EAB

A/B Block Schedules for High Schools

District Leadership Forum

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Madelyn Bowers
Research Associate

Olivia Rios
Senior Research Manager

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1) Executive Overview

Key Observations

Administrators at profiled schools implement a block schedule to provide increased flexibility for students, better prepare them for college, and ease their course load-related stress. Contacts at all five profiled schools emphasize that the block schedule model allows students to take more courses throughout their four-year high school career. Contacts report lower levels of student stress and increased preparedness for college or careers.

Administrators at profiled schools often operate a modified version of the A/B block schedule to accommodate the time requirements of different courses. Four of five profiled schools administer a modified version of an A/B block schedule. Variations of the A/B block schedule at profiled schools include a hybrid model (i.e., some combination of A/B model and 4x4 model), A/B alternating with rotating Fridays, and a blended block (i.e., both 90-minute periods and 45-minute periods).

Administrators often create new courses or implement new curricula after they implement a block schedule model. With longer class times and additional credit accumulation, block schedules can open avenues for innovation in high school curricula. The block schedule model allowed administrators at **School D** to implement an integrated math curriculum, and administrators at **School B** created courses focused on social and emotional learning to support student success.

Contacts at profiled schools emphasize that the block schedule model allows teachers to employ more interactive and project-based learning strategies in the classroom. Interactive classroom strategies include Socratic discussions, hands-on labs, and real-world problem solving. Block schedule models provide teachers with time to include active learning activities in addition to direct instruction to better engage students and deepen learning.

Provide collaborative professional development sessions before the initial implementation of a block schedule to help teachers adapt to increased class time. These sessions focus on how to develop transitions during a longer lesson and how to engage students in project-based learning activities. Administrators invite teachers and departments from nearby schools to help train teachers in subject-specific teaching strategies and to help align curricula to the block schedule. After the initial implementation, academic departments administer these professional development sessions independently.

2) A/B Block Schedule Motivations and Structures

Motivations

Block Schedules Can Increase Course Capacity, Mitigate Student Stress, and Prepare Students for College

Administrators at profiled schools cite increased course capacity for students, decreased student stress, and increased college preparation as the three main motivations for implementing a block schedule.

Motivations for Implementing a Block Schedule at Profiled Schools

Increase Course Capacity for Students

Contacts at all five profiled schools note that the block schedule model allows students to take more courses throughout high school. Because students can accrue more credits in a block schedule versus a traditional schedule, students have more flexibility in course selection and can more easily make up courses should they perform poorly.

Also, in a block schedule, students have more time to:

- Participate in jobs or internships during the school day
- Have free periods or study halls
- Explore interests in sports, performing arts, and other electives

Mitigate Student Stress

Administrators at **School D** implemented a block schedule largely due to an increase in student stress related to coursework and homework. Prior to the transition to a block schedule, students balanced six courses worth of homework daily on top of extracurricular activities, which proved overwhelming for many students. According to administrators, students do not report as much stress within the block schedule model as they did within the traditional schedule model.

Prepare Students for College

Contacts at **School B** believe the block schedule model better prepares their students for the typical college course schedule, where courses meet in large blocks of time and do not typically meet daily. The longer class periods coupled with increased flexibility in course selection make a block schedule model like the typical college schedule.

Modify the A/B Block Schedule to Accommodate Course Needs

Administrators at profiled schools often operate a modified version of the A/B block schedule to accommodate the time requirements of different courses. All profiled schools except **School E** administer a modified version of an A/B block schedule. At School E, all courses offered fit into the A/B block format.

Three Types of A/B Block Schedule Modification at Profiled Schools

Hybrid Model

Administrators at **School A** and **School D** integrate the 4x4 block schedule model (i.e., students enroll in four courses per semester for two semesters) with the A/B schedule.

- Ninth and tenth grade students typically take courses that operate on the 4x4 schedule. This schedule helps students acclimate to high school courses, since they only take four courses at a time (instead of the six or seven taken by students in upper grades).
- Administrators offer rigorous courses with spring evaluations on an A/B schedule. Because students study the course materials throughout the year, they are therefore better prepared for the spring exams. Students at the eleventh and twelfth grade level often enroll in more rigorous courses (e.g., AP courses) so tend to follow a more traditional A/B schedule.

Standard A/B Model with Alternating Fridays

Administrators at **School B** operate a traditional A/B block schedule with alternating Fridays to meet the state-mandated minimum number of instructional minutes for career and technology courses.

- Mondays through Thursdays are alternating A/B days, while Fridays alternate between "A" days and "B "days from week-to-week.
- Administrators occasionally repeat a week to meet the state's minimum number of instructional minutes for career and technology courses.

Blended Model

Administrators at **School C** offer a blended A/B block schedule broken into eight, 45-minute periods, called "skinny" courses, to increase course scheduling flexibility and maximize teachers' instructional time.

- Administrators offer courses either as 90-minute block courses or 45-minute "skinny" courses. All types of courses are offered as skinny periods depending on the needs of students.
- Skinny courses alleviate course capacity issues as administrators can offer bottleneck courses, such as algebra and introductory English, in a variety of block and skinny periods.

Examples of A/B Block Schedule Modifications at Profiled Schools

Example Hybrid Model Schedule				
	Semester One		Semester Two	
Block	A	B	A	B
One	AP World History	AP English	AP World History	AP English
Two	Spanish III	Spanish III	Art	Music Theory
Three	Calculus	Calculus	Chemistry	Chemistry
Four	Performing Arts	Study Hall	Performing Arts	Study Hall

Example Alternating Friday Schedule					
	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Week One	Schedule A	Schedule B	Schedule A	Schedule B	Schedule A
Week Two	Schedule A	Schedule B	Schedule A	Schedule B	Schedule B
Week Three	Schedule A	Schedule B	Schedule A	Schedule B	Schedule A
Week Four	Schedule A	Schedule B	Schedule A	Schedule B	Schedule A

Example Blended Block Model			
Block		A	B
One	Skinny (45 minutes)	English	Math
	Skinny (45 minutes)	English Support	Math Support
Two	Two (90 minutes)	Chemistry	World History
Three	Three (90 minutes)	Web Development	Programming 1
Four	Four Skinny (45 minutes)	Spanish	Spanish
	Four Skinny (45 minutes)	Gym	Gym

Additional Schedule Considerations

Build in Time for Students to Access Additional Support During the School Day

Administrators at **School C**, **School D**, and **School E** incorporate additional support time into students' schedules. These advisory periods allow students to receive personal and/or academic support.

Administrators at School C offer academic support to students during a "skinny" period. For example, if a student needs extra support in English beyond the normal class period, administrators will place the student in a 45-minute academic support course. Students who perform poorly on state-wide assessment also receive additional academic support in the form of a "skinny" period.

Administrators at School D include a ten-minute advisory period for students three days a week. Students meet with an assigned advisor to discuss personal, social, and academic issues. The advisory period serves as an important time for advisors to more deeply understand their advisees' lives and school experiences beyond the classroom.

Advisory at *School D*

Students attend advisory period for **ten minutes** between periods one and two on **Monday**, **Thursday**, and **Friday**.

Students are **assigned an advisor** when they begin high school and **remain with the same advisor** until graduation.

Teachers serve as advisors and oversee small groups of students.

Students at School E receive one 35-minute period of flexible time every day. Students can access administrative offices, the library, the quad (i.e., the open common area near the office), and teachers' offices during this time. This period takes place between the first and second periods of the day.

School E Uses Formal Tutorial Center During Built-in Academic Support Time

The Tutorial Center at **School E** is a student-run, academic support center. Located in the library, the Tutorial Center is designed for collaborative and interactive academic support. Students can access the Tutorial Center to receive tutoring from peer tutors during their flexible 35-minute period or during study hall periods. One dedicated staff member manages the Tutorial Center space, creates tutoring schedules, and trains peer tutors. The Tutorial Center has proven to be an effective way to provide additional academic support to students beyond the support teachers provide during classroom time.

Contacts at School B want to build in an advisory period for their students but cannot do so because they must adhere to the state's minimum instructional minutes for career and technology courses. Contacts do note, however, that pull-out advising (i.e., students are pulled out from class to receive academic support) is easier in a block schedule because students do not miss entire classes to receive support. Students may miss a portion of the class, but longer class periods enable them to make up missed work within the standard class period.

Stagger Lunch Periods to Reduce Strain on Cafeteria Space

Administrators at **School A**, **School B,** and **School C** offer staggered lunches during the third instructional period of the day. Administrators extend this period by 30 to 60 minutes to accommodate lunch scheduling. Beyond food service staff, contacts do not note any impact to non-instructional staff due to a block schedule model.

When creating the course schedule each year, administrators at School A ask all teachers when they would like lunch to take place during the third period. While most teachers opt for lunch before or after instructional time, a few teachers opt for lunch in the middle of instructional time to offer their students a break from the material. The first and third lunches are full while the second lunch is much smaller, which reduces distracting transition noise in the hallways while other students are in the middle of classes.

Examples of Staggered Lunches

Two Staggered Lunches			
Periods 1, 2, and **4** are **92 minutes**			
Period 3 is **148 minutes** (12:10pm – 2:38pm)	Lunch One	Lunch Class	12:10pm – 12:59pm 1:04 pm – 2:38pm
	Lunch Two	Class Lunch Class	12:15pm – 1:04pm 1:04pm – 1:49pm 1:54pm – 2:38pm

Three Staggered Lunches			
Periods 1, 2, and **4** are **90 minutes**			
Period 3 is **125 minutes** (11:10am – 1:15pm)	Lunch One	Lunch Class	11:10am – 11:40am 11:45am – 1:15pm
	Lunch Two	Class Lunch Class	11:15am – 12:00pm 12:00pm – 12:30pm 12:35pm – 1:15pm
	Lunch Three	Class Lunch	11:15am – 12:45pm 12:45pm – 1:15pm

Examples of Staggered Lunches (cont.)

Four Staggered Lunches			
Periods 1, 2, and **4** are **94 minutes**			
Period 3 is **120 minutes** (10:43am – 12:43pm)	Lunch One	Lunch	10:43am – 11:13am
		Class	11:13am – 12:43pm
	Lunch Two	Class	10:43am – 11:13am
		Lunch	11:13am – 11:43pm
		Class	11:43am – 12:43pm
	Lunch Three	Class	10:43am – 11:43am
		Lunch	11:43am – 12:13pm
		Class	12:13pm – 12:43pm
	Lunch Four	Class	10:43am – 12:13pm
		Lunch	12:13pm – 12:43pm

Consider Allowing Students to Leave Campus during Lunch to Reduce Lunchtime Pressure

For more information on open campus lunch policies, please see EAB's report **High School Open Campus Lunch Policies**.

Administrators at **School B** offer two lunches to students. Administrators considered adding a third lunch period due to the recent dramatic increase in student population but opted instead to offer senior students the opportunity to leave campus during lunch. Contacts note that enough seniors leave campus to reduce pressure of the food service staff and cafeteria space. Contacts also pointed out that that off-campus obligations, like career preparation, internships, jobs, and college courses, also reduce the lunchtime strain.

Block Schedules Provide Additional Planning Time for Teachers

At most profiled schools, teachers saw their planning time double compared to a traditional schedule. This increased planning time was a key factor to gaining buy-in from teachers during initial block schedule implementation.

Teachers at **School A**, **School B**, and **School D** receive one entire block for planning (e.g., 90 minutes) every day. Teachers at these schools instruct three of four block periods daily, or six of eight periods, throughout the year.

Teachers at **School C** receive approximately 45 minutes daily for planning time. Teachers typically instruct six block periods and one skinny period throughout the year.

Teachers at **School E** officially receive 90 minutes of planning every other day. Teachers instruct five of seven courses throughout the year, and the remaining two periods are provided as a planning period and an "unassigned" period. Contacts note that many teachers use their unassigned period as another planning period, though they are not obligated to spend this time planning. Teachers can meet with other teachers, spend time on personal development, or enjoy a peaceful meal.

Integrate Collaboration Time for Teachers Before or During the School Day

Administrators at **School C**, **School D**, and **School E** provide collaborative time for teachers on a daily or weekly basis. Contacts report that collaborative time is most effective before or during the school day, when teachers have few external, conflicting commitments.

Three Methods to Provide Collaborative Planning Time for Teachers

Before School with a Late Start Schedule

Administrators at **School D** have implemented Monday late-starts in their bell schedule for collaborative teacher planning time.

- Every Monday, departments meet from 8:00am – 9:00am to discuss subject-specific instructional strategies, curriculum, and general updates.
- Occasionally, these Monday late-starts serve as school-wide meetings to solve larger problems involving all teachers and administrators.
- To accommodate this collaborative time, administrators reduce class periods 15 minutes each on Mondays.

After School

Administrators at **School E** implement after-school collaborative time for teachers once per week.

- Departments independently offer trainings and discussions, and sometimes staff-wide meetings take place during this collaborative time.
- Contacts note that after-school collaborative time is not as effective as before-school time, as staff members frequently have conflicting commitments during the afternoon collaborative sessions.
- Administrators may consider transitioning to morning collaborative time and implementing a late-start schedule.

Reserved Periods in School Day During Curriculum Transitions

Administrators at **School C** provide collaborative time for departments that recently switched curriculum or textbooks. Administrators only offer this collaborative time during a curriculum transition. While beneficial for staff, scheduling this collaborative time for departments proves challenging for administrators given the variability of their course schedules.

- Teachers instructing Algebra 1 and Geometry recently implemented a new curriculum and textbook. Administrators gave these teachers two skinny periods (one block period) daily all year to collaborate on classroom and lesson strategies for this new curriculum.
- One skinny period (i.e., half of this collaborative block) is "unstructured" collaborative time, where teachers can discuss the new curriculum and new teaching strategies together. An assistant principal joins the other skinny period and provides administrative oversight.
- Because no students can be scheduled for these courses during the planning period, other classes accommodate many more students during this period than other periods.

Consider Creating Professional Learning Communities to Promote School-Wide Collaboration

Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) are collaborative teams of teachers focused on improving student learning with reflective self-evaluation of instructional strategies and continuous learning. PLCs serve as advocates for student-focused classroom strategies and continuous improvement of instruction and curriculum.

Three Big Ideas of PLCs[1]

1: Ensure Students Learn

A PLC holds responsibility for maximizing student learning. As a group, teachers identify what each student should learn, how teachers will know if a student has met expectations, and how teachers should respond if students have trouble learning.

2: Build a Culture of Collaboration

A PLC should promote a collaborative culture. Teachers work as a team to analyze and improve their classroom practices. The team engages in discussions focused on teaching goals, strategies, materials, pacing, questions, concerns, and student results.

3: Focus on Results

PLCs judge their effectiveness based on student results. Instead of simply collecting data, teachers work as a group to analyze and compare data on student learning.

District administrators at **School D** created and supported PLCs when the school first made the transition to a block schedule. The district invited external speakers to educate all teachers in the School About the PLC model and the importance of collaboration to promote student success.

PLCs at *School D*

PLCs advocate for adjustments to curriculum and instruction based on student achievement to promote continuous improvement and learning across the school.

PLCs enable teachers to bring interesting classroom strategies to PLC meetings, discuss them with colleagues, and then implement the new strategies in the classroom. Teachers then report back to the larger group to discuss how students reacted to the new strategies.

1) Richard DuFour. "What is a "Professional Learning Community"." Educational Leadership (May 2004) pgs. 6-11 http://www.allthingsplc.info/files/uploads/DuFourWhatIsAProfessionalLearningCommunity.pdf

4) Block Schedule Implementation

Collecting Feedback

Continuously Seek and Collect Feedback from Teachers and Students

Communicating frequently and clearly with teachers about the block schedule transition is key to garnering wide-spread support for the initial change. Administrators should collect feedback from teachers throughout the initial implementation process. After block schedule implementation, administrators should routinely check in with teachers and students to identify potential future schedule adjustments.

Prior to the 2018-2019 school year, administrators at **School A** operated a standard A/B schedule. The standard model made scheduling courses difficult for administrators, and courses like math and world languages were not suited for the alternating-day schedule. Administrators changed the format of various courses on an ad-hoc basis, which made tracking course schedule adjustments tedious. Around 2015, administrators began considering schedule model alterations to better serve their students.

Process to Adapt Block Schedule at *School A*

1. Administrators interviewed teachers from each department to field suggestions for schedule model improvements.
2. Instructional staff in each department created their ideal course schedules.
3. Administrators incorporated each department's suggestions to create a master schedule that they determined best supported student learning.

The new hybrid model better suits the needs of students, teachers, and courses. Administrators at School A have more flexibility and offer courses daily for one semester (e.g., world languages), every other day for one semester (e.g., art), or every other day for the whole year (e.g., AP science) depending on the needs of students and the course. Though challenging, contacts note that the comprehensive and collaborative review of their standard block schedule helped garner teacher support for implementing a blended block schedule.

Administrators at **School B** and **School E** initially offered standard A/B block schedules four days a week with a traditional schedule on the remaining day each week. Contacts received feedback that teachers did not enjoy re-calibrating their lessons for the shorter periods one day per week, and students reported high levels of stress due to the need to meet homework requirements for all eight courses once each week. Administrators at both schools decided to eliminate the traditional schedule day to alleviate student and teacher stress related to coursework.

Administrators at **School D** have not adjusted their block schedule model after implementation but continue to adjust course offerings to accommodate teacher and student needs. For example, administrators initially offered world language courses on the standard A/B schedule. Teachers expressed the need for students to engage in daily practice to best engage with the foreign language, so administrators switched foreign languages to a daily course offered each semester. As another example,

math courses used to be offered in a solid block (i.e., daily block period for one semester) model. Students who took math during the fall semester reported feeling unprepared for the spring state standardized test, so administrators changed math courses to the standard A/B schedule.

Changes to Instruction

Block Schedules Facilitate Innovations in Curriculum and Course Offerings

With longer class times and additional credit accumulation, block schedules facilitate innovation in high school curricula. Contacts at **School D** say that the block schedule model allows them to experiment in all aspects of their curriculum. Block periods slow down learning to focus on intentional lessons with interactive applications of new knowledge. The block schedule encourages teachers to try new classroom management and instructional strategies because they have longer class periods in which to experiment.

Block Schedule Allowed *School D* to Implement an Integrated Math Curriculum

Administrators at **School D** changed their math curriculum from isolated math (i.e., separate courses for Geometry, Algebra, Calculus, etc.) to integrated math (i.e., one course that explores multiple math topics) due in part to increased class time in a block schedule. Administrators implemented this new math curriculum and adjusted classroom strategies periodically without feeling pressured to get it right the first time.

Because students have more flexibility in their course selection in a block schedule than in a traditional schedule and a block schedule aligns more closely with a typical college schedule, administrators at **School B** introduced social and emotional learning courses in this model to help students prepare for life after graduation. Examples of these courses include a self-management course called "Effective Learning" and a course that helps students develop resiliency and confidence called "Goals for Personal Success."

Longer Classes Allow Teachers to Employ Interactive Learning Techniques

Contacts at profiled schools emphasize that the block schedule model allows teachers to employ more interactive and project-based learning strategies in addition to direct instruction. Administrators at profiled schools observe an increase in project-based learning in all courses after the transition, most notably in subjects such as math, where direct lecture-style instruction is traditionally more common. Interactive classroom strategies include Socratic discussions, hands-on labs, and real-world problem solving.

At **School D**, teachers have more time to connect with students and discover how their students learn and what strategies they can employ to maximize their students' learning during extended block periods. Teachers organize multiple activities during a block period and can spend enough time on each activity without feeling rushed.

Teachers Connect Real-World Events to Lessons

Social Science teachers at **School D** now show CNN Student News in class because of the additional class time provided by a block schedule. Teachers then engage students in discussions about real-world events, integrating topics discussed in their most recent lessons and connecting theories to current events.

Contacts at **School E** notice fewer lectures and more dynamic instruction in courses due to the block schedule. Many teachers have adapted their instructional strategies and change activities more frequently to keep students engaged with their course materials. Teachers use more technology-based activities in their courses with additional time to present course material and conduct activities. Teachers also include more pre- and post-assessments to gauge student learning with their extended class time. These assessments help teachers better orient lessons toward students' weaknesses and determine effective classroom activities.

Professional Development

Provide Professional Development on Teaching Longer Lessons Before Implementing the Block Schedule Model

Administrators at profiled schools provided professional development sessions before the initial implementation of a block schedule to help teachers adapt to 90-minute classes. These sessions focused on how to develop transitions during a longer lesson and how to engage students in project-based learning activities. A resounding theme to these professional development sessions is collaboration: administrators at most profiled schools invited teachers from local schools to collaborate with their teachers to develop instructional strategies and lesson plans for the block schedule. After the initial implementation, academic departments create and administer block schedule-related professional development sessions independently at all profiled schools.

Professional development sessions should include workshops on creating new lesson plans that suit longer block periods. Because teaching for a block period is very different than teaching for a 45-minute period, it is imperative that administrators provide support to their teachers in developing lesson plans for a block period before the actual implementation of a block schedule. Below are six key elements of an effective block period lesson plan.

Qualities of an Effective 90-Minute Lesson Plan[2]

- ☑ Variety in Activities and Instructional Strategies
- ☑ Smooth Transitions Between Activities
- ☑ Time to Present Information
- ☑ Time for Student Practice
- ☑ Time for Review and Closure
- ☑ Wise and Careful Planning

[2]North Carolina Public Schools. "Adjusting to the Block Methodology and Instructional Strategies." http://www.ncpublicschools.org/docs/curriculum/worldlanguages/resources/flonblock/08adjusting.pdf

Invite Experienced Teachers to Speak at Professional Development Sessions

Administrators at **School E** invited teachers and administrators from a neighboring high school that recently transitioned to a block schedule to present during the summer professional development session. These experienced teachers and administrators provided advice and guidance for teaching in an extended class period. The discussions with experienced teachers provided invaluable guidance for overcoming common challenges in teaching in a block period. Teachers were better prepared to start the first year with some tools and suggestions from other teachers.

Administrators at **School A** facilitated joint department meetings with academic departments from other high schools within the district to prepare their teachers for the shift to a block schedule. Departments collaborated to align curriculum to the block schedule and develop transitions within lessons. During these collaborative meetings, teachers worked together to develop content-specific transitions and activities to move smoothly through a class.

Offer Teachers Opportunities to Observe Block Scheduled-Classrooms to Prepare for the New Schedule Model

Contacts at **School C** express the value of observation to help teachers navigate teaching in a block schedule. Provide teachers the opportunity to observe classes in neighboring school districts, focusing on the tactics used to engage students in the learning process. Reach out to neighboring districts or other high schools in your district and ask administrators if their teachers would be interested in joining a discussion on teaching for a block period.

Ongoing Professional Development Related to Block Schedules is Decentralized at Profiled Schools

For the first year after block schedule implementation, some profiled schools continued professional development oriented around classroom strategies. However, after the first year, administrators at profiled schools decentralized professional development specific to the block schedule to academic departments or PLCs.

Administrators at **School A** keep a running document with teachers' notes and feedback regarding the block schedule and block periods. Administrators incorporate teacher feedback into trainings and bell schedule alterations.

Departments create trainings to help teachers implement innovative learning techniques, manage student behavior, and adapt the curriculum around the block schedule. Department-run trainings prove helpful for teachers as they communicate subject-specific instructional techniques and share the collective knowledge of the department staff. These trainings evolve as teachers discover new strategies and bring them back to share in their department trainings.

PLCs provide a natural professional development opportunity as teachers continuously bring new ideas for classroom strategies to the group. PLCs often discuss new teaching strategies and student feedback on recent activities.

5) Research Methodology

Project Challenge

Leadership at a member institution approached the Forum with the following questions:

- When did contact districts switch from a traditional schedule to a block schedule?
    - What motivated contact districts to switch to block scheduling?
    - Why did contact districts choose the A/B block schedule instead of the 4/4 or integrated models?
- What is the structure of contact districts' block schedule?
- What challenges did contact districts face when designing the school day?
- How does a block schedule impact non-instructional time at contact districts?
    - Do contact districts' schedules include academic support periods for students?
    - Do contact districts' schedules include built-in collaborative planning time for teachers?
    - How did contact districts schedule lunch periods?
- How did instructional delivery change as a result of block scheduling?
- How did the transition to a block schedule impact instructional staff at contact districts?
- What support did contact districts provide to instructional staff before, during, and after implementing a block schedule?
- Did contact districts restructure professional development sessions to help teachers acquire new skills? If so, what did they include?
- Did contact districts hire additional staff to support teacher training and development during implementation? If so, how did the additional staff support implementation efforts?
- How did the transition to a block schedule impact other staff members at contact districts?
    - How did contact districts support these staff members?
- What unexpected roadblocks occurred during the transition from a traditional high school schedule to a block schedule at contact districts?
    - How did contact districts overcome these challenges?
- Does the contact district consider its implementation of a block schedule to be successful?
- What, if anything, would the contact district do differently if they could go through the implementation process again?

Project Sources

The Forum consulted the following sources for this report:

- EAB's internal and online research libraries (eab.com)
- The Chronicle of Higher Education (http://chronicle.com)
- National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) (http://nces.ed.gov/)
- DuFour, Richard. 2004. "What is a "Professional Learning Community"." *Educational leadership* 6-11.
- North Carolina Public Schools. "Adjusting to the Block Methodology and Instructional Strategies." (http://www.ncpublicschools.org/docs/curriculum/worldlanguages/resources/flonblock/08adjusting.pdf)

Research Parameters

The Forum interviewed high school administrators at the assistant principal level with significant knowledge of curriculum and instruction.

A Guide to Institutions Profiled in this Brief

District	State	Approximate Enrollment
School A	Virginia	1,800
School B	Texas	1,900
School C	Ohio	2,000
School D	California	2,000
School E	California	1,400