and for students. Time is the basic dimension through which teachers' work is constructed and interpreted. Time often defines the possibilities and limitations of teachers' professional performance. "Through the prism of time, we can begin to see ways in which teachers construct the nature of their work at the same time as they are constrained by it" (Hargreaves, 1990).

Existing structures and time frames do not afford the necessary time to work collaboratively, to plan, implement, and evaluate quality programs for children, and to engage in an assortment of professional development activities.

The degree to which today's American schools are controlled by the dynamics of clock and calendar is surprising, even to people who understand school operations (NECTL, 1994):

- With few exceptions, schools open and close their doors at fixed times in the morning and early afternoon - a school in one district might open at 7:30 AM and close at 2:15 PM; in another, the school day might run from 8:00 in the morning until 3:00 in the afternoon.

- With few exceptions, the school year lasts nine months, beginning in late summer and ending in late spring.
- According to the National Center for Education Statistics, schools typically offer a six-period day, with about 5.6 hours of classroom time a day.
- No matter how complex or simple the school subject - literature, shop, physics, gym, or algebra - the schedule assigns each an impartial national average of 51 minutes per class period, no matter how well or poorly students comprehend the material.
- The norm for required school attendance, according to the Council of Chief State School Officers, is 180 days. Eleven states permit terms of 175 days or less; only one state requires more than 180 days.
- Secondary school graduation requirements are universally based on seat time - "Carnegie Units," a standard of measurement representing one credit for completion of a one-year course meeting daily.
- Staff salary increases are typically tied to time - to seniority and the number of hours of graduate work completed.
- Despite the obsession with time, little attention is paid to how it is used. In the 42 states examined, the National Education

Commission on Time and Learning found only 41 percent of secondary school time must be spent on core academic subjects.

The results are predictable. The school clock governs how families organize their lives, how administrators oversee their schools, and how teachers work their way through the curriculum. Above all, it governs how material is presented to students and the opportunity they have to comprehend and master it.

This state of affairs explains a universal phenomenon during the last quarter of the academic year: as time runs out on them, frustrated teachers face the task of cramming large portions of required material into a fraction of the time intended for it. As time runs out on the teacher, perceptive students are left to wonder about the integrity of an instructional system that behaves, year-in and year-out, as though the last chapters of their textbooks are not important (NECTL, 1994).

By relying on time as the metric for school organization and curriculum, we have built a learning enterprise on a foundation of five premises that most educators know to be false (NECTL, 1994).

- 1) That students arrive at school ready to learn in the same way, on the same schedule, all in rhythm with each other.
- 2) That academic time can be used for non-academic purposes with no effect on learning.

- 3) That because yesterday's calendar was good enough for us, it should be good enough for our children, despite major changes in the larger society.
- 4) That schools can be transformed without giving teachers the time they need to retool themselves and reorganize their work.
- 5) That we find a new fiction: it is reasonable to expect "world-class academic performance" from our students within the time-bound system that is already failing them.

**Time as the Driver.** In traditional, regimented school schedules, time has been the constant and learning the variable. The school day schedule of approximately seven periods of 50-minutes of instruction has remained relatively constant over the past several decades, yet the academic achievement rates during that time have shown wide variations. It seems the imperative for improving schools is to reverse this dictum. Learning must be the constant and time the variable. Too frequently, decisions impacting learning, teaching, and curriculum are based on convenience, rather than on the learning needs of students.

Many professional educators understand the inherent fallacy of requiring each child to spend the same number of hours in school, complete the same number of courses, attend school for the same number of years, fulfill the same standardized requirements. Proponents of a more student-

centered approach believe that schools need more flexible structures, enabling students to take as much or as little time as necessary to master their course work (CCAD, 1983). Liberating pedagogy and the curriculum from time constraints enhances teaching and learning (CCAD, 1983).

In its landmark report, A Nation at Risk, the National Education Commission on Excellence in Education (1983) urged America's schools to allocate "significantly more time" to learning. "This will require more effective use of the existing school day, a longer school day, or a lengthened school year." Of all the recommendations made in A Nation at Risk, the commission's suggestion regarding the use of time probably has received the least attention (Anderson, 1994). Most decisions impacting learning, teaching, and curriculum are based on economic convenience. As the adage goes, time is money, and money for public education has remained relatively constant and in most cases reduced during the past few decades.

Current scheduling practices have created a very narrow view of human learning, one focusing on recall and recognition, rather than thinking and learning (Kruse & Kruse, 1995). Additionally, Kruse and Kruse (1995) state that habit learning does not instill a deeper understanding of something, nor does it develop critical thinkers. They go on to state that learning does not occur by being exposed to knowledge in small non-related blocks of time, nor by having information dispensed through solely

symbolic means. Our present approach has been influenced by a traditional view of time, and the adoption of a university-styled departmental structure with its customary style of pedagogy. As a result, subject area specialists dispense knowledge almost solely through linguistic means (Kruse & Kruse, 1995).

**Time for Professional Development.** Firestone and Rosenblum (1988) suggest that, when professionals have authentic opportunities to organize and control their work setting, performance increases. However, the traditional view of teachers' work has been and continues to be time spent in front of the classroom (SCTR, 1994). Such a perception reinforces the concept that teachers are the deliverers of content, while curricular and planning decisions are made at higher levels of authority, that professional development is unrelated to improving instruction.

As teachers and other school employees participate as stakeholders in current reform processes, such as The Oregon Educational Act for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, they are demanding a share in the control of school time and its use (SCTR, 1994). The assumption that teachers and their time must be controlled emanates from the historically low status of teachers and is related to issues of trust and respect (Purnell & Hill, 1992). Teachers have not been trusted to use their non-instructional time wisely and have had virtually no control over the structure or use of their time.

Current professional development activities frequently are restricted to district-mandated workshops, training programs, and inservice experiences delivered by an external authority (Little, 1984). These activities, often viewed by professionals as attempts simply to expose them to current educational fads or trends, are generally considered squandered time. This type of professional development is usually organized around the individual's needs, as opposed to that of the group. They are usually in response to a previous incident or crisis, or are in anticipation of a major shift in program or policy. What educators desperately want and need are professional development activities that address their current professional frustrations and concerns. They want an opportunity to brainstorm with and learn from their peers. "Collaborative work with peers increases teachers' sense of affiliation with the school and their sense of mutual support and responsibility for the effectiveness of instruction" (Little, 1984).

Unlike the solitary endeavor that characterizes teaching in the United States, Asian pedagogy is approached as a group effort. In Japan and Taiwan, for example, teachers are in charge of classes only 60 percent of the time they are in school (Stevenson, 1992). In Beijing, teachers instruct students in the classroom three hours daily; their remaining time is dedicated to interacting with colleagues, planning and assessing, tutoring students, or participating in a variety of professionally enriching experiences. Experiences from overseas indicate that when professional



development opportunities are a designated and significant part of teachers' work environment, higher quality learning for students can be achieved (Price, 1993). In fact, without regularly scheduled time for teachers to improve their own practice, any extended blocks of time will not change the educational experience for students (Purnell & Hill, 1992). Learning new teaching strategies, and continuously improving them takes a serious commitment of time.

In a recent survey of 178 principals (Purnell & Hill, 1992) in urban high schools undertaking major change efforts, the data revealed that the lack of time, energy, and money were identified as the key implementation problems. Additionally, Purnell and Hill (1992) state that on average teachers devote 70 days of time to the process of implementing a new project, and more successful schools devoted 50 days a year to the services of external assistance for training, coaching, and capacity building.

The National Staff Development Council recommends the following as characteristics of effective staff development activities (National Staff Development Council [NSDC], 1989).

- **Time of Day and Season.** Staff development activities that take place at the end of a day have less of a chance of being successful than those offered when participants are fresh. Staff development activities are less likely to be successful when they

are scheduled at times of the year when seasonal activities, parent conferences, holiday celebrations, etc., occur.

- **Involvement in Planning Objectives.** Staff development activities tend to be more effective when participants have taken part in planning the objectives and the activities. Objectives planned by the participants are perceived as more meaningful with a higher degree of clarity and acceptance.
- **Time for Planning.** Whether the staff development activities are mandated or participation is voluntary, participants need time away from their regular responsibilities in order to plan objectives and subsequent activities.
- **Opportunities for Sharing.** Staff development activities in which participants share and provide assistance to one another are more apt to attain their objective than activities in which participants work alone.
- **Opportunity for Follow-Up.** Staff development activities are more successful if participants know there will be an opportunity to become involved in follow-up sessions.
- **Opportunity for Practice.** Staff development activities that include demonstrations, supervised tasks, and feedback are more likely to accomplish their objectives than those activities that expect participants to store skills or use at a future time.

- **Active Involvement.** More successful staff development activities are those which provide the participant with a chance to be actively involved. Hands-on experiences with materials and active participation in exercise will later be used with students.
- **Opportunity for Choice.** If a participant has chosen to become involved in an activity, there is a far greater likelihood that the experience will be more meaningful. A meaningful series of alternative activities should be offered within a staff development program that is planned over a period of time.

Redefining the use of time will not enhance educational quality in and of itself. Skill mastery takes precedence over seat time, and adequate planning and preparation time is essential to effective teaching. Staff development activities focused on instructional improvement and strategies to improve student performance are critical to achieving the lofty goals of The Oregon Educational Act for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, specifically, the best educated citizens in the nation by the 2000 and a workforce equal to any in the world by the year 2010.

**Time and School Reform.** In many places, reform efforts, described earlier, have simply been added to the list of priorities school employees are expected to perform daily. Time must be stretched further to accommodate staff participation in governance issues, curriculum

development, action research, student assessment, program evaluation, and community involvement activities.

"If the recent reforms are to succeed, students and teachers must not simply absorb a new body of knowledge. Rather, they must acquire a new way of thinking about knowledge and a new practice of acquiring it" (Price, 1993). Teachers and school employees must learn new information, new process skills, and new strategies for new instructional efforts (e.g., team teaching, cross-age learning, interdisciplinary instruction, peer coaching, cooperative learning). These contemporary teaching skills necessitate teacher interaction and collaboration to produce improved instruction; consequently, more time must be devoted for professional development activities in order to achieve reform efforts than was required in the past.

**Time and the Increasing Needs of Students.** Profound changes that are occurring in society, in home environments, and in the workplace have invaded schools, increasing the number and intensity of interactions teachers must conduct with children on a daily basis (SCTR, 1994). Time demands must be factored in with other time pressures teachers face as they address the burgeoning amount of knowledge and skills today's students are required to master.

Further complicating the situation, most teachers are realizing additional demands on their time as special-needs children are being

mainstreamed into classrooms in a sincere effort to improve their academic performance and socialization skills (SCTR, 1994). An important requirement for quality integrated education of special-needs students is comprehensive training for all education employees so that they might acquire the necessary skills and develop resources for teaching students with diverse learning problems and highly specific physical needs.

Addressing the problem of time constraints requires long-term solutions. However, immediate relief is necessary to overcome current time problems. Members of the Special Committee on Time Resources set forth several suggestions designed to help professional educators provide short-term relief to their time crisis. Five strategies were identified as tactics educators across the country are using to find more time (Thomas, 1995):

1. Using various personnel arrangements to free teachers from direct student supervision.
2. Formally altering the time frame of the traditional calendar, school day, or teaching schedule.
3. Using common planning time to support restructuring programs, interdisciplinary teams, subject area collaboration, and grade level planning.
4. Using currently scheduled meetings and professional development activities more effectively by focusing on planning and collaboration.

5. Hiring additional teachers, clerks, parents, and support staff to allow for smaller class sizes and/or expanded or additional sessions.

### **Restructured Educational Time**

In systems where educators spend considerable amounts of their workday in preparing lessons and collaborating with colleagues on lessons, student achievement is notably higher (Stevenson & Stigler, 1992).

Strategies for designing and implementing restructured time models to coincide with school reform efforts, specifically the Oregon Educational Act for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, require answers to a number of questions, including the most fundamental of all questions: What educational activities need more time and why (NSDC, 1989). The answers to this question should be approached from the perspective of educational activities designed to:

- Maximize opportunity for students to achieve learning outcomes;
- Maximize opportunities for staff members to achieve learning outcomes; and
- Maximize opportunities to create the best possible restructured program.

Stevenson and Stigler's study (1992) verifies that successful teaching includes a variety of approaches which allow students who may

not understand one approach the opportunity to experience other approaches in presenting the material. Time on task goes beyond allocating time for students to be engaged in learning activities.

When learning outcomes are the focus, the teacher's role becomes that of a guide rather than instructor. When a teacher is not providing direct instruction, opportunity exists to meet with others, such as students, teachers, parents, counselors, and community patrons to define, design, and implement educational choices for students.

Education staffs who collaborate on lesson planning and their work with students raise student achievement dramatically by improving the quality of teaching itself. The success of collaborative systems in education is largely the result of the collaborative interaction that every profession relies upon for the growth and refinement of its knowledge base (Stevenson & Stigler, 1992).

### **Principal's Role**

Principals develop and put into motion school schedules based on district and state regulations, such as Oregon's Required Instructional Time Regulation (Oregon Administrative Rules, 1996). This regulation states each school district shall annually adopt a calendar that provides its students at each grade level with the following minimum number of instructional hours:

- Grades 9-12, 990 hours
- Grades 4-8, 900 hours
- Grades 1-3, 810 hours
- Grades K, 405 hours

These school schedules control the school, teachers, and the students. They function as a means of social control. They link the school to the factories described by Frederick Taylor in near mirror images. They place the principal, once rooted in teaching and learning, into the arena of management.

To construct an alternate to the existing school schedule requires us to abandon the current belief that the primary purpose of the school schedule is control. Moving from one control to another does not mean that the school is out-of-control. Moving from one form of school schedule to another is an example of shifting control, from the institution to the client.

The current schedule typically being used is a manifestation of social control at work in our schools. A schedule that varies in time and frequency is not the point. Such changes are at best cosmetic. In order for real change to occur, the teacher/student relationship must become the hub of the new structure of the school.

Principals should consider re-designing the school schedule not only to transform the teaching and learning process, but also to transform



themselves as leaders. Leadership is the art of empowerment rather than control (Walberg, 1993).

### **Summary**

A review of the literature underscores the need for schools to restructure the way time is allocated and distributed during the instructional day. It is all too easy to bury oneself in the details of a schedule and forget about the learning needs of the students and teachers alike. If we think hard about the best ways for students to learn and teacher to teach, we must confront some uncomfortable truths. The clock should not direct or control teaching or learning, nor the artificial cycles of terms and tests and report cards. In fact, sometimes those things, all integral to the very idea of a school schedule, often interrupt and impede the ways students learn and teachers teach.

## Chapter III

### METHODOLOGY

#### **Introduction**

This study examined the effects of a change in the school schedule at one middle school in a small community located in the Pacific Northwest. This study assessed the degree to which the staff felt the change in the school schedule had an impact on time for staff development, instructional preparation, staff collaboration, student achievement, student contact overload, and school climate.

#### **Study Design**

This study could best be described as descriptive research, one which involves the collection of data in order to test hypotheses or to answer questions concerning the current status of the subject of the study (Gay, 1987). Typically, descriptive research is concerned with the assessment of attitudes, opinions, demographic information, conditions, and procedures. Descriptive data are usually collected through a questionnaire survey, interviews, or observations.

The data and information collected during this study were solicited from individuals using questionnaires and interviews. This method of data collection falls within the procedures utilized in a self-report study.

There are several major types of self-report studies. Gay (1987) states that the most well known and most-often used is probably survey research, which generally utilizes questionnaires or interviews to collect data from members of a population in order to determine the current status of that population with respect to one or more variables.

### **Study Sample**

Subjects for this study were members of a convenience sample of practicing classroom teachers and other licensed personnel employed in the site school, who provide instruction and supervision to students. Each subject who agreed to participate in this study was under the direct daily supervision of the researcher. I was the building principal of the site school, and each of the subjects was a member of the school's staff. Each subject who agreed to participate in the study did so voluntarily, following a general solicitation to all staff members meeting the criteria for participation.

The subjects who agreed to participate in the study were chosen because, of their availability for the study, their knowledge about the school's schedule prior to, during, and after its change, the willingness of the superintendent of the school district to allow them to participate in the

study, and most importantly, their apparent representation of the school community.

All the subjects were given verbal assurance by me that their participation in this study, their responses to the School Schedule Questionnaire Survey, and the School Schedule Interview Survey were for the purpose of gathering data about teacher perceptions regarding the change in the school schedule, and that their candid and frank responses would be greatly valued. Each was also given verbal assurance that in no way would their participation in this study place them in a jeopardizing position with me, the researcher and their principal. In addition, each subject who participated in the study was a permanent licensed teacher, thus having significant employment protections, unlike a probationary licensed teacher.

Two subjects were solicited from each of the "houses" making up the organizational structure at this middle school. This form of subject solicitation is known as stratified sampling, which is the process of selecting a sample in such a way that identified sub-groups in the population are represented in the sample in the same proportion that they exist in the population (Gay, 1987). A "house," as defined in this study, is an organizational arrangement of teachers and other licensed personnel who are solely responsible for instruction and supervision of a particular grade level or group of students. Each "house" has approximately nine licensed

staff members serving the students within its responsibility at any given time during the school day.

- Two of the subjects (6-1, 6-2) were solicited from the 6th Grade House, representing the nine core classroom teachers responsible for providing instruction in mathematics, science, social science, and language arts to 6th grade students. At the time of participation in this study, subject 6-1 was a mathematics and science teacher, and subject 6-2 was a language arts and social science teacher.
- Two of the subjects (7-1, 7-2) were solicited from the 7th Grade House, representing the nine core classroom teachers responsible for providing instruction in mathematics, science, social science, and language arts to 7th grade students. At the time of participation in this study, subject 7-1 was a social science teacher, and subject 7-2 was a language arts teacher.
- Two of the subjects (8-1, 8-2) were solicited from the 8th Grade House, representing the nine core classroom teachers responsible for providing instruction in mathematics, science, social science, and language arts to 8th grade students. At the time of participation in this study, subject 8-1 was a mathematics teacher, and subject 8-2 was a social science teacher.

- Two of the subjects (E-1, E-2) were solicited from the Encore House, representing the nine classroom teachers responsible for providing instruction in elective courses to 6th, 7th and 8th grade students; in the areas of technology, drama, art, wellness, music, band, choir and foreign language. At the time of participation in this study, subject E-1 was a music teacher, and subject E-2 was a drama teacher.
- And, two of the subjects (S-1, S-2) were solicited from the Specialist House, representing the nine classroom teachers and other licensed personnel responsible for providing instruction and supervision to 6th, 7th and 8th grade students as, Learning Resource Teachers, English as a Second Language Teachers, Basic Life Skills Teachers, Alternative Education Teachers, Library Media Teachers, and Guidance and Counseling Teachers. At the time of participation in this study, subject S-1 was a Basic Life Skills teacher, and subject S-2 was a Learning Resource teacher.

The purpose of soliciting subjects for this study using the method of stratified sampling, was to guarantee the desired representation of the relevant sub-groups, or "houses."

A letter explaining the purpose of the study was sent to the superintendent of the school district (see Appendix: A), and distributed to

each subject (see Appendix: B). Contact was made with each subject who volunteered to participate in the study to schedule the date and time the assessment tools would be administered.

### **Research Instruments**

Two research instruments were designed and implemented to gather data from the subjects who participated in this study. These instruments included the following:

- 1) School Schedule Questionnaire Survey
- 2) School Schedule Interview Survey

The development and purpose of each instrument is as follows: The School Schedule Questionnaire Survey (see Appendix: C) was developed and designed to be administered to all participants in the study. The development of the School Schedule Questionnaire Survey was done following a review of sample evaluation instruments contained in Sandra L. Schurr's publication (1992) How to Evaluate Your Middle School: A Practitioner's Guide for an Informal Program Evaluation. Schurr's (1992) sample evaluation instruments are used to solicit the opinions and impressions of various groups and individuals. The sample instruments contain surveys, checklists, and interview questions. For the purpose of this study, The School Schedule Questionnaire Survey was developed utilizing portions of Schurr's (1992) sample instruments designed to solicit opinions

and impressions about time for team effectiveness, advisory, classroom planning and instruction, staff development, and school climate.

The type of assessment utilized for the School Schedule Questionnaire Survey was a Likert Scale, which asks each subject to respond to a series of statements by indicating whether he or she strongly agrees (SA), agrees (A), is undecided (U), disagrees (D), or strongly disagrees (SD) with each statement (Gay, 1987). Each response is associated with a point value, 5 for strongly agrees (SA), 4 for agrees (A), 3 for undecided (U), 2 for disagrees (D), and 1 for strongly disagrees (SD). An individual's score is determined by the point values for each statement, the mean score for statements in each area, and the mean score for all statements on the survey.

Each subject was asked to respond to each statement in the School Schedule Questionnaire Survey as it related to the change in the school's schedule. The change, as defined in this study, is the implementation of school schedule as defined in Table 1, in September of 1994, the beginning of the 1994-95 school year. This change in schedule was made to address the essential elements of Turning Points, described earlier.

Each subject was asked to respond to each statement in the School Schedule Questionnaire Survey comparing the change schedule (Table 1) to the schedule in place during the preceding school years at the site



school. The schedule in place the preceding school years to the change schedule (Table 1) is describe by that represented in Table 2.

The results of the School Schedule Questionnaire Survey were assessed to identify the degree to which each of the subjects of the study felt the change in the school schedule had an impact on time for staff development, instructional preparation, staff collaboration, student achievement, student contact overload, and school climate.

The School Schedule Interview Survey (see Appendix: D) was developed and designed to be administered to all participants who volunteered in the study as a follow-up to the questionnaire survey. Morgan (1988) states that an interview is a purposeful conversation, usually between two people, that is directed by one in order to get information from the other. The follow-up interviews were utilized to gather descriptive data in the subjects' own words so that insights could be developed on how the subjects interpret the current state of the school schedule on the variables of, time for staff development, instructional preparation, staff collaboration, student achievement, student contact overload, and school climate.

### **Procedure**

This study was organized into three sections. The following is an explanation of each of the three sections of this descriptive research study.

- Section one involved the solicitation of all teachers for this study. All subjects were purposefully solicited because of their connection to the sub-group they represent within the school community, and their knowledge about the school schedule prior to, during, and after its change. Each subject voluntarily participated in the collection of data through the School Schedule Questionnaire Survey, and the School Schedule Interview Survey.
- Section two involved the administering of the School Schedule Questionnaire Survey. The ten subjects selected for the study were contacted to schedule the date and time the survey was to be distributed and returned to the researcher. In most cases, the School Schedule Questionnaire Survey was to be returned to the researcher within ten working days.
- Section three involved the administering of the School Schedule Interview Survey. Each of the ten subjects was contacted to schedule the date and time the interview was to be conducted. In most cases, the interview was to be completed within five working days of the return of the School Schedule Questionnaire Survey.

The ethical standards in this research project have focused on the Seven Step Moral Reasoning Model (Andersen, 1994). The significant steps related to this study are:

- 1) What are the relevant facts? A significant change occurred in the school schedule and organizational model being employed at the site school beginning in September 1994. Prior to that date, a traditional seven periods of 50-minutes of instruction, and departmentalized model had been in place for many years. I wanted to determine if teachers and other licensed personnel working at the school during the time both schedules were in place, felt the change in schedule beginning in September 1994, contributed to time for staff development, instructional preparation, staff collaboration, and had an impact on student achievement, student contact overload, and school climate.
- 2) What are the ethical issues? The researcher for this study was the principal at the site school, and the direct supervisor for each of the subjects in this study. I shared with all the staff members the scope of the study and the parameters for selecting the subjects, namely, each subject had to have been employed at the site school prior to, during, and after the change in the school's schedule. Because I was the researcher for this study was the direct supervisor of the subjects, and because the potential for bias existed due to this supervisory relationship, verbal assurance was given to the

subjects by the researcher that their responses would in no way jeopardize their employment status. Additionally, because I realized that due to this relationship, and its potential effect of the subjects willingness to respond candidly and frankly, I selected subjects who were permanent licensed teacher, as opposed to probationary licensed teachers with fewer employment protections.

- 3) Who are the primary stakeholders? The primary stakeholders in this study are me, as the principal, teachers, other licensed personnel, the district's administration, Board of Directors, students, and parents. Each has a vested interest in the results of the study and the potential conclusions, implications, and recommendations.
- 4) What actions should be taken? At the conclusion of this study, the conclusions, implications, and recommendations should be shared with the subjects of the study, the total site school staff, the district's administration, Board of Directors, students and parents. The confidentiality of each subject who voluntarily participated in this study should be maintained and adhered to.

## Chapter IV

### Results

#### Introduction

The focus of this study was to investigate the degree to which the staff at one middle school in a small community in the Pacific Northwest felt the change in the school schedule had an impact on teacher perceptions regarding time for staff development, instructional preparation, and staff collaboration. Additionally, the study examined relevant teacher perceptions regarding student achievement, student contact overload, and school climate, as a result of the change in the school schedule.

The desire for more time is something everyone experiences. The purpose of this study was not to look at the desire for more time, but rather how teachers perceived the time available in conjunction with the control they had over the use of that time.

The change, as defined in this study, is the implementation of a school schedule similar to that illustrated in Table 1, in September 1994, the beginning of the 1994-95 school year. The implementation of the school schedule followed several years where the school schedule was similar to that illustrated in Table 2.

In order to investigate the Research Questions addressed in Chapter 1, data were collected using two instruments: (1) the School Schedule Questionnaire Survey, and (2) the School Schedule Interview Survey.

The subjects of this study were individually given certain information prior to their participation in either the School Schedule Questionnaire or the School Schedule Interview Survey. Participants were instructed that when responding to the statements in the questionnaire or questions in the interview, they should consider the school schedule being described as the one being used from 1994-97 (see Table 1). The current schedule (Table 1) should be compared to that which was in place the immediate years prior to the 1994-95 school year (see Table 2).

The survey contained several statements under each of the general categories to be assessed: staff development, instructional preparation, staff collaboration, student achievement, student contact overload, and school climate. Each statement focused on a sub-element of each of the general categories. For example, under the general category of instructional preparation, subjects were asked to respond to statements about time available for lesson preparation; time available for materials collection and organization; time available for assessing and recording student work; and time available to communicate about student progress with students, parents and colleagues. Data was collected on each of the statements from

the sub-elements and summed to determine a mean score for each statement, and general category for subject and study population.

The School Schedule Interview Survey asked each subject to respond to a series of questions on each of the general categories: staff development, instructional preparation, staff collaboration, student achievement, student contact overload, and school climate. Each subject was asked to respond by stating how the school schedule had an impact on time for each of the general categories cited above. Interview questions were designed for the purpose of corroborating or refuting the subjects' responses from the School Schedule Questionnaire Survey, as well as to collect additional information on specific statements made which either supported or rejected the hypothesis that the school schedule had an impact on time for staff development, instructional preparation, staff collaboration, student achievement, student contact overload, and school climate.

A tape recording was made of each of the School Schedule Interviews. A transcript of selected statements from each interview was produced, and the tapes were erased to protect the confidentiality of the subjects. Specific statements were selected from the transcript of each recorded interview that the researcher felt corroborated or refuted the responses of each of the subjects from the School Schedule Questionnaire.

## **Demographic Results**

A total of ten subjects completed the demographic information, the responses on the School Schedule Questionnaire Survey, and the School Schedule Interview Survey. Table 3 provides the demographic data relative to the sample population used in this study.

**Years in Education.** Table 3 reports the number of years in education for each of the subjects who completed the School Schedule Questionnaire Survey. This questionnaire was administered to each of the subjects prior to the School Schedule Interview Survey. The mean years of experience in education for the study sample was 19.4 years.

**Years in District.** Table 3 also reports the total years in the school district for each of the subjects. The mean years in the district for the study sample was 12.8 years.

**Years in Current Position.** The total year in current position for each of the subjects is the third column in Table 3. The range for the study sample was 16 years, with a high of 19 years and a low of 3 years. The mean years in the current position for the study sample was 9.0 years.

**Years in Current School.** The total years in the current school is the final demographic data presented in Table 3. The mean years in the current school for the study sample was 9.7 years.



Table 3

Number of Years in Education, District, Current Position and Current School (N=10)

Subjects	Yrs. In Education	Yrs. In District	Yrs. In Position	Yrs. in School
6-1	21	19	19	19
6-2	19	16	14	10
7-1	23	8	8	8
7-2	24	21	5	11
8-1	8	8	3	8
8-2	18	11	11	11
E-1	21	10	10	10
E-2	13	7	7	7
S-1	24	8	8	8
S-2	23	20	5	5
ALL	194	128	90	97
MEAN	19.4	12.8	9.0	9.7

### **School Schedule Questionnaire Survey and School Schedule Interview Survey Results**

The School Schedule Questionnaire Survey was developed utilizing Likert Scales to assess the degree to which each of the subjects felt the change in the school schedule had an impact on time for staff development, instructional preparation, staff collaboration, student achievement, student contact overload, and school climate.

The School Schedule Interview Survey was developed and designed to be administered to all the participants in the study as a follow-up to the questionnaire survey. The School Schedule Interview Survey asked each subject to respond to a series of questions, each one focused on one of the general categories: staff development, instructional preparation, staff collaboration, student achievement, student contact overload, and school climate. Each subject was asked to respond by stating how the school schedule had an impact on each of the general categories.

**Staff Development.** Table 4 reports the distribution of data from the School Schedule Questionnaire Survey for each of the subjects in the area of staff development.

School Schedule Questionnaire Survey statement number 1 (S1), *The current school schedule has had a positive impact on time available for sharing instructional strategies and practices with colleagues*, received a mean score of 4.5, with 50% of the subjects (6-1, 6-2, 7-1, 7-2, 8-2) giving a

Table 4

Summary of Subjects' Responses to Statements Regarding Time for Staff Development (N=10)

Statement	6-1	6-2	7-1	7-2	8-1	8-2	E-1	E-2	S-1	S-2	MEAN
S1	5	5	5	5	4	5	4	4	4	4	4.50
S2	5	5	5	5	4	5	4	5	4	4	4.60
S3	4	5	5	5	4	5	5	5	4	4	4.60
S4	2	4	4	4	2	3	4	2	5	4	3.40
SUB MEAN	4.00	4.75	4.75	4.75	3.50	4.50	4.25	4.00	4.25	4.00	4.28
SD											0.42
Z-SCORE	-0.66	1.14	1.14	1.14	-1.86	0.54	-0.06	-0.66	-0.06	-0.66	
T-SCORE	43.39	61.42	61.42	61.42	31.36	55.41	49.40	43.39	49.40	43.39	

response of strongly agree (SA), and 50% of the subjects (8-1, E-1, E-2, S-1, S-2) giving a response of agree (A). Five of the six teachers providing instruction to only 6th, 7th, or 8th grade students in the core academic areas of math, science, social studies, and language arts (6-1, 6-2, 7-1, 7-2, 8-2) gave a response of strongly agree (SA), while each of the four teachers who provide instruction to students in all three grades (E-1, E-2, S-1, S-2) gave a response of agree (A).

School Schedule Questionnaire Survey statement number 2 (S2), *The current school schedule has had a positive impact on time available for communicating with colleagues about individual students*, received a mean score of 4.6, with 60% of the subjects (6-1, 6-2, 7-1, 7-2, 8-2, E-2) giving a response of strongly agree (SA), and 40% of the subjects (8-1, E-1, S-1, S-2) giving a response of agree (A). Five of the six teachers providing instruction to only 6th, 7th, or 8th grade students in the core academic areas of math, science, social studies, and language arts (6-1, 6-2, 7-1, 7-2, 8-2) gave a response of strongly agree (SA), and one teacher who provides instruction to students in all three grades (E-2) gave a response of strongly agree (SA).

School Schedule Questionnaire Survey statement number 3 (S3), *The current school schedule has had a positive impact on time available for communicating about school events*, received a mean score of 4.6, with 60% of the subjects (6-2, 7-1, 7-2, 8-2, E-1, E-2) giving a response of

strongly agree (SA), and 40% of the subjects (6-1, 8-1, S-1, S-2) giving a response of agree (A). Four of the six teachers providing instruction to only 6th, 7th, or 8th grade students in the core academic areas of math, science, social studies, and language arts (6-2, 7-1, 7-2, 8-2) gave a response of strongly agree (SA), while two of the four teachers who provide instruction to students in all three grades (E-1, E-2) gave a response of strongly agree (SA).

School Schedule Questionnaire Survey statement number 4 (S4), *The current school schedule has had a positive impact on time available for enhancing professional growth by engaging in relevant activities*, received a mean score of 3.4, with 10% of the subjects (S-1) giving a response of strongly agree (SA), and 50% of the subjects (6-2, 7-1, 7-2, E-1, S-2) giving a response of agree (A). Two of the six teachers providing instruction to only 6th, 7th, or 8th grade students in the core academic areas of math, science, social studies, and language arts (6-1, 8-1) gave a response of disagree (D), while one of the four teachers who provide instruction to students in all three grades (E-2) gave a response of disagree (D).

The mean score for the four statements related to staff development was 4.28 out of a possible 5.0, with a standard deviation of 0.42. The range of scores was 1.25 with three subjects (6-2, 7-1, 7-2) having a sub mean score of 4.75, and one subject (8-1) having a sub mean score of 3.5. Of the four statements related to staff development (S1, S2, S3, S4), *Time*

*available for enhancing professional growth by engaging in relevant activities (S4), had the lowest mean score of 3.4. The statements that received the greatest mean score of 4.6 were, Time available for communicating with colleagues about individual students (S2), and Time available for communicating about school events (S3).*

The data collected for the stratified samples for each "house" indicates that the range of scores in the area of staff development was 0.75 for the 6th grade staff members (6-1, 6-2), 0.0 for the 7th grade staff members (7-1, 7-2) 1.0 for the 8th grade staff members (8-1, 8-2), 0.75 for the Encore staff members (E-1, E-2), and 0.75 for the Specialist staff members (S-1, S-2).

**Staff Development.** Responses to question number 1 (Q1) from the School Schedule Interview Survey, *Do you feel the current schedule has had a positive impact on time available for staff development*, included:

(6-1) "I feel it has been extremely positive because of the opportunity to sit down with colleagues in the same subject matter, or others to share instructional strategies. The colleagues I work with are very willing to share ideas and things that they learn and bring back from conferences. It has been significantly different from the previous schedule. We have more time, but more importantly, we have common time."

(6-2) "With the schedule, it is very, very beneficial to the new teachers, or substitute teachers, who are on long-term assignment. To have

the time we have in planning allows us time to go over any new materials to plan together as a team."

(7-1) "I have been able to spend some time with people on the staff that have some special talents and really learn from them, such as the Internet and other technologies like the computerized gradebook program. We spend approximately 20 minutes each day doing staff development activities."

(7-2) "As an individual team, it has been wonderful. The time is built right in to make it happen."

(8-1) "There is no doubt that the schedule helps me plan with my 8th grade curriculum people, and also allows me time to get down and communicate with other math teachers in the 6th and 7th grade wings."

(8-2) "I think the schedule has been great because there is an extended period of time to get into a good conversation about the kind of stuff that really matters, instead of 5 minutes where we have to cover stuff and have to leave. It has been very nice to keep the other teachers up with the social studies curriculum changes."

(E-1) "Time that has been set up for the Encore teachers to meet together on a weekly basis with the administrators. On a regular basis, there is time to talk about how things are going in the school, what needs we have, and direction the curriculum is going."

(E-2) "The planning together as a house is really important, though as Encore, we don't integrate much, but sharing each other's ideas is really great."

(S-1) "I feel more connected to the other teachers because I am able to attend the house meetings. In the past I was kind of isolated as a Life Skills teacher."

(S-2) "At the 6th grade level, I scheduled time during teacher prep time to meet with teams to provide instructional practices and strategies to teachers in dealing with my kids."

**Instructional Preparation.** Table 5 reports the distribution of data from the School Schedule Questionnaire Survey for each of the subjects in the area of instructional preparation.

School Schedule Questionnaire Survey statement number 5 (S5), *The current school schedule has had a positive impact on time available for lesson preparation*, received a mean score of 4.2, with 50% of the subjects (6-2, 7-1, 8-2, E-1, E-2) giving a response of strongly agree (SA), and 30% of the subjects (6-1, 8-1, S-2) giving a response of agree (A). Three of the six teachers providing instruction to only 6th, 7th, or 8th grade students in the core academic areas of math, science, social studies, and language arts (6-2, 7-1, 8-2) gave a response of strongly agree (SA), and one of the six (7-2) gave a response of disagree (D). Two of the four teachers who



Table 5

Summary of Subjects' Responses to Statements Regarding Time for Instructional Preparation (N=10)

Statement	6-1	6-2	7-1	7-2	8-1	8-2	E-1	E-2	S-1	S-2	MEAN
S5	4	5	5	2	4	5	5	5	3	4	4.20
S6	4	5	4	4	5	5	4	5	3	4	4.30
S7	2	4	5	4	4	5	5	5	3	4	4.10
S8	4	4	5	4	4	5	5	4	5	4	4.40
SUB MEAN	3.50	4.50	4.75	3.50	4.25	5.00	4.75	4.75	3.50	4.00	4.25
SD											0.59
Z-SCORE	-1.27	0.42	0.85	-1.27	0.00	1.27	0.85	0.85	-1.27	-0.42	
T-SCORE	37.27	54.24	58.49	37.27	50.00	62.73	58.49	58.49	37.27	45.76	

provide instruction to students in all three grades (E-1, E-2) gave a response of strongly agree (SA).

School Schedule Questionnaire Survey statement number 6 (S6), *The current school schedule has had a positive impact on time available for materials collection and organization*, received a mean score of 4.3, with 50% of the subjects (6-1, 7-1, 7-2, E-1, E-2) giving a response of agree (A), and 40% of the subjects (6-2, 8-1, 8-2, E-2) giving a response of strongly agree (SA). Three of the six teachers providing instruction to only 6th, 7th, or 8th grade students in the core academic areas of math, science, social studies, and language arts (6-1, 7-1, 7-2) gave a response of agree (A), while the other three teachers (6-2, 8-1, 8-2) gave a response of strongly agree (SA).

School Schedule Questionnaire Survey statement number 7 (S7), *The current school schedule has had a positive impact on time available for assessing and recording of student work*, received a mean score of 4.1, with 40% of the subjects (7-1, 8-2, E-1, E-2) giving a response of strongly agree (SA), and 40% of the subjects (6-2, 7-2, 8-1, S-2) giving a response of agree (A). Five of the six teachers providing instruction to only 6th, 7th, or 8th grade students in the core academic areas of math, science, social studies, and language arts (6-2, 7-1, 7-2, 8-1, 8-2) gave a response of agree (A) or strongly agree (SA), while one of the six (6-1) gave a response of disagree (D). Two of the four teachers who provide instruction to

students in all three grades (E-1, E-2) gave a response of strongly agree (SA).

School Schedule Questionnaire Survey statement number 8 (S8), *The current school schedule has had a positive impact on time available for communicating about student progress with students, parents, and colleagues*, received a mean score of 4.4, with 40% of the subjects (7-1, 8-2, E-1, S-1) giving a response of strongly agree (SA), and 60% of the subjects (6-1, 6-2, 7-2, 8-1, E-2, S-2) giving a response of agree (A). Two of the six teachers providing instruction to only 6th, 7th, or 8th grade students in the core academic areas of math, science, social studies, and language arts (7-1, 8-2) gave a response of strongly agree (SA), while four to the six gave a response of agree (A). Two of the four teachers who provide instruction to students in all three grades (E-1, S-1) gave a response of strongly agree (SA), while the other two gave a response of agree (A).

The mean score for the four statements related to instructional preparation was 4.25 out of a possible 5.0, with a standard deviation of 0.59. The range of scores was 1.5 with one subject (8-2) having a sub mean score of 5.0, and three subjects (6-1, 7-2, S-1) having a sub mean score of 3.5. Of the four statements related to instructional preparation (S5, S6, S7, S8), *Time available for assessing and recording of student work* (S7), had the lowest mean score of 4.1. The statement which received the

greatest mean score of 4.4 was, *Time available to communicate about student progress with students, parents, and colleagues* (S8).

The data collected for the stratified samples for each "house" indicates that the range of scores in the area of instructional preparation was 1.0 for the 6th grade staff members (6-1, 6-2), 1.25 for the 7th grade staff members (7-1, 7-2), 0.75 for the 8th grade staff members (8-1, 8-2), 0.0 for the Encore staff members (E-1, E-2), and 0.5 for the Specialist staff members (S-1, S-2).

**Instructional Preparation.** Responses to question number 2 (Q2) from the School Schedule Interview Survey, *Do you feel the current schedule has had a positive impact on time for class and instructional responsibilities*, included:

(6-1) "It has been very positive within the school day. I don't use it necessarily for grading. I use it for contacting colleagues, particularly when I am teaching science. We have a new math colleague on the 6th grade staff. He has new ideas, as well as, needs information about the curriculum. The availability to share those ideas is critical."

(6-2) "It's a dual thing. With more time, you can have better planning with your team, to learn about Certificate of Initial Mastery (CIM) tasks, and to talk as a team. Before you would have been doing it solo."

(7-1) "I try to spend 10 minutes each day searching out resources, either through the Education Service District (ESD) or through my colleagues."

(7-2) "I think it is terrible. I sometimes think we had more time before, because there is so much time, we feel we can have this meeting, that meeting, and prep time happens after school or early in the morning."

(8-1) "There is no way I could have enough time with all the assessments and scoring of tasks I have to do, but without the time we have, I would be sunk. I don't think we could implement any of the changes in the way we want to assess students at the middle level without the proper time to get items scored during prep and class time."

(8-2) "It allows for personal and group prep time, where you can do your individual things, as well as, speak about students and the daily schedule."

(E-1) "With the 90 minute block of course, there is a lot more time to do it because there is large blocks of time. It is an effective use of time, we are able to get the job done a lot better by having more time to do it. I have an extended period of time available so I can get things organized and I don't need someone to cover my class. I can go over to the high school and talk with Dana L. and visit classes and see what is happening over there. Preparing for the jazz festival, lots of letters and invitation writing, as well as, calling to directors and judges."

(E-2) "There is more time to get things done."

(S-1) "My kids are now involved in the Encore classes which allow me to do more planning."

(S-2) "I spend more time during prep getting to know the teacher and student strengths, so when it comes to prep, I end up doing it after school on my own time."

**Staff Collaboration.** Table 6 reports the distribution of data from the School Schedule Questionnaire Survey for each of the subjects in the area of staff collaboration.

School Schedule Questionnaire Survey statement number 9 (S9), *The current school schedule has had a positive impact on time available to meet to discuss individual students' academic progress and behavior*, received a mean score of 4.1, with 40% of the subjects (7-1, 7-2, 8-2, E-1) giving a response of strongly agree (SA), and 40% of the subjects (6-2, 8-1, S-1, S-2) giving a response of agree (A). Three of the six teachers providing instruction to only 6th, 7th, or 8th grade students in the core academic areas of math, science, social studies, and language arts (7-1, 7-2, 8-2) gave a response of strongly agree (SA), and one of the six (6-1) gave a response of undecided (U). Two of the four teachers who provide instruction to students in all three grades (S-1, S-2) gave a response of agree (A), while one of the four (E-2) gave a response of disagree (D).

Table 6

Summary of Subjects' Responses to Statements Regarding Time for Staff Collaboration (N=10)

Statement	6-1	6-2	7-1	7-2	8-1	8-2	E-1	E-2	S-1	S-2	MEAN
S9	3	4	5	5	4	5	5	2	4	4	4.10
S10	5	5	5	4	3	5	4	4	4	4	4.30
S11	2	4	4	3	3	3	4	4	4	4	3.50
S12	3	4	3	4	3	5	4	2	5	3	3.60
SUB MEAN	3.25	4.25	4.25	4.00	3.25	4.50	4.25	3.00	4.25	3.75	3.88
SD											0.53
Z-SCORE	-1.18	0.71	0.71	0.24	-1.18	1.18	0.71	-1.65	0.71	-0.24	
T-SCORE	38.21	57.07	57.07	52.36	38.21	61.79	57.07	33.50	57.07	47.64	

School Schedule Questionnaire Survey statement number 10 (S10), *The current school schedule has had a positive impact on time available to meet to plan and organize events and activities*, received a mean score of 4.3, with 40% of the subjects (6-1, 6-2, 7-1, 8-2) giving a response of strongly agree (SA), and 50% of the subjects (7-2, E-1, E-2, S-1, S-2) giving a response of agree (A). Four of the six teachers providing instruction to only 6th, 7th, or 8th grade students in the core academic areas of math, science, social studies, and language arts (6-1, 6-2, 7-1, 8-2) gave a response of strongly agree (SA), and one of the six (8-1) gave a response of undecided (U). All four of the teachers who provide instruction to students in all three grades (E-1, E-2, S-1, S-2) gave a response of agree (A).

School Schedule Questionnaire Survey statement number 11 (S11), *The current school schedule has had a positive impact on time available to meet and share information with groups*, received a mean score of 3.5, with 60% of the subjects (6-2, 7-1, E-1, E-2, S-1, S-2) giving a response of agree (A), and 30% of the subjects (7-2, 8-1, 8-2) giving a response of undecided (U). Two of the six teachers providing instruction to only 6th, 7th, or 8th grade students in the core academic areas of math, science, social studies, and language arts (6-1, 7-1) gave a response of agree (A), and one of the six (6-1) gave a response of disagree (D). All of the teachers who



provide instruction to students in all three grades (E-1, E-2, S-1, S-2) gave a response of agree (A).

School Schedule Questionnaire Survey statement number 12 (S12), *The current school schedule has had a positive impact on time available to meet to celebrate individual and group accomplishments*, received a mean score of 3.6, with 20% of the subjects (8-2, S-1) giving a response of strongly agree (SA), and 40% of the subjects (6-1, 7-1, 8-1, S-2) giving a response of undecided (U). One of the six teachers providing instruction to only 6th, 7th, or 8th grade students in the core academic areas of math, science, social studies, and language arts (8-2) gave a response of strongly agree (SA), and three of the six (6-1, 7-1, 8-1) gave a response of undecided (U). One of the four teachers who provide instruction to students in all three grades (S-1) gave a response of strongly agree (SA), while one of the four (E-2) gave a response of disagree (D).

The mean score for the four statements related to staff collaboration was 3.88 out of a possible 5.0, with a standard deviation of 0.53. The range of scores was 1.5 with one subject (8-2) having a sub mean score of 4.5, and one subject (E-2) having a sub mean score of 3.0. Of the four statements related to staff collaboration (S9, S10, S11, S12), *Time available to meet and share information with groups* (S11), had the lowest mean score of 3.5. The statement which received the greatest mean score

of 4.3 was, *Time available to meet to plan and organize events and activities* (S10).

The data collected for the stratified samples for each "house" indicates that the range of scores in the area of staff collaboration was 1.0 for the 6th grade staff members (6-1, 6-2), 0.25 for the 7th grade staff members (7-1, 7-2), 1.25 for the 8th grade staff members (8-1, 8-2), 1.25 for the Encore staff members (E-1, E-2), and 0.5 for the Specialist staff members (S-1, S-2).

**Staff Collaboration.** Responses to question number 3 (Q3) from the School Schedule Interview Survey, *Do you feel the current schedule has had a positive impact on time for staff collaboration*, included:

(6-1) "We meet three or more times per week as a house to communicate, collaborate, for the interchange of ideas, or designing plans such as the day's schedule, the nuts and bolts, what works best, or just talking about the kids. The common time allows us the time to do those types of things."

(6-2) "Wonderful. It enables us the opportunity to focus on people's strengths to develop as a team. It lets us find out what each of us does well, so one person's strengths covers for someone else's weakness."

(7-1) "Under the other system, we might have gotten together once per week. Under this system, every day for 15 minutes, regardless. Even if

it is time to debrief. It is one of the best situations I have had as far as working with other staff members."

(7-2) "It's wonderful on the team. Our integrated activities have improved greatly. We plan all of our activities around common cross curriculum, like the tri-fold environmental activity we are currently doing."

(8-1) "It is very, very good. The teaming time is fantastic, meeting about a kid, or subject, or an integrated project we are working on. It can allow time for all the people involved. The time to parent conference with all the team members is great."

(8-2) "It is especially nice to communicate about behavioral issues and our students. We have time to bring students in for a group conference. We are able to do a great deal of integration of activities and planning for cooperative projects."

(E-1) "Long blocks of time to meet and plan events such as the All-School Olympics that we did last year. Meeting together on a regular basis to get to know the other Encore teachers on a personal basis. Recently we were able to share strategies that worked in class to handle classroom management and students that need our attention. Seven or eight of us were able to share and I was able to glean some things from some of the other Encore teachers that I am now implementing, and they are working well in class. I was also able to share some things that others are now using."

(E-2) "Encore teachers don't collaborate on curriculum as much as the other houses, but we can collaborate on activities and projects such as the Fine Arts Night."

(S-1) "I'm kind of an outside observer, but I see the opportunity to collaborate more through the house format and common time."

(S-2) "Better, I mean yes. I can get to a teacher to help adjust the curriculum and suggest different expectations for students. This is easier when working with teams."

**Student Achievement.** Table 7 reports the distribution of data from the School Schedule Questionnaire Survey for each of the subjects in the area of student achievement.

School Schedule Questionnaire Survey statement number 13 (S13), *The current school schedule has had a positive impact on students' daily classroom scores*, received a mean score of 3.4, with 50% of the subjects (6-2, 7-2, 8-1, 8-2, S-2) giving a response of agree (A), and 40% of the subjects (6-1, 7-1, E-1, S-2) giving a response of undecided (U). Four of the six teachers providing instruction to only 6th, 7th, or 8th grade students in the core academic areas of math, science, social studies, and language arts (6-2, 7-2, 8-1, 8-2) gave a response of agree (A), and two of the six (6-1, 7-1) gave a response of undecided (U). One of the teachers who provide instruction to students in all three grades (E-2) gave a response of disagree (D), and one teacher (S-2) gave a response of agree (A).

Table 7

Summary of Subjects' Responses to Statements Regarding Student Achievement (N=10)

Statement	6-1	6-2	7-1	7-2	8-1	8-2	E-1	E-2	S-1	S-2	MEAN
S13	3	4	3	4	4	4	3	2	3	4	3.40
S14	3	4	4	4	3	4	3	3	3	4	3.50
S15	3	3	3	3	3	3	4	3	3	3	3.10
S16	3	4	3	4	4	4	3	3	3	3	3.40
SUB MEAN	3.00	3.75	3.25	3.75	3.50	3.75	3.25	2.75	3.00	3.50	3.35
SD											0.36
Z-SCORE	-0.98	1.12	-0.28	1.12	0.42	1.12	-0.28	-1.68	-0.98	0.42	
T-SCORE	40.21	61.19	47.20	61.19	54.20	61.19	47.20	33.21	40.21	54.20	

School Schedule Questionnaire Survey statement number 14 (S14), *The current school schedule has had a positive impact on students' mid-term and end-of-term progress summary results*, received a mean score of 3.5, with 50% of the subjects (6-2, 7-1, 7-2, 8-2, S-2) giving a response of agree (A), and 50% of the subjects (6-1, 8-1, E-1, E-2, S-1) giving a response of undecided (U). Four of the six teachers providing instruction to only 6th, 7th, or 8th grade students in the core academic areas of math, science, social studies, and language arts (6-2, 7-1, 7-2, 8-2) gave a response of agree (A), and two of the six (6-1, 8-1) gave a response of undecided (U). Three of the four teachers who provide instruction to students in all three grades (E-1, E-2, S-1) gave a response of undecided (U), while one (S-2) gave a response of agree (A).

School Schedule Questionnaire Survey statement number 15 (S15), *The current school schedule has had a positive impact on students' content retention*, received a mean score of 3.1, with 90% of the subjects (6-1, 6-2, 7-1, 7-2, 8-1, 8-2, E-2, S-1, S-2) giving a response of undecided (U), and 10% of the subjects (E-1) giving a response of agree (A). All six teachers providing instruction to only 6th, 7th, or 8th grade students in the core academic areas of math, science, social studies, and language arts (6-1, 6-2, 7-1, 7-2, 8-1, 8-2) gave a response of undecided (U), and all but one of the four teachers who provide instruction to students in all three grades (E-1) gave a response of undecided (U).

School Schedule Questionnaire Survey statement number 16 (S16), *The current school schedule has had a positive impact on students' standardized assessment scores*, received a mean score of 3.4, with 60% of the subjects (6-1, 7-1, E-1, E-2, S-1, S-2) giving a response of undecided (U), and 40% of the subjects (6-2, 7-2, 8-1, 8-2) giving a response of agree (A). Four of the six teachers providing instruction to only 6th, 7th, or 8th grade students in the core academic areas of math, science, social studies, and language arts (6-2, 7-2, 8-1, 8-2) gave a response of agree (A), and two of the six (6-1, 7-1) gave a response of undecided (U). All four of the teachers who provide instruction to students in all three grades (E-1, E-2, S-1, S-2) gave a response of undecided (U).

The mean score for the four statements related to student achievement was 3.35 out of a possible 5.0, with a standard deviation of 0.36. The range of scores was 1.0 with three subjects (6-2, 7-2, 8-2) having a sub mean score of 3.75, and one subject (E-2) having a sub mean score of 2.75. Of the four statements related to student achievement (S13, S14, S15, S16), *Time available to have a positive impact on students' content retention* (S15), had the lowest mean score of 3.1. The statement which received the greatest mean score of 3.5 was, *Time available to have a positive impact on students' mid-term and end-of-term progress summary results* (S14).

The data collected for the stratified samples for each "house" indicates that the range of scores in the area of student achievement was 0.75 for the 6th grade staff members (6-1, 6-2), 0.5 for the 7th grade staff members (7-1, 7-2), 0.25 for the 8th grade staff members (8-1, 8-2), 0.5 for the Encore staff members (E-1, E-2), and 0.5 for the Specialist staff members (S-1, S-2).

**Student Achievement.** Responses to question number 4 (Q4) from the School Schedule Interview Survey, *Do you feel the current schedule has had a positive impact on student achievement*, included:

(6-1) "I found this very difficult to answer in the survey. In my view, I think it probably has, but I can't think of any kind of direct link that I'm thinking of that has something to do with achievement. It also has to do with how you're measuring achievement. I think it has enabled us to, one, provide a very enriching, very complete, very hands-on nurturing 6th grade program. If that has had a direct result on some kid's achievement, that's hard to say, but I do think it has had an indirect result, if not direct. I have to believe the time has had a positive result on being prepared for class when the kids walk in."

(6-2) "I think I'm undecided. When we have more time to plan and make that planning cover the TAG, regular, and lower students' needs, we do a better job of reaching everyone, but sometimes you can teach your heart out, and you still can't reach that child."



(7-1) "I'm still trying to figure that one out. I know that having better preparation, better resources, in the long run is definitely going to have a positive impact student achievement."

(7-2) "Absolutely, we have a blanket policy that when we meet with students or parents, we do so as a team. I would say it has had a tremendous impact on student achievement."

(8-1) "It allow us to better plan, and be better prepared. If our lessons are better prepared, kids are going to get more out of them. They are going to score better on anything they do." "In a regular schedule where me and Mr. D. have different prep periods, that would be impossible to have consistent assessment of tasks at the 8th grade for math."

(8-2) "We have been able to keep up with the kids more. If a student is falling down in one class then we can communicate with other teachers quicker." "Student achievement is directly tied to student behavior, so when we can communicate about behavior, we can keep the students up and running."

(E-1) "The idea of having more time with fewer students, getting to know the students better; you are able to meet their needs a lot better with that long block of time, as opposed to having a lot of students for a bang-bang-bang short period of time. I think my kids are better prepared for their performances because they have a long 90-minute block of time. You can

work with the kids as far as how they are going to get on and off the risers and behave at the concert, transitions, etc."

(S-1) "Speaking about my students, they have been involved in Encore and other classes. They are beginning to participate in sports and this has had a major impact on their school success. I feel better connected to the other teachers because I have gotten to know them better."

(S-2) "I really thought about that. A good number of my students have so many other issues that effect them. I think the schedule impacts their learning to a degree, but it's hard to show on paper that we are making headway."

**Student Contact Overload.** Table 8 reports the distribution of data from the School Schedule Questionnaire Survey for each of the subjects in the area of student contact overload.

School Schedule Questionnaire Survey statement number 17 (S17), *The current school schedule has had a positive impact on reducing the number of students you instruct each day*, received a mean score of 2.8, with 30% of the subjects (6-1, 8-1, E-2) giving a response of strongly disagree (SD), 30% of the subjects (6-2, 7-1, S-2) giving a response of undecided (U), and 20% of the subjects (8-1, E-1) giving a response of strongly agree (SA). Two of the six teachers providing instruction to only 6th, 7th, or 8th grade students in the core academic areas of math, science, social studies, and language arts (6-1, 8-2) gave a response of strongly

Table 8

Summary of Subjects' Responses to Statements Regarding Student Contact Overload (N=10)

Statement	6-1	6-2	7-1	7-2	8-1	8-2	E-1	E-2	S-1	S-2	MEAN
S17	1	3	3	2	5	1	5	1	4	3	2.80
S18	2	3	4	5	5	1	5	1	4	3	3.30
S19	1	2	3	5	5	3	5	1	4	4	3.30
S20	1	4	3	5	4	3	5	1	4	4	3.40
SUB MEAN	1.25	3.00	3.25	4.25	4.75	2.00	5.00	1.00	4.00	3.50	3.20
SD											1.40
Z-SCORE	-1.39	-0.14	0.04	0.75	1.11	-0.86	1.29	-1.57	0.57	0.21	
T-SCORE	36.06	48.57	50.36	57.51	61.08	41.42	62.87	34.27	55.72	52.15	

disagree (SD), and one of the six (7-2) gave a response of disagree (D).

One of the teachers who provides instruction to students in all three grades (E-2) gave a response of strongly disagree (SD), and one teacher (E-1) gave a response of strongly agree (SA).

School Schedule Questionnaire Survey statement number 18 (S18), *The current school schedule has had a positive impact on reducing the number of assessments you do each day*, received a mean score of 3.3, with 30% of the subjects (7-2, 8-1, E-1) giving a response of strongly agree (SA), 20% of the subjects (8-2, E-2) giving a response of strongly disagree (SD), and 20% of the subjects (6-2, S-2) giving a response of undecided (U). Two of the six teachers providing instruction to only 6th, 7th, or 8th grade students in the core academic areas of math, science, social studies, and language arts (7-2, 8-1) gave a response of strongly agree (SA), and one of the six (8-2) gave a response of strongly disagree (SD). One of the teachers who provides instruction to students in all three grades (E-2) gave a response of strongly disagree (SD), and one teacher (E-1) gave a response of strongly agree (SA).

School Schedule Questionnaire Survey statement number 19 (S19), *The current school schedule has had a positive impact on increasing the time you have to work with students each day*, received a mean score of 3.3, with 30% of the subjects (7-2, 8-1, E-1) giving a response of strongly agree (SA), 20% of the subjects (6-1, E-2) giving a response of strongly

disagree (SD), and 20% of the subjects (7-1, 8-2) giving a response of undecided (U). Two of the six teachers providing instruction to only 6th, 7th, or 8th grade students in the core academic areas of math, science, social studies, and language arts (7-2, 8-1) gave a response of strongly agree (SA), and two of the six (7-1, 8-2) gave a response of undecided (U). One of the teachers who provides instruction to students in all three grades (E-1) gave a response of strongly agree (SA), and one teacher (E-2) gave a response of strongly disagree (SD).

School Schedule Questionnaire Survey statement number 20 (S20), *The current school schedule has had a positive impact on the time you have to communicate with students each day*, received a mean score of 3.4, with 20% of the subjects (7-2, E-1) giving a response of strongly agree (SA), 40% of the subjects (6-2, 8-1, S-1, S-2) giving a response of agree (A), and 20% of the subjects (6-1, E-2) giving a response of strongly disagree (SD). Two of the six teachers providing instruction to only 6th, 7th, or 8th grade students in the core academic areas of math, science, social studies, and language arts (6-2, 8-1) gave a response of agree (A), and two of the six (7-1, 8-2) gave a response of undecided (U). One of the teachers who provides instruction to students in all three grades (E-2) gave a response of strongly disagree (SD), and one teacher (E-1) gave a response of strongly agree (SA).

The mean score for the four statements related to student contact overload was 3.20 out of a possible 5.0, with a standard deviation of 1.40. The range of scores was 4.0 with one subject (E-1) having a sub mean score of 5.0, and one subject (E-2) having a sub mean score of 1.0. Of the four statements related to student contact overload (S17, S18, S19, S20), *Time available to have a positive impact on reducing the number of students you instruct each day* (S17), had the lowest mean score of 2.8. The statement which received the greatest mean score of 3.4 was *Time available to communicate with students each day* (S20).

The data collected for the stratified samples for each "house" indicates that the range of scores in the area of student contact overload is 1.75 for the 6th grade staff members (6-1, 6-2), 1.0 for the 7th grade staff members (7-1, 7-2), 2.75 for the 8th grade staff members (8-1, 8-2), 4.0 for the Encore staff members (E-1, E-2), and 0.5 for the Specialist staff members (S-1, S-2).

**Student Contact Overload.** Responses to question number 5(Q5) from the School Schedule Interview Survey, *Do you feel the current schedule has had a positive impact on your feeling of student contact overload*, included:

(6-1) "Much to my surprise I have found that I have come to relish having one, or two, or three groups of kids that I am principally responsible

for, and get to spend more than forty-five minutes with them. It has been family - like. We are like a little family."

(6-2) "This schedule has given us lots of flexibility. We can contact individuals and parents to discuss concerns we are having."

(7-1) "It has reduced my stress load because of the ability to work with youngsters who need some special or extended contact, such as a short conference to discuss concerns."

(7-2) "We could not teach the way we do now without the time we currently have."

(8-1) "This schedule is much less stressful by far than any schedule I have been in, especially with the amount of students I see in one day, as opposed to 6 periods per day. The thing that hammers a teacher the most is trying to communicate with all the parents, and trying to get all the assessing done, and all the scoring and grading done. This schedule really helps us because you are dealing with fewer numbers of kids per day. This is much better on me and my stress level, and how I feel when I come to work every day, verses the regular six periods and 45 minute prep each day."

(8-2) "Now I feel a little bit more relaxed at the end of the day. I can communicate with my colleagues about the kids I have had major concerns with. I have been able to vent, and I am not taking it home each day. I see fewer students each day, but my class size is still high, say 32 students."

(E-1) "90 minute blocks are a lot better. You can be a more effective teacher, because you can meet the student's needs with fewer students for a longer period of time."

(S-1) "My student load is quite nice. I have plenty of time to plan for my students."

(S-2) "I think it has made a big impact on my day. I am now actually in the classroom. I feel like I can meet with all the kids who need help. We are now not cut off from the other teachers. I am closer to the team and house."

**School Climate.** Table 9 reports the distribution of data from the School Schedule Questionnaire Survey for each of the subjects in the area of school climate.

School Schedule Questionnaire Survey statement number 21 (S21), *The current school schedule has had a positive impact on your assessment of the school's atmosphere*, received a mean score of 3.8, with 40% of the subjects (6-1, 8-2, E-1, S-2) giving a response of strongly agree (SA), and 20% of the subjects (6-2, 7-1) giving a response of agree (A). Two of the six teachers providing instruction to only 6th, 7th, or 8th grade students in the core academic areas of math, science, social studies, and language arts (6-1, 8-2) gave a response of strongly agree (SA), and two of the six (6-2, 7-1) gave a response of agree (A). Two of the four teachers who provide instruction to students in all three grades (E-1, S-2) gave a response of



Table 9

Summary of Subjects' Responses to Statements Regarding School Climate (N=10)

Statement	6-1	6-2	7-1	7-2	8-1	8-2	E-1	E-2	S-1	S-2	MEAN
S21	5	4	4	2	3	5	5	2	3	5	3.80
S22	5	4	4	4	4	3	4	2	4	4	3.80
S23	2	4	4	2	4	5	4	2	3	4	3.40
S24	2	4	3	5	4	3	4	4	5	5	3.90
S25	1	4	4	2	4	5	4	4	5	5	3.80
SUB MEAN	3.00	4.00	3.80	3.00	3.80	4.20	4.20	2.80	4.00	4.60	3.74
SD											0.60
Z-SCORE	-1.23	0.43	0.10	-1.23	0.10	0.76	0.76	-1.56	0.43	1.42	
T-SCORE	37.75	54.30	50.99	37.75	50.99	57.62	57.62	34.44	54.30	64.24	

strongly agree (SA), and one teacher (E-2) gave a response of disagree (D).

School Schedule Questionnaire Survey statement number 22 (S22), *The current school schedule has had a positive impact on your assessment of increased parent and community participation*, received a mean score of 3.8, with 70% of the subjects (6-2, 7-1, 7-2, 8-1, E-1, S-1, S-2) giving a response of agree (A). Four of the six teachers providing instruction to only 6th, 7th, or 8th grade students in the core academic areas of math, science, social studies, and language arts (6-2, 7-1, 7-2, 8-1) gave a response of agree (A), and one of the six (6-1) gave a response of strongly agree (SA). Three of the four teachers who provide instruction to students in all three grades (E-1, S-1, S-2) gave a response of agree (A), and one teacher (E-2) gave a response of disagree (D).

School Schedule Questionnaire Survey statement number 23 (S23), *The current school schedule has had a positive impact on your assessment of student and staff attitudes*, received a mean score of 3.4, with 50% of the subjects (6-2, 7-1, 8-1, E-1, S-2) giving a response of agree (A), and 30% of the subjects (6-1, 7-2, E-2) giving a response of disagree (D). Three of the six teachers providing instruction to only 6th, 7th, or 8th grade students in the core academic areas of math, science, social studies, and language arts (6-2, 7-1, 8-1) gave a response of agree (A), and one of the six (8-2) gave a response of strongly agree (SA). Two of the four teachers who

provide instruction to students in all three grades (E-1, S-2) gave a response of agree (A), and one teacher (E-2) gave a response of disagree (D).

School Schedule Questionnaire Survey statement number 24 (S24), *The current school schedule has had a positive impact on your assessment of increased student activity participation*, received a mean score of 3.9, with 40% of the subjects (6-2, 8-1, E-1, E-2) giving a response of agree (A), and 30% of the subjects (7-2, S-1, S-2) giving a response of strongly agree (SA). Three of the six teachers providing instruction to only 6th, 7th, or 8th grade students in the core academic areas of math, science, social studies, and language arts (6-2, 7-2, 8-1) gave a response of strongly agree (SA) or agree (A), and one of the six (6-1) gave a response of disagree (D). All of the teachers who provide instruction to students in all three grades (E-1, E-2, S-1, S-2) gave a response of strongly disagree (SD) or agree (A).

School Schedule Questionnaire Survey statement number 25 (S25), *The current school schedule has had a positive impact on your assessment of staff collaboration and socialization*, received a mean score of 3.7, with 50% of the subjects (6-2, 7-1, 8-1, E-1, E-2) agree (A), and 30% of the subjects (8-2, S-1, S-2) giving a response of strongly agree (SA). Four of the six teachers providing instruction to only 6th, 7th, or 8th grade students in the core academic areas of math, science, social studies, and language arts (6-2, 7-1, 8-1, 8-2) gave a response of strongly agree (SD) or agree

(A), and one of the six (6-1) gave a response of strongly disagree (SD). All of the teachers who provide instruction to students in all three grades (E-1, E-2, S-1, S-2) gave a response of strongly agree (SA) or agree (A).

The mean score for the five statements related to school climate was 3.74 out of a possible 5.0, with a standard deviation of 0.60. The range of scores was 1.8 with one subjects (S-2) having a sub mean score of 4.6, and one subject (E-2) having a sub mean score of 2.8. Of the five statements related to school climate (S21, S22, S23, S24, S25), *Time available to have a positive impact on your assessment of student and staff attitudes* (S23), had the lowest mean score of 3.4. The statement which received the greatest mean score of 3.9 was, *Time available to have a positive impact on your assessment of increased student activity participation* (S24).

The data collected for the stratified samples for each "house" indicates that the range of scores in the area of school climate was 1.0 for the 6th grade staff members (6-1, 6-2), 0.8 for the 7th grade staff members (7-1, 7-2), 0.4 for the 8th grade staff members (8-1, 8-2), 1.4 for the Encore staff members (E-1, E-2), and 0.8 for the Specialist staff members (S-1, S-2).

**School Climate.** Responses to question number 6 (Q6) from the School Schedule Interview Survey, *Do you feel the current schedule has had a positive impact on your assessment of the overall school climate*, included:

(6-1) "I think a schedule can definitely have an impact on school climate. I think it has had a positive impact on parents: that, one, we are available; two, we are in long blocks where kids spend two-thirds of their day with the team; and it has allowed an easier transition for students into middle school. It has helped the students' transition to school better. The schedule has allowed us to do other things such as go bowling and do community service, which has a positive effect of what parents feel about our school."

(6-2) "As you give people more tasks to do, when you ask people to raise achievement scores, if you don't give the time to do it, people get really frustrated. When people are given time to get the things done they are more positive and willing to put in the extra time."

(7-1) "Within the 7th grade house we are able to interact, feel more together; spending time together that isn't all stress time. That has made it feel better at school. I think people are feeling less stressed at the end of the day. We have had more socials; time to spend together as a staff, where in the past we didn't, or didn't want to take the time."

(7-2) "I really don't have any idea. I really have less contact with the others on the staff because we are in our own little world planning for our kids."

(8-1) "Of all the positives this schedule has, this gets knocked a little bit, and that's just because of the fact that adults and the staff, they are

limited by the people they get to see due to their prep times. Other teachers are in class and involved with classes while you are on prep."

(8-2) "I think the school climate is better with this schedule. There is time when the climate takes a nose-dive, say at grade time, but I think the schedule has been great all around. I would not want to change it. It has been good for student achievement, for the behavior angles of it, collaborating with your colleagues, it makes for a happier place for working."

(E-1) "I have been at Patton for 11 years. With the schedule, I am better able to get to know the other teacher in my area. The Encore team has come a lot closer together than it was before, instead of just doing your own thing in your own little area. Meeting twice every week, we are able to share and find out what they are doing so we can blend that together better with what the other Encore areas are doing. I think the schedule has been positive on student behavior. Getting to know the students better and spending more time with them; they feel more secure in the room, and feel like you know them better on a personal basis. I think it has had a good impact on the kids."

(E-2) "I think just the fact that they have an opportunity to access Encore classes impacts school climate. I don't know if the schedule, per se, effects school climate."

(S-1) "There are many factors that effect school climate, but the schedule has had a positive impact on the school climate. It has allowed us to share with each other and pull together as a staff."

(S-2) "The old schedule didn't lead itself to communication between teachers and classes about student progress." "The prep time has allowed us to modify curriculum that all of us are doing. We can get together during our prep time to get things done."

## **Chapter V**

### **CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The purpose of this study was to examine the effects of a change in a daily schedule at one middle school in a community located in the Pacific Northwest. The schedule changes were examined as they related to teacher perceptions about time for staff development, instructional preparation, and staff collaboration. Additionally, the study examined the relevant teacher perceptions regarding student achievement, student contact overload, and school climate as a result of the change in the school's schedule.

The questions that emerged as the focus for this study included the following:

- 1) How does a school's schedule effect teacher perceptions about time for staff development, instructional preparation, and staff collaboration?
- 2) How does the school's schedule effect teacher perceptions about student achievement, student contact overload, and school climate?

Consequently, the primary question presented in this study sought to examine if the school's schedule had an influence on teacher perceptions regarding time available to conduct the primary tasks associated with their



professional development as educators: staff development, instructional preparation, and staff collaboration.

Subjects for this study were from a convenience sample of ten licensed classroom teachers and specialists at the site school, two from each of the six organizational units, or “houses” within the school. In order to investigate the research questions, data were collected using two instruments:

- 1) School Schedule Questionnaire Survey.
- 2) School Schedule Interview Survey.

The data obtained from the use of these two instruments were analyzed and organized to report the results of the research based on the following three categories:

- 1) Descriptive data from the demographic results of the School Schedule Questionnaire Survey.
- 2) Descriptive data from the responses to the statements in the School Schedule Questionnaire Survey.
- 3) Descriptive data from the responses to the questions in the School Schedule Interview Survey.

The following conclusions, implications and recommendations are based on the results of these data.

## **Conclusions**

**Demographic Data.** The study sample represented a group of licensed classroom teachers and specialists that had an average of 19.4 years in education, with a range of 16 years (8-24). The study sample had an average of 12.8 years in the district, slightly lower (6.6 years) than the average years in education. The average years for the study sample in their current position was 9.0 years, with a range of 16 years (3-19). The average years in the school for the study sample was 9.7 years, similar to the average years in their current position.

The results from the demographic data collected from the School Schedule Questionnaire Survey led the researcher to the following conclusions in this study:

- **Convenience Sample.** Although convenience samples such as the one used in this study cannot be considered to be representative of any general population, the assessment tools for this study were administered to subjects representing various segments of the school community in order to decrease the likelihood that the results obtained in any one assessment were a one-time occurrence. However, it can be concluded that the results of this study apply only to this specific study sample.
- **Years in Education.** In part, the subjects were selected their knowledge about the school's schedule prior to, during, and after

its change. Six of the ten subjects had over 20 years experience in education, another two subjects had 18 and 19 years of experience. Only one of the subjects in the study sample had less than 10 years experience in education.

- **Years in District.** The average year in district (12.8) was considerably less than the average years in education (19.4) for the study sample. It appears from the data for this study sample, that only one of the subjects has worked solely in the site school. Eight of the ten subjects have fewer years in the district than the average years in education for the study sample.
- **Years in Current Position.** The data appears to indicate that six of the ten subjects were hired into their current positions within the district. The data for two of the subjects in the study sample indicate that they have had recent position transfers (within 5 years) with long tenures in the district (20 and 21 years).
- **Years in School.** The data for the study sample indicates that six of the ten subjects have spent the same number of years in the district, in their positions, and in their schools, suggesting their entire tenure in the district has been spent in the site school teaching in their current position.

Based on the demographic data, this study concludes that the years in education, years in district, years in position, and years in school are

significantly different for the subjects in the study sample, and thus, no correlation can be drawn to suggest anything other than the subject are representative of the greater population within the school.

The conclusions that have been drawn from an analysis of the data from the School Schedule Questionnaire Survey statements, and the School Schedule Interview Survey questions are identified below:

- How does the school's schedule effect teacher perceptions about time for staff development?** Nine of the ten subjects had a mean score greater than or equal to 4.00 out of a possible 5.00 for the four statements related to staff development. This indicates that they either agreed to, or strongly agreed to these four statements on the average. The overall mean score for the ten subjects was 4.28 out of a possible 5.00. This was the highest mean score for all the general categories: staff development, instructional preparation, staff collaboration, student achievement, student contact overload, and school climate. Of the four statements related to staff development, *The current school schedule has had a positive impact on time available for communicating with colleagues about individual students*, and *The current school schedule has had a positive impact on time available for communicating about school events*, received the highest mean scores. The statement that had the lowest mean

score was, *The current school schedule has had a positive impact on time available for enhancing professional growth by engaging in relevant activities.* In analyzing the mean score results for these three statements, I conclude that the subjects believed that the schedule had more of an impact on time available to communicate, than it did on time available to engage in professional growth activities. This was reinforced by several of the subject's responses to the interview questions. One subject stated, "I think the schedule has been great because there is an extended period of time to get into a good conversation about the kind of stuff that really matters, instead of five minutes where we have to cover stuff and have to leave." Another subject stated, "I feel it has been extremely positive because of the opportunity to sit down with colleagues in the same subject matter, or others to share instructional strategies." Two other subjects reinforced this view regarding time available to either learn from others, or to share instructional strategies. One subject stated, "I have been able to spend some time with people on the staff that have special talents and really learn from them, such as the Internet and other technologies like the computerized grade book program." The other subject stated, "At the 6<sup>th</sup> grade level, I schedule time during teacher prep to meet with the teams to

provide instructional practices and strategies to teachers in dealing with my kids.” These statements would support literature related to staff development, as illustrated by Little (1994) who stated, “Collaborative work with peers increases teachers’ sense of affiliation with the school and their sense of mutual support and responsibility for the effectiveness of instruction.”

- **How does the school’s schedule effect teacher perceptions about time for instructional preparation?** Seven of the ten subjects had a mean score greater than or equal to 4.00 out of a possible 5.00 for the four statements related to instructional preparation. This indicates that they either agreed to, or strongly agreed to these four statements on the average. The overall mean score for the ten subjects was 4.25 out of a possible 5.00. This was the second highest mean score for all the general categories previously identified. Of the 25 statements on the School Schedule Questionnaire Survey, the four statements related to instructional preparation had the highest individual mean scores, with all four having a mean score greater than 4.00. This indicates that on the average, the subjects felt that schedule had a positive impact on time for instructional preparation. Of the four statements related to instructional preparation, *The current school schedule has had a positive impact on time available for*

*communicating about student progress with students, parents, and colleagues*, received the highest mean score. This is consistent with the two statements related to staff development that received the highest mean score, both of which related to communication issues. In analyzing the four statements related to instructional preparation, I conclude that the subjects felt that the schedule had a positive impact on time for instructional preparation. This was reinforced by the subject's responses to the interview questions. One subject stated, "It has been very positive within the school day. I don't use it necessarily for grading, I use it for contacting colleagues, particularly when I am teaching science." Another subject stated, "It's a dual thing. With more time, you can have better planning with your team, to learn about the Certificate of Initial Mastery (CIM) tasks, and to talk as a team. Before you would have been doing it solo." I believe the most significant response to the questions regarding instructional preparation came from the subject who stated, "There is no way I could have enough time with all the assessments and scoring of tasks I have to do, but without the time we have, I would be sunk. I don't think we could implement any of the changes in the way we want to assess students at the middle level without the proper time to get items scored during prep and class time."

- **How does the school's schedule effect teacher perceptions about time for staff collaboration?** Six of the ten subjects had a mean score greater than or equal to 4.00 out of a possible 5.00 for the four statements related to staff collaboration. This indicates that they either agreed to, or strongly agreed to these four statements on the average. The overall mean score for the ten subjects was 3.88 out of a possible 5.00. This was the third highest mean score for all the general categories. Of the four statements related to staff collaboration, *The current school schedule has had a positive impact on time available to meet to plan and organize events and activities*, had the highest mean score. The statement that received the second highest mean score was, *The current school schedule has had a positive impact on time available to meet to discuss individual student's academic progress and behavior*. Both of these statements are related to opportunities where time is available to communicate. This was a consistent theme that was present in the responses to the statements related to staff development and instructional preparation. Responses by the subjects to the questions on the School Schedule Interview Survey, focused on time available to collaborate with members of their team, as opposed to time available to collaborate with others. One subject stated,



“Wonderful. It enables us the opportunity to focus on people’s strengths to develop as a team. It lets us find out what each of us does well, so one person’s strengths cover for someone else’s weakness.” Another subject referenced the previous schedule when stating, “Under the other system, we might have gotten together once per week. Under this system, every day for 15 minutes, regardless. Even if it is time to debrief. It is one of the best situations I have had as far as working with other staff members.” A third subject stated, “It is very good, very good. The teaming time is fantastic, meeting about a kid, or subject, or an integrated project we are working on. It can allow time for all the people involved. The time to parent conference with all the team members is great.” In analyzing the four statements related to staff collaboration, I conclude that the subjects generally felt that the schedule had a positive impact on time available to collaborate with members of their team, but time available to collaborate with staff members outside the team was difficult. This is evidenced by the low mean score on the statement, *The current school schedule has had a positive impact on time available to meet and share information with groups.*

- **How does the school’s schedule effect teacher perceptions about student achievement?** None of the ten subjects had a

mean score greater than or equal to 4.00 out of the possible 5.00. This indicates that none of the subjects agreed to, or strongly agreed to the four statements related to student achievement. The overall mean score for the ten subjects was 3.35 out of a possible 5.00. This is the second lowest mean score for the general categories. Of the four statements related to student achievement, *The current school schedule has had a positive impact on students' content retention*, had the lowest mean score. In analyzing the mean scores results for the four statements, I conclude that the subjects generally were undecided about the effects of the school schedule on student achievement. This was reinforced by several of the responses to the interview questions. One subject stated, "I found this very difficult to answer in the survey. In my view, I think it probably has, but I can't think of any kind of direct link that I'm thinking of that has something to do with achievement. It also has to do with how you're measuring achievement." Another subject stated, "I think I'm undecided. When we have more time to plan and make that planning cover the Talented and Gifted, regular, and lower students' needs, we do a better job of reaching everyone, but sometimes you can teach your heart out and you still can't reach that child." A third subject stated, "I'm still trying to figure that one

out. I know that having better preparation, better resources, in the long run is definitely going to have a positive impact on student achievement."

- **How does the school's schedule effect teacher perceptions about student contact overload?** Four of the ten subjects had a mean score less than or equal to 3.00 out of a possible 5.00 for the four statements related to student contact overload. Four of the ten subjects had a mean score greater than or equal to 4.00 out of a possible 5.00 on the same four statements. This indicates that there is a significant difference in teacher perceptions as a result of the subjects' responses on the four statements related to student contact overload. In fact, the two subject from the Encore House who provide instruction to students in electives courses, has mean scores at opposite extremes, with one having a mean score of 1.00, and the other 5.00. The overall mean score for the ten subjects was 3.20 out of a possible 5.00. This was the lowest mean score for all the general categories. Of the four statements related to student contact overload, *The current school schedule has had a positive impact on reducing the number of students you instruct each day*, received the lowest mean score. In analyzing the mean score for the four statements related to student contact overload, I

conclude that the subjects did not feel that school schedule had a positive impact on student contact overload, but this was not reinforced by the responses to the interview questions. Several of the subjects responded very positively to the schedule's impact on student contact overload. One stated, "Much to my surprise, I have found that I have come to relish having one, two, or three groups of kids that I am principally responsible for, and get to spend more than forty-five minutes with them." Another subject stated, "It has reduced my stress load because of the ability to work with youngsters who need some special or extended contact, such as a short conference to discuss concerns." A third subject stated, "This schedule is much less stressful by far than any schedule I have been in. With the amount of students I see in one day, as opposed to 6 periods per day." One subject summarized the conflict that existed between the mean scores on the statements, and the responses to the interview questions by stating, "I see fewer students each day, but my class size is still high, say 32 students."

- **How does the school's schedule effect teacher perceptions about school climate?** Five of the ten subjects had a mean score greater than or equal to 4.00 out of a possible 5.00 for the five statements related to school climate. This indicates that they

either agreed to, or strongly agreed to these five statements on the average. The overall mean score for the ten subjects was 3.74 out of a possible 5.00. This was slightly higher than the mean scores for student achievement and student contact overload, but lower than the mean scores for staff development, instructional preparation, and staff collaboration. Of the five statements related to school climate, four of them, *The current school schedule has had a positive impact on your assessment of the school's atmosphere, of increased parent and community participation, of increased student activity participation, and of staff collaboration and socialization*, had similar mean scores ranging between 3.80 and 3.90. The statement, *The current school schedule has had a positive impact on your assessment of student and staff attitudes*, had the lowest mean score. In analyzing the five statements related to school climate, I concluded that the subjects generally felt positive about the effects of the school schedule on school climate. This was reinforced by several of the subject's responses to the interview questions. One subject stated, "As you give people more tasks to do, when you ask people to raise achievement scores, if you don't give the time to do it, people get really frustrated." Another subject stated, "I think the school climate is better with this

schedule. There is time when the climate takes a nose-dive, say at grading time, but I think the schedule has been great all around." A third subject stated, "There are many factors that effect school climate, but the schedule has had a positive impact on the school climate. It allows us to share with each other and pull together as a staff." Two subjects gave responses that reinforced the concern mentioned in the staff collaboration responses, when they stated, "I really don't have any ideas. I really have less contact with the others on the staff because we are in our own little world planning for our kids." The other subject stated, "Of all the positives this schedule has, this gets knocked a little bit, and that's just because of the fact that adults and the staff, they are limited by the people they get to see due to their prep times."

These questionnaire and interview results suggest several conclusions about this study. Teachers' perceptions indicate:

- 1) Time available for staff development, instructional preparation, and staff collaboration is greatly influenced by their perception about the control of time to collaborate with colleagues, to communicate about student progress, and to plan school activities and events.

- 2) Student achievement is difficult to assess without quantitative measures, and that although teachers may feel the schedule has a positive impact on student achievement, most are concerned about the lack of objective measures when making such an assessment.
- 3) The total number of students a teacher comes into contact with each day, rather than class size, has a greater impact on their perception about student contact overload.
- 4) A school schedule can greatly impact teacher perceptions about school climate, and that although it may create barriers which prevent dialogue with all members of the staff, it can impact teacher perceptions about their ability to come together to build support for their students.

### **Implications**

The pertinent literature and the results of this study reveal that teacher perceptions regarding the school's schedule, as reflected in time available to conduct the primary tasks associated with their professional development, i.e., staff development, instructional preparation, and staff collaboration, are significantly influenced by the degree to which they control that time, and can make decisions about its use.

The results of this study do suggest some implication for school personnel when considering a change in a school's schedule:

- 1) When designing a school schedule, consideration should be given to establishing common blocks of time when teachers in like grade levels, instructional departments, or engaged in similar activities and event, can collaborate for the purpose of sharing ideas, organizing resources, and establishing consensus.
- 2) When designing a school schedule, consideration should be given to establishing opportunities where collaboration and communication can occur between teachers of differing groups for the purpose of accessing staff resources, and building shared vision.
- 3) When designing a school schedule, consideration should be given to establishing opportunities where teachers control the use of, and make decisions about their time, for the purpose of encouraging independence, accountability, and responsibility for the effectiveness of instruction.
- 4) If an administrator wishes to assess student achievement as a result of a change in a school's schedule, clearly defined baseline data needs to be identified, which will be utilized to assess the degree of change following the schedule change.



- 5) When designing a school schedule, consideration should be given to establishing teacher-to-student ratios that give preference to limiting the total number per day, as opposed to the total number per period.
- 6) When designing a school schedule, consideration should be given to establishing opportunities where teachers can team together to provide instruction to common groups of students, for the purpose of establishing a cohesive and consistent learning environment.

### **Recommendations**

Although the value of this study has been articulated in the conclusions of this investigation, it is important to acknowledge the inherent limitations and the related recommendations that arise from the study:

- 1) It is difficult to assess the generalizability of this study to populations. Because the study sample involved only ten subjects, and the study group was a convenience sample, it is not possible to generalize the results to populations. Therefore, it is recommended that if this study were to be replicated in other schools, the size of the study sample should be increased.

- 2) Because the study subjects were all working at the site school for this study, and because all the study subjects were under the direct supervision of the researcher, it is not possible to generalize their responses to populations. Therefore, it is recommended that this study be replicated in other schools where the researcher is not in a supervisory position to the subjects, to ascertain if the findings are generalizable.
- 3) Because the study was conducted at a single school site, and the study assessed teacher perceptions regarding the change in the school's schedule at that site, it is not possible to generalize the results to populations. Therefore, it is recommended that this study be extended to several school simultaneously, to ascertain if the findings are generalizable.
- 4) No follow-up information has been collected from the participants in this study to see if the responses they gave have remained consistent with present perceptions. Therefore, it is recommended that a longitudinal study be conducted to verify whether the results are consistent over time.

## **Study Summary**

When I began this research study, my belief was that teachers ultimately wanted and needed was time for professional development within the workday in order to engage in activities that would improve their pedagogy. My belief was that a school's schedule could significantly influence the time that was available for this need, and that if the schedule could be designed so as to capture available time, and school leaders could structure the activities during that time to facilitate the improvement of teacher pedagogy, teacher satisfaction would be high.

What I discovered through this study, was that teacher perceptions about the availability and use of time was significantly influenced by the degree to which they perceived they could control that time and make decisions about its use, and that regardless of the content of the professional development activities available, when teachers perceived they had a high degree of control over the use of available time, their evaluation of the school schedule's influence on that time was equally high.

Having discovered through this study the significant influence that the control of available time has on teacher perceptions, I have found it is teachers, rather than school leaders who should structure the activities accordingly. My revised belief is the following: What teachers ultimately want and need is time for professional development within the work day to engage in activities to improve their pedagogy, and a school's schedule can

significantly influence the time available for this need. If a school schedule can be designed to capture available time, and teachers can control and make decisions about the activities during that time to facilitate the improvement of their pedagogy, teacher satisfaction will be high.

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## APPENDICES



**APPENDIX A:**  
**LETTER TO SUPERINTENDENT**

**LETTER SEEKING APPROVAL  
FROM SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENT**

November 1, 1996

A. Elaine Taylor, Superintendent  
McMinnville School District 40  
1500 N. Baker  
McMinnville, OR 97128

Re: Doctoral Research Study

Dear Superintendent Taylor:

I am conducting a research study to examine teacher perceptions regarding a change in a school schedule and its effect on time for staff development, instructional preparation, and staff collaboration. Additionally, I am going to examine teacher perceptions regarding student achievement, student contact overload, and school climate.

Of all the educational resources in short supply – money, materials, equipment, and time – time is by far the resource that educators consider most desired. Funding allocations can be altered to increase money, which in turn may be used to purchase materials and equipment, but the passage of time is fixed. Whatever control is to be had over the calendar and clock rests in the way the time allotted to us is managed.

I am asking licensed classroom teachers and specialists from the staff at Patton Middle School to voluntarily participate in the study to assist me in collecting data to answer the following questions: 1) How does a school's schedule effect teacher perceptions about time for staff development, instructional preparation, and staff collaboration? 2) How does a school's schedule effect teacher perceptions about student achievement, student contact overload, and school climate?

Participants will be asked to complete a questionnaire containing twenty-five statements. Several statements are included for each of the general categories: staff development, instructional preparation, staff collaboration, student achievement, student contact overload, and school climate. Participants will be asked to respond to each statement by indicating whether they strongly agree, agree, are undecided, disagree, or strongly

disagree. Following the questionnaire, each participant will be interviewed to assess the degree to which each feels the change in the school schedule has had an impact on the above mentioned categories. Strict standards of confidentiality will be maintained and special precautions will be taken to protect the confidentiality of their responses.

I am requesting your approval to solicit volunteers for my research study from the staff at Patton Middle School. I will be contacting you in the next week to hopefully, obtain your permission. If you have any questions in the meantime, please call me at (503) 472-6148.

Respectfully,

Kris J. Olsen, Principal  
Patton Middle School

**APPENDIX B:**  
**LETTER TO SUBJECTS**

**KRIS J. OLSEN  
1948 N.W. WALLACE RD.  
MCMINNVILLE, OR 97128  
PHONE (503) 472-4316**

December 1, 1996

«FirstName» «LastName»  
«Address»  
«City» «State» «PostalCode»

Re: Doctoral Research Study

Dear «FirstName» «Last Name»:

I am conducting a research study to examine teacher perceptions regarding a change in a school schedule and it's effect on time for staff development, instructional preparation, and staff collaboration. Additionally, I am going to examine teacher perceptions regarding student achievement, student contact overload, and school climate.

Of all the educational resources in short supply – money, materials, equipment, and time – time is by far the resource that educators consider most desired. Funding allocations can be altered to increase money, which in turn may be used to purchase materials and equipment, but the passage of time is fixed. Whatever control is to be had over the calendar and clock rests in the way the time allotted to us is managed.

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Participants will be asked to complete a questionnaire containing twenty-five statements. Several statements are included for each of the general categories: staff development, instructional preparation, staff collaboration, student achievement, student contact overload, and school climate. Participants will be asked to respond to each statement by indicating

whether they strongly agree, agree, are undecided, disagree, or strongly disagree. Following the questionnaire, each participant will be interviewed to assess the degree to which each feels the change in the school schedule has had an impact on the above mentioned categories. Strict standards of confidentiality will be maintained and special precautions will be taken to protect the confidentiality of their responses.

I am requesting your voluntary participation in my research study. I will be contacting you in the next week to hopefully, secure your participation. If you have any questions in the meantime, please call me at (503) 472-6148.

Respectfully,

Kris J. Olsen, Principal  
Patton Middle School

**APPENDIX C:**  
**SCHOOL SCHEDULE QUESTIONNAIRE SURVEY**





3. The current school schedule has had a positive impact on time available for communicating about school events.  
(SA) (A) (U) (D) (SD)
4. The current school schedule has had a positive impact on time available for enhancing professional growth by engaging in relevant activities.  
(SA) (A) (U) (D) (SD)
5. The current school schedule has had a positive impact on time available for lesson preparation.  
(SA) (A) (U) (D) (SD)
6. The current school schedule has had a positive impact on time available for materials collection and organization.  
(SA) (A) (U) (D) (SD)
7. The current school schedule has had a positive impact on time available for assessment and recording of student work.  
(SA) (A) (U) (D) (SD)
8. The current school schedule has had a positive impact on time available for communicating about student progress with students, parents and colleagues.  
(SA) (A) (U) (D) (SD)
9. The current school schedule has had a positive impact on time available to meet to discuss individual student's academic progress and behavior.  
(SA) (A) (U) (D) (SD)
10. The current school schedule has had a positive impact on time available to meet to plan and organize events and activities.  
(SA) (A) (U) (D) (SD)
11. The current school schedule has had a positive impact on time available to meet and share information with groups.  
(SA) (A) (U) (D) (SD)
12. The current school schedule has had a positive impact on time available to meet to celebrate individual and group accomplishments.  
(SA) (A) (U) (D) (SD)

13. The current school schedule has had a positive impact on students' daily classroom scores.  
(SA) (A) (U) (D) (SD)
14. The current school schedule has had a positive impact on students' mid-term and end-of-term progress summary results.  
(SA) (A) (U) (D) (SD)
15. The current school schedule has had a positive impact on students' content retention.  
(SA) (A) (U) (D) (SD)
16. The current school schedule has had a positive impact on students' standardized assessment scores.  
(SA) (A) (U) (D) (SD)
17. The current school schedule has had a positive impact on reducing the number of students you instruct each day.  
(SA) (A) (U) (D) (SD)
18. The current school schedule has had a positive impact on reducing the number of assessments you do each day.  
(SA) (A) (U) (D) (SD)
19. The current school schedule has had a positive impact on increasing the time you have to work with students each day.  
(SA) (A) (U) (D) (SD)
20. The current school schedule has had a positive impact on increasing the time you have to communicate with students each day.  
(SA) (A) (U) (D) (SD)
21. The current school schedule has had a positive impact on your assessment of the school's atmosphere.  
(SA) (A) (U) (D) (SD)
22. The current school schedule has had a positive impact on your assessment of increased parent and community participation.  
(SA) (A) (U) (D) (SD)

23. The current school schedule has had a positive impact on your assessment of student and staff attitudes.  
(SA) (A) (U) (D) (SD)
24. The current school schedule has had a positive impact on your assessment of increased student activity participation.  
(SA) (A) (U) (D) (SD)
25. The current school schedule has had a positive impact on your assessment of staff collaboration and socialization.  
(SA) (A) (U) (D) (SD)

**APPENDIX D:**  
**SCHOOL SCHEDULE INTERVIEW SURVEY**

## SCHOOL SCHEDULE INTERVIEW SURVEY

When responding to the following questions, please consider that the *current school schedule* being described is the one in place for the past three school years, from 1994-1997. The current schedule should be comparing to that which was in place the immediate years prior to the 1994-95 school year.

1. Do you feel the current school schedule has had an impact on time available for staff development? How?
2. Do you feel the current school schedule has had an impact on time available for instructional preparation? How?
3. Do you feel the current school schedule has had an impact on time available for staff collaboration? How?
4. Do you feel the current school schedule has had an impact on student achievement? How?
5. Do you feel the current school schedule has had an impact on your feeling of student-contact overload? How?
6. Do you feel the current school schedule has had an impact on your assessment of the overall school climate? How?