Maintaining a High School Elective/Vocational Program with the Increase in College Entrance Requirements

Clyde W. Frankie
Eastern Illinois University
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Maintaining a High School Elective/Vocational Program

with the Increase in College Entrance Requirements

(TITLE)

BY

Clyde W. Frankie

(Field Experience)

THESIS

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
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1991

YEAR

I HEREBY RECOMMEND THIS THESIS BE ACCEPTED AS FULFILLING
THIS PART OF THE GRADUATE DEGREE CITED ABOVE

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ADVISOR

12-13-91
DATE

DEPARTMENT HEAD
Maintaining Electives

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Maintaining a High School Elective/Vocational Program
with the Increase in College Entrance Requirements

Clyde W. Frankie
Eastern Illinois University
Abstract

This field experience examines how 21 selected Illinois unit district high schools have maintained their elective/vocational enrollments with the 1985 increase in college admission requirements. The 21 high schools identified had a student population between 700 and 1000. A questionnaire was sent to each school requesting information regarding their master schedule. Questions specifically requested data on number of class periods, length of class periods, number of graduation units, faculty teaching load, class maximums and minimums, and percent of college-bound students in respective schools. This data was analyzed through comparative data tables to identify potential solutions or trends high schools are utilizing to address the declining elective/vocational enrollments. Responses from all 21 high schools in this study enabled an accurate analysis to occur within the established limitations. Findings tended to support recommendations of a master schedule with at least seven periods with 50 minute class periods, with students enrolled in six courses per day, graduation requirements reflecting passage of six courses per semester, faculty option of teaching five or six classes, and flexible classroom maximums and minimums to allow for financial limitations of a district.
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</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER I

Overview of the Problem

Introduction

This field experience examines how selected unit districts have maintained their vocational/elective enrollments with the increase in the minimum high school course requirements for admission to public universities and to baccalaureate transfer programs at community colleges. The focus of this study is to examine how selected unit districts have attempted to maintain a comprehensive curriculum in which vocational/elective course opportunities are afforded all students, particularly those college-bound. The specific objective is to relate this information to Charleston High School and, thus, recommend to the principal an appropriate master schedule that provides for vocational/elective course opportunities for college-bound students.

Statement of the Problem

On November 5, 1985, the Illinois Board of Higher Education instituted minimum high school course requirements for admission to public universities and to baccalaureate transfer programs at community colleges. Initially, the implementation date was to be Fall, 1990; however, this date has been changed to Fall, 1993. During
the 1989 legislative session, the Illinois General Assembly enacted Public Act 86-0954, which established the high school course requirements for admission to public universities as law.

For admission to public universities, the law now requires completion of at least 15 units of high school course work, including four units of English; three units each of mathematics, science, and social studies; and two units of electives. One unit is equivalent to one year. Vocational education, foreign language, music, and art are identified in the elective category. The new requirements, effective for admission in Fall, 1993, are summarized in Table 1 and described in greater detail in Appendix A.

Table 1:
Admission Requirements to Public Universities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subjects</th>
<th>Units</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Studies</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathematics</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreign language, music, vocational education, or art</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Maintaining Electives

Table 2 compares the academic course requirements for high school graduation adopted by the Illinois General Assembly in 1983 with baccalaureate admission adopted in 1989.

Table 2:
High School vs. College-Bound Graduation Requirements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Units</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language Arts</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathematics</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Studies</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music, Art, Foreign Language,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocational Ed.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical Education</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Specific course requirements for high school graduation consist of 14 units. In addition to the nine units of academic course work, other state mandates require students to take four years of physical education and one-half year...
of health education. Courses in consumer education and driver/safety education require an additional one-half year each. A student may proficiency consumer education and some schools allow health and driver/safety education to be taken in lieu of physical education.

A college-bound student, therefore, must complete a minimum of 19 to 20 course units in order to satisfy requirements for high school graduation and admission to baccalaureate programs. This total does not include additional requirements prescribed by local school boards.

In the spring of 1988, the Charleston Education Association and Charleston Community Unit District Number One negotiated a two-year pilot program in an attempt to reverse the decreasing enrollment in the elective/vocational course offerings. The pilot program changed the daily schedule from a six period to a seven period schedule. This change enabled the elective/vocational enrollments to increase in 47 of the 60 courses offered in the first year of the seven period schedule. In the second year, 23 of the 60 courses offered showed additional enrollment increases over the previous year. This two-year pilot was examined and renegotiated in the spring of 1991. The two-year pilot has been successful in offering additional course opportunities at Charleston High School even though the effects were not as dramatic in
the second year. A need exists to evaluate if the current program is the best solution or if there are other viable options in maintaining elective/vocational enrollments. A committee of four administrators from the district and four Charleston Education Association representatives from the high school has continued to study this pilot schedule. Recommendations are to be presented by the second Tuesday in January, 1992, to the Board of Education and to the high school faculty for consideration. If either side rejects the proposal, the schedule is to revert to the 1988-89 six period schedule.

The goal of this study is to develop a master schedule that:

(1) provides the minimum number of periods necessary to maintain elective/vocational courses;
(2) keeps teaching load per teacher to a reasonable level;
(3) provides reasonable class period lengths;
(4) allows flexibility of student load to enroll in elective/vocational courses.

To make an informed decision, data gathered includes:

(1) the number of periods in a schedule,
(2) the number of classes a teacher is assigned,
(3) the numbers of classes students are required to take as well as allowed to take,
(4) credits required to graduate,
(5) the limitations of class size,
(6) number of full-time equivalent faculty,
(7) the length of class periods.

This information may in turn help other districts facing a
decline in elective/vocational enrollments maintain a
comprehensive curriculum.

This field experience paper examines how 21 selected
unit district high schools have attempted to maintain an
elective/vocational enrollment since the Illinois Board of
Higher Education announced the increased entrance
requirements. It specifically seeks to identify and thus
recommend a master schedule with an appropriate number of
periods.

Limitations

It is assumed that all schools that are a part of this
project desire to maintain their elective/vocational
programs in order to offer a comprehensive curriculum. The
information sheets returned will contain up-to-date and
accurate information about each school's schedule and
requested data. The rate of return of the information
sheets will be sufficient to indicate any trends that may
exist in unit district high schools of similar size to
Charleston High School.
High schools of similar size but not a part of unit districts were omitted from this project. Since many issues in education have financial ramifications, decisions of unit districts must take into account the impact on the rest of its school system. A high school district may be able to implement solutions not financially available to unit districts. Private schools were also omitted from this project since their funding is provided from different sources and they do not always fall under the same regulations and guidelines as public schools. A complete list of the 21 high schools being studied can be found in Appendix B.

High schools of similar size were determined to be high schools with an enrollment of not less than 700 students and no more than 1000 students. This puts Charleston High School virtually in the middle with an enrollment of 858 students. Schools with a population 150 more or less than Charleston's enrollment were felt to create a population base with different needs and consequently, their own unique problems and solutions. The number 150 was derived by looking at the district break in the school's populations above and below that of Charleston's. It is felt that to expand this limit any further would not gain enough additional data to offset
using an enrollment variation greater than + 17.5% of Charleston's enrollment.

Definition of Terms

The following terms are specifically identified to provide clarity and understanding of this paper.

Elective. Those courses not required to fulfill graduation and/or college admission requirements

Vocational Education. Organized educational programs which are directly related to the preparation of individuals for paid or unpaid employment or for additional preparation for a career. Such programs shall not include preparation for careers generally considered to be professional or requiring a baccalaureate or higher degree. (Illinois State Board of Education, October, 1980)

Graduation requirements. Those requirements established locally by the Board of Education including state mandates necessary to successfully complete high school.

Full time faculty. Faculty members teaching a full load (employed on a full time status).

Carnegie unit. A standard of measure of course time defined as forty minutes daily, five days a week, for thirty-six weeks or 120 clock hours.

The following subject definitions are used by the Illinois Board of Higher Education to implement the course
requirements for admission to Illinois public universities and to baccalaureate transfer programs at community colleges.

**English.** Course work which emphasizes reading, writing, speaking, and listening in the English language. Includes emphasis on (a) sentence structure; (b) paragraph structure; (c) systematic organization; and (d) diction, word choice that is appropriate, clear and effective and (e) analysis of literature including characteristics such as point of view, theme, setting, character, and style to help the student become more sensitive and appreciative as a reader. Typically, such courses as general reading, journalism, mass communication, radio/t.v./film, and theater are not acceptable for English course work.

**Mathematics.** Traditional preparation for college mathematics is a year each of algebra, geometry, and advanced algebra, with a fourth year of advanced mathematics for engineering, science, and many business majors. Acceptable are computer science courses that study a structured programming language and use computing as a means to solve problems. Typically, such courses as career/occupational mathematics, consumer mathematics, applied business mathematics, pre-algebra, and computer courses that do not involve programming and mathematical problem solving are not acceptable.
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**Social studies.** One year of United States history or a combination of United States history or American government is required. Beyond history and government, acceptable social studies include anthropology, economics, geography, philosophy, political science, psychology, and sociology. Typically, courses of an applied, service, or vocational nature, or courses in religious dogma are not acceptable.

**Science.** Traditional preparation for college is a year each of biology, chemistry, and physics. Courses in biological and physical sciences are acceptable. An earth science or an introductory course to biology, chemistry, and/or physics which includes laboratory experiences is acceptable. Typically, a general science course taken to prepare for a laboratory science course is not acceptable.
CHAPTER II
Rationale and Review of Literature

Rationale

It has been six years since the Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE) announced minimum high school course requirements for admission to Illinois public colleges and universities. Current college-bound juniors in the public schools are faced with fulfilling the new requirements before their target graduations in the spring of 1993. A current college-bound high school student must complete 15 units to satisfy college entrance requirements plus an additional five units to fulfill state mandated requirements for a total of 20 units. In a six period schedule a student, taking six classes per day for four years with no study halls, would acquire a maximum of 24 units. This potentially leaves four units of electives for a college-bound student to enroll in over a four year period. Should a local board of education require any units above those required by state or college admissions this could virtually eliminate any elective opportunities.

If a comprehensive curriculum is desired, than a school curriculum should address the needs of all students. Hodgkinson (1987) noted that future curriculum needs to address a changing demographic society. The senior class of the year 2000 will be comprised of students that are:
1. one-third minorities,
2. 24% below the federal poverty line,
3. immigrants from South American and Asia (83%), where historically they have come from progressive European countries,
4. 18% born outside of marriage,
5. half will live with a single parent,
6. 11% have physical or emotional handicaps,
7. 20% of teen-age females will become pregnant.

Will these students be adequately prepared for life, taking college-bound classes without the availability of elective/vocational courses?

This study analyzed how selected unit districts have addressed the increase of college admission with maintaining their elective/vocational enrollments.

Review of Literature

The Illinois Board of Higher Education (1989) reported that students' flexibility in selecting high school courses to meet requirements for graduation, college admission, and also pursue other interests is limited. The main constraints a school must address to provide flexibility are: 1) time available in the school day for students to enroll in courses, 2) staff available to teach these courses, and 3) district graduation requirements.

Although 83% of Illinois high schools offer a schedule
which allows students to take seven or more instructional units a day for four years, smaller schools still may lack the ability to schedule a variety of course options.

A report by Illinois Board of Higher Education (1989) noted a decline in vocational education enrollment by over 28% between 1980 and 1988. The IBHE noted that not all of this decline can be attributed to increased college admissions requirements; however, the increase in requirements and subsequent decline in vocational education enrollments do not appear to be coincidental. Studies by Price (1985), Anderson and Brullette (1985), Dyrenfurth (1985), and Strickland and Elson (1987) have indicated a trend of declining enrollments in vocational education classes as a result of increased graduation requirements.

The issue of integrating academic and vocational education has become a focal point for vocational educators. Parks and Henderson (1985) indicated academic and vocational course work ought to be a fused and coordinated curriculum for all students. The National Association of Secondary School Principals (1988) emphasized integrating academic and vocational instruction into a unified curriculum. This can ensure that students are better prepared to meet the challenges of careers and changing society.
Tresnak (1988) indicated how Herrin High School answered the dilemma of decreasing vocational education enrollment. The focus of his article was on college-bound students having no room in their six period schedule because of the college entrance requirements. The solution employed was to expand the master schedule from six to seven periods.

Flumerfelt (1986) answered the dilemma of increased graduation requirements by the implementation of a rotating seven period schedule in a six period day. The seventh period meets each day in lieu of one of the six periods scheduled. This concept is similar to the floating period colleges have used under the quarter system. This method accomplishes the same result as a seven period schedule with a unique approach to the traditional schedules.

In 1985, Virginia's General Assembly instructed the Department of Education to study the feasibility of a seven academic period day. This study was a result of the state school policy favoring an increase in the number of graduation requirements. Many of the Virginia school systems adopted a seven-period schedule as a solution to allow students to acquire the necessary credits (Bishop, 1988).

Aldachi and Kim (1985) identified advantages of the seven-period day, including increased use of facilities,
retention of elective courses, reduction of pupil-teacher ratio, and flexibility in use of the additional period. The degree to which a school would recognize the benefits depends on the size of the school. The seven period day allowed the opportunity to offer more sections with the current staff, while not precluding the addition of staff as enrollment grows.

Frechtling's study (cited in Bishop, 1988) analyzed the impact of the seven period schedule. It was noted that the number of sections of required courses increased by 7% and overall course enrollments increased by 11.7% with the switch from a six period to a seven period schedule. Students also utilized the seven period day to enroll in vocational courses in order to acquire life skills.

While the research tends to reflect the concept that the seven-period day will provide students with more course opportunities, some researchers question academic achievement only slightly increasing and at high expense (Mazzarella, 1984). Other issues surfaced causing hesitation for some to adopt the schedule change. Goodlad (1983) suggested "we can make better use of the time that is now available" (p. 99). Justiz (1984) suggested that instead of lengthening school days or years, schools should strive to efficiently reschedule the school day to include solely academic courses. Ellis (1984) noted research tends
to indicate that the correlation between time and achievement is far less than predicted. "The quality of instructional time is more important than quantity" (p. 3).

Many states are making efforts to use school time more productively. Frantz, Strickland, and Elson (1988) indicated schools in various states have increased the school day from six to seven periods. This has enabled schools to increase course offerings and flexible schedules to accommodate student needs.

Seneca High School in Illinois has implemented the "eight block schedule." Students are able to take a greater number of electives throughout their high school experience while at the same time meeting necessary graduation requirements (Washburn, 1989).

Rangely High School, in northwestern Colorado, faced the question of how to achieve increased graduation requirements and still preserve the elective programs. A decision was made in the spring of 1983-84 to expand from a seven period to an eight period day. The change resulted in advantages similar to those identified by other studies in that elective offerings increased, pupil-teacher ratios dropped, and enrollment increased, particularly in electives, arts and vocational classes by as much as 40% (Young, 1986).
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Washburn (1989) recommended strategies to encourage students to enroll in vocational education courses. Principals are encouraged to:

1. institute an eight period day,
2. adopt a policy requiring all students to enroll in a minimum of five courses,
3. institute an "early bird" schedule (before 8:00 a.m.),
4. evaluate and revise the curriculum for business, home economics, and industrial education departments,
5. encourage cooperation among departments in order to provide students with elective courses which meet academic requirements,
6. establish a schedule to encourage student participation in seven instructional units,
7. eliminate early dismissal periods,
8. compress the number of courses offered in the English program in order to ensure that all courses will be offered at least twice during the school day.

School personnel have the responsibility to provide their students with a schedule that provides the basic requirements for graduation and college, but also the opportunity to expand their horizons in vocational as well as general electives. Dempsey (1988) indicated that
administrators must be able to answer several important questions when building a master schedule:

1. Who benefits from this schedule?
2. Is the schedule flexible?
3. Are instructional needs met?
4. Are required courses available?
5. Are curriculum choices limited?
6. Has the schedule adapted to changing times?
7. Is small enrollment eliminating some courses?
8. Is time made available for counseling?
9. Is teacher experience considered?
10. Are teaching assignments equitable?
11. Are school facilities utilized?
12. Are community resources utilized?
13. Is the schedule reliable?

These questions may help create a schedule that will provide educational opportunities that best serve the needs of the students of a given school.
CHAPTER III

Design of the Study

Overview

This field study was designed to examine how 21 selected unit district high schools have addressed declining elective/vocational enrollments since the IBHE has implemented new college admission requirements. A questionnaire was sent to the 21 high schools identified requesting information regarding master schedule, faculty load, and student requirements. Collection and analysis of this information identified current trends utilized by related unit district high schools to address declining elective/vocational enrollments. A recommendation on addressing the declining elective/vocational enrollment at Charleston High School culminates this study.

Sample and Population

Twelve unit district high schools smaller than Charleston and nine unit district high schools larger than Charleston were identified as the basis for this field study (Appendix B). These high schools are in public unit districts with a single high school enrollment within 150 students of Charleston’s enrollment of 858 students. The Illinois High School Membership School Directory for 1990 was used to determine all schools whose enrollment meet the 150 plus or minus criteria. The Illinois Teacher Salary
Study was then used to identify those schools which are unit districts as opposed to high school districts. All information collected is based upon changes each school has experienced between 1985 and the 1990-91 school term.

Data Collection and Instrumentation

A cover letter was addressed and mailed to the principal of each school (Appendix C). An information sheet was attached to the cover letter to ask for information pertinent to the school’s schedule, school day, and graduation requirements (Appendix D). The information sheet was developed with the advice of Charleston High School administration. Questions are an outgrowth of the concerns expressed by the faculty at Charleston High School since the initial study and subsequent development of the seven period pilot schedule. A self-addressed stamped envelop was provided to return the information sheets. A two-week response time was requested to encourage prompt return. Those schools not responding received a follow-up phone call the following week in an attempt to achieve a 90% return.

Data Analysis

The data and/or information received in this study was analyzed to determine how each school has attempted to maintain its elective/vocational programs. Data tables were utilized to compare:
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1. Number of class periods in the schedule of each school with enrollment trends in vocational/elective courses.

2. Length of class periods with the number of class periods per day.

3. Number of class periods students are required to take per semester with the number of class periods in the school day.

4. Number of units required for graduation with the number of classes students are required to take per day.

5. Teaching load of faculty with the number of class periods per day.

6. Class maximum (caps) with the number of class periods per day.

7. Class minimums with the number of class periods per day.

8. Percent of college bound students with the number of class periods per day.

A complete listing of the data and information gathered for comparison is found in Appendix E. This information was utilized to help design a master schedule with the main goal of maintaining the elective/vocational program at Charleston High School.
Questionnaire

Twenty-one unit districts were sent questionnaires the third week of May, 1991 (Appendix D). Information regarding each school's master schedule was requested in order to identify potential solutions utilized in maintaining elective/vocational enrollments. The 1985 school year was identified as a reference date in determining if any change has occurred in the master schedule to address the new college entrance requirements. The initial responses represented 16 of the 21 questionnaires returned by the first week of June, 1991. The month of June was utilized in calling the remaining five schools to secure responses from all 21 unit districts. Vacations and changes in administration slowed this process. The end result of the follow-up telephone calls secured complete responses from all 21 schools for this study.
CHAPTER IV

Results

There were three basic student schedules utilized by the schools involved in this study. Three schools utilize a six period student schedule, 15 utilize a seven period student schedule, with the remaining three schools with an eight period student schedule. Table 3 compares the number of periods in the school day with enrollments in elective/vocational courses over the past five years.

Table 3:
Enrollment in Elective/Vocational Courses Compared to the Number of Periods/Day

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Enrollment</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>20% decrease</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slight decrease</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No change</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Schools with seven or more periods indicated the most success in maintaining elective/vocational enrollment.

The length of periods varied within each student schedule as well as between each of the three schedules. Table 4 contains the breakdown of the length of periods in the six, seven, and eight period schedules.
Table 4:
Length of Periods vs Number of Periods per Day

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Periods</th>
<th>44</th>
<th>45</th>
<th>47</th>
<th>48</th>
<th>50</th>
<th>52</th>
<th>53</th>
<th>55</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Schools on a six period schedule exhibited the longest length of periods whereas schools on an eight period schedule had the shortest periods. The seven period schedules showed the greatest variance in time.

Table 5 shows the comparison of the number of classes a student must take and was permitted to take per day in relationship to the three schedules.

Table 5:
Classes Required/Permitted per Day vs Number of Periods

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Periods</th>
<th>4/7</th>
<th>5/6</th>
<th>5/7</th>
<th>5/8</th>
<th>5-6/7</th>
<th>6/7</th>
<th>6/8</th>
<th>7/7</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>--</td>
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<td>--</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>--</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Maintaining Electives

Schools on a six period schedule showed the only consistent pattern. Many variations occurred in the other two schedules including one school that requires students to take five classes one semester and six classes the next.

The graduation requirements ranged from a low of 17 units to a high of 24 units. Table 6 represents a comparison of graduation units and number of classes required of a student per day.

Table 6:
Graduation Units vs Required Classes per Day

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Units</th>
<th>Classes</th>
<th>17</th>
<th>18</th>
<th>19</th>
<th>20</th>
<th>20.25</th>
<th>20.5</th>
<th>21</th>
<th>21.5</th>
<th>22</th>
<th>22.25</th>
<th>24</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A slight trend existed in that the lower the units for graduation the fewer classes students were required to take per day.

Teaching assignments per faculty member was also examined to determine any trend between number of assignments and periods in the school day. Table 7 illustrates this relationship.
Table 7:

**Teaching Assignments vs Number of Periods/Day**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Periods</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>5/6</th>
<th>6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Although only the six period schedules showed a consistent pattern three schools allowed for faculty options in choosing whether to teach five or six classes with their sixth assignment being administration discretion.

Table 8 breaks down class maximums as compared to the number of periods per day.

Table 8:

**Class Maximums vs Number of Periods/Day**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Periods</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No Limits</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>9*</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limited/work stations</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limits set by area</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contractual at 35</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Philosophy exists to limit number to 25-30.*
No particular pattern emerged although it should be noted schools were reluctant to establish across the board class limits. Class maximums showed only one school that had contractual language that established a specific number of students as a cap.

Class minimums indicated an attempt made by the majority of the schools to have guidelines set as to how many students must enroll for a class to be held. Table 9 breaks down the class minimums in relationship to the number of periods per day.

Table 9:
Class Minimums vs Number of Periods/Day

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Periods</th>
<th>10</th>
<th>12</th>
<th>15</th>
<th>20</th>
<th>No Limits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1*</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>3*</td>
<td>2*</td>
<td>4*</td>
<td>2*</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Exceptions to this number may occur by board approval

Virtually every school that established set numbers for minimum enrollment also allowed for variances to occur if the course was sequential or college prep.
Maintaining Electives

The number of students determined to be college bound was compared to the number of periods in the school day. An attempt to examine any relationship between the number of periods in a school and the percent of college bound students can be found in table 10.

Table 10:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Periods/Day</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A slight trend to a greater number periods in a school day as the percent of college bound students increased emerged. The fact this relationship does not hold true particularly in the six period day may account for the decrease in elective/vocational enrollment.

The data results are based upon the accuracy of the questionnaires returned. The hope for a strong relationship to justify the number of periods, length of classes, faculty assignments, and student class requirements in developing a master schedule to address the needs of all students did not occur. Inference did occur to help solve the declining elective/vocational enrollment at Charleston.
High School. This information was valuable in selecting a master schedule to help balance the increase in college entrance requirements with declining elective/vocational enrollment.
Summary, Findings, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Summary

November 5, 1985, marked a new era in the curriculum of Illinois high schools. The Illinois Board of Higher Education instituted minimum high school course requirements for admission to public universities and to baccalaureate transfer programs at community colleges. These new requirements created an additional burden to schools' elective/vocational course enrollments. A college-bound student, in addition to the general high school and local graduation requirements, must also ensure that he or she had a total of four units in English; three units each in social studies, mathematics and science; and two units in foreign language, music, vocational education or art. Many college-bound students who attend a traditional high school with six periods found their elective opportunities virtually eliminated from their curriculum. This field study examined how 21 Illinois public high schools, with student enrollments between 700 to 1000 students and which were part of a unit school district, attempted to solve the dilemma of declining enrollments in their elective/vocational courses. An analysis of information gathered included the number of class periods, length of class periods, graduation
requirements, faculty teaching load, number of classes
students are required optionally to take per day, and class
maximums and minimums. A comparison of this information in
relationship to the three schedules utilized provided the
necessary data to formulate a recommendation on a master
schedule for maintaining enrollment in elective/vocational
programs.

Findings

1) Schools with six period schedules experienced
decreased enrollments in elective/vocational courses of
approximately 20% over the past five years. Eight of the
15 schools with a seven period schedule indicated no
significant decrease in elective/vocational enrollments.
The remaining seven showed a slight decrease in
enrollments. The seven schools that indicated a slight
decrease in elective/vocational enrollment average slightly
higher college-bound enrollment, 62.5%, as compared to the
eight schools that experienced no significant decrease,
56.4%.

2) The length of class periods illustrated only one
pattern in relationship to periods in the school day.
Schools on a six period schedule demonstrated the longest
periods at 55 minutes. Schools on the remaining two
schedules, seven and eight periods daily, showed no trend
in class length as they varied from a low of 44 minutes to
a high of 53 minutes. This may be related to variables not examined, such as contract language, constraints on starting or ending times dictated by bus schedules or tradition.

3) The number of class students are required and may optionally take per semester showed consistency in the six period schedule. Students attending the three schools with six periods per day are required to enroll in five classes per day with the option of taking a sixth class. The remaining seven and eight period schedule schools showed no pattern or consistency when comparing to periods in the school day.

4) Graduation requirements ranged from a low of 17 units to a high of 24 units. No consistency or pattern existed when compared to the number of classes students are required to take per day. An attempt to compare graduation requirements with number of periods per day also showed no relationship.

5) The number of classes faculty were required to teach per day in a six period schedule was consistent at five. Schools with a seven or eight period schedule showed no relationship whether compared to number of class periods per day, percent of college-bound students or number of classes students were required to take each day.
6) The maximum number of students schools philosophically strived to maintain per course consistently hovered around 25-30 students. The number of work stations available helped to limit class caps in some areas such as vocational courses and lab classes. Only one school specifically had a set number (35) which classes may not exceed. This number was identified by contract language.

7) Class minimums fluctuated from no written policy to a range of class numbers between 10 to 20 students. Virtually all schools that established a set minimum number also were provided with an exception to waive this number if a sequential class, upper-level class, or college entrance requirement with most needing board of education approval.

8) The percent of college-bound students identified by each school showed no direct relationship to the number of periods in the school day. Schools on all three schedules showed the same variances in the percent of college-bound students from lows in the 40's or below to a high in the 70's.

Related Findings

Three of the 21 schools studied indicated a change in the number of periods in the school day since 1985. All three increased the student schedule from six to seven periods. The remaining 18 schools have not had a change in
their schedules. Modifications of the time schedule were made by three schools to accommodate a tutorial period, implementation of broadcasting of Whittle Channel 1 news broadcast daily, and to lengthen class for instruction. Early bird options existed in two schools as an attempt to increase course opportunities outside the confines of the regular school day.

In looking at the number of sections taught by faculty, a trend existed that those schools whose faculty taught six classes would have fewer FTEs than a school whose faculty taught only five classes. This would logically hold true due to the number of additional sections potentially created. Graduation requirements had increased in 10 of the 21 districts since 1985. The rationale may point to the increase in college admission requirements or an attempt to encourage more elective/vocational course enrollment.

The number of preparations per faculty member showed little disparity. All 21 schools expressed that no formal policy or contract language existed, however, it was the philosophy of the administration to limit preparations to no more than three. Realistically, in spite of the philosophy expressed, this may not be possible in all situations.
Conclusions

It is concluded that the seven period student schedule represents the minimum option in order to fulfill college entrance requirements, local graduation requirements, and still be able to maintain courses in the elective/vocational areas. Schools with a seven period schedule showed a slightly better than 50% chance of maintaining elective/vocational enrollments. The length of the class periods varied greatly and probably represented more local constraints than any relationship to schedule or college-bound enrollment. The number of classes required of students may represent one way of boosting enrollments in elective/vocational courses. A second method may be reflected through graduation requirements. The number of credits required for graduation fluctuated regardless of the schedule or the percent of college-bound students. Graduation credits may reflect each school’s philosophy towards allowing or discouraging early graduation. The number of classes faculty members are required to teach may reflect a district’s attempt to offer additional sections or courses to students, thus providing more opportunities. A second rationale may indeed be financially motivated as this may allow for fewer FTEs. Class maximums and minimums probably were a reflection of the financial condition of the district more than the needs of the student.
Maintaining Electives

Recommendations

Based upon the data and results of this study the following recommendations for a master schedule to preserve elective/vocational enrollments are noted:

1) Class schedule of at least seven periods per day with an early bird option to provide an eighth period for motivated students.

2) Class periods of 50 minutes that fit within the confines of the school day and allow for ease of scheduling.

3) Students required to enroll in at least six courses per day with the seventh and eighth option of study hall or additional elective to promote elective/vocational enrollments.

4) Graduation requirements should reflect the need for students to passing six courses per semester for eight semesters of high school. Credits assigned per course may vary according to the philosophy of the local board of education.

5) Faculty given the option of teaching five or six classes with the remainder of the schedule being assigned as seen appropriate by administration. This can be made on a yearly or semester basis.
6) Classroom maximums and minimums should be flexible in order to provide for variations in students needs as well as financial limitations of the district.

7) The master schedule needs to be reviewed annually to ensure the needs for all students are met.

Presently, the first group of students to be affected by the new college entrance requirements are starting their junior year in high school. A follow-up study needs to occur over the next four years to continue to assess the impact of schools' schedules upon the elective/vocational enrollments as the fall of 1993 approaches with the new college entrance requirements.
References


Engelgau, G.R. (1986) Draft Subject Definitions. Advisory Committee on Admissions Requirements to the IBHE staff.


(a) Commencing in the fall of 1993, no new student shall then or there after be admitted to instruction in any of the departments or college of (the University) unless such student also has satisfactorily completed:

(1) at least 15 units of high school course work from the following 5 categories:

(A) 4 years of English (emphasizing written and oral communications and literature;
(B) 3 years of social studies (emphasizing history and government;
(C) 3 years of mathematics (introductory through advanced algebra, geometry, trigonometry, or fundamentals of computer programming);
(D) 3 years of science (laboratory sciences);
(E) 2 years of elective in foreign language, music, vocational education or art;

(2) except that institutions may admit individual applicants if the institution determines through assessment or through evaluation based on learning outcomes of course work taken, including vocational education courses, that the applicant demonstrates knowledge and skills substantially equivalent to the knowledge and skills expected to be acquired in the high school courses required for admission. Institutions may also admit 1) applicants
Maintaining Electives

who did not have an opportunity to complete the minimum college preparatory curriculum in high school, and 2) educationally disadvantaged applicants who are admitted to the formal organized special assistance programs that are tailored to the needs of such students, providing that in either case, the institution incorporated in the applicant's baccalaureate curriculum courses or other academic activities that compensate for course deficiencies; and

(3) except that up to 3 of the 15 units of course work required by paragraph (1) of this subsection may be distributed by deducting no more than one unit each from the categories of social studies, mathematics, sciences, and electives and completing those 3 units in any of the 5 categories of course work described in paragraph (1).

(b) When allocating funds, local boards of education shall recognize their obligation to their students to offer the course work required by subsection (a).
## Appendix B

### SCHOOLS STUDIED

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Enrollment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chillicothe (Ill. Valley Central)</td>
<td>707</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sycamore</td>
<td>712</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chatham (Glenwood)</td>
<td>721</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Murphysboro</td>
<td>728</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Herrin</td>
<td>742</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Jacob (Triad)</td>
<td>761</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highland</td>
<td>762</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mt. Zion</td>
<td>767</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effingham</td>
<td>794</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paris</td>
<td>797</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canton</td>
<td>801</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mascoutah</td>
<td>815</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taylorville</td>
<td>859</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Batavia</td>
<td>866</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cory (C-.Grove)</td>
<td>887</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jerseyville</td>
<td>904</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bethalto (Civic Memorial)</td>
<td>949</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Chicago</td>
<td>954</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morton</td>
<td>966</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dixon</td>
<td>982</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lake Zurich</td>
<td>997</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Dear Curriculum Director/Principal,

On November 5, 1985, the Illinois Board of Higher Education instituted minimum high school course requirements for admission at Illinois public community colleges and to Illinois public universities. The implementation date was to be fall, 1990. This date has been subsequently changed to fall, 1993. This increase in requirements for college bound students may decrease the elective/vocational opportunities. In some schools, this decrease enrollments can eliminate some elective/vocational sections or courses.

In consultation with the administration at Charleston High School the enclose questionnaire was developed to be completed in 15 minutes or less. This information will be utilized to study how similar schools have attempted to maintain their enrollments in elective/vocational programs. This information is vital to our review of Charleston High School’s approach to this problem.

Please take a few minutes to respond to the attached information sheet. Your response is of extreme importance as you are only of only twenty-one schools being contacted for this information. Enclosed is a stamped, self-addressed envelop to return the information by May 24, 1991. A tabulation of the results will be sent to you in the last week of June, 1991.

Sincerely,

Clyde W. Frankie
Department Head
Driver's, Health, and
Physical Education

Dean Tucker
Principal
Appendix D

DATA SHEET

School_____________________ Enrollment____

1. How many periods are in your school day? _____six periods _____seven periods _____other, how many?_____

2. Has the number of periods changed at your school since 1985? _____yes _____no
   If yes why?________________________________________

3. What time does your school day begin?_________
   Has this changed since 1985? _____yes _____no
   If yes, why?________________________________________

4. What time does your school day end?_________
   Has this changed since 1985? _____yes _____no
   If yes, why?________________________________________

5. What is the length of your class periods?_____
   Has this changed since 1985? _____yes _____no
   If yes, why?________________________________________

6. What is the length of your lunch period?_____
   Has this changed since 1985? _____yes_____no
   If yes, why?________________________________________

7. How many courses are required for graduation?_____
   Has this changed since 1985? _____yes_____no
   If yes, why?________________________________________
8. How many units are required for graduation?_____
Has this changed since 1985?___yes___no
If yes, why?__________________________________________

9. Are all classes
_____ one unit per semester?
_____ .5 units per semester?
_____ other (please explain)?____________________
_________________________________________________

10. Full Time Equivalents (Teachers)_____
How many classes are full-time teachers required to teach each
semester_______? year________?

11. Do you have a limit on the number of preparations for teachers?
_____yes _____no limit
Limited to __________

12. Do you limit the number of students per class?
______No limit
______Limited in all classes
Number ___________
______Limited in some classes
Number ___________
Maintaining Electives

Areas in which some classes are limited and the number
(Please list - English, vocational, laboratory, etc.)

_________ ___

_________ ___

_________ ___

13. Do you have minimum established for a class to be offered?
   ___ yes ___ number
   ___ no

14. How many classes are full-time students required or permitted to take each day?
   Required_________ Permitted_________

15. Approximately what percent of your student body are classified as college-bound?

16. Has the enrollment in general electives/vocational decreased since the new college entrance requirements have been in effect? Yes_____ No_____
   If so summarize to what degree__________________________
17. In what specific way has your school attempted to maintain its elective/vocational enrollment?

In addition to the above, please enclose a copy of your schedule for 1990-1991. Thank you for your help. We will mail you a summary of the results in June.
## Maintaining Electives

### Appendix E

### DATA SUMMARY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ENROLLMENT</th>
<th>STUDENT STUDY DAYS</th>
<th>FACULTY</th>
<th>STUDY CLASSES</th>
<th>95% OF COLLEGE</th>
<th>CREDITS REQ</th>
<th>CLASS CAPS</th>
<th>CHANGE IN # OF WORK STATIONS</th>
<th>CHANCE IN VOL/ENG</th>
<th># OF PERIODS</th>
<th>PER LENGTH</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CHILLICOTHE</td>
<td>707</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5-7</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Y-</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SYCAMORE</td>
<td>712</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5/6</td>
<td>5-7</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Y-</td>
<td>55</td>
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<tr>
<td>CHATHAM</td>
<td>721</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5-7</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>22.25</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>10*</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MURPHYSBORO</td>
<td>728</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5-6</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>15*</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HERRIN</td>
<td>742</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6-8</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>15*</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ST JACOB</td>
<td>761</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5-6</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>20.5</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HIGHLAND</td>
<td>762</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5-6</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>15*</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MT ZION</td>
<td>767</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5-7</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>15*</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EFFINGHAM</td>
<td>794</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5-7</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>20*</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PARIS</td>
<td>797</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6-7</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>20*</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CANTON</td>
<td>801</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5/6</td>
<td>6-7</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>10*</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MASCOUTAH</td>
<td>815</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6-7</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>12*</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TAYLORVILLE</td>
<td>859</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5-8</td>
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<td>18</td>
<td>B</td>
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<td>N</td>
<td>65</td>
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<tr>
<td>BATAVIA</td>
<td>866</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>5-6</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>15*</td>
<td>Y-</td>
<td>65</td>
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<tr>
<td>CARY</td>
<td>887</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5/6</td>
<td>5-1</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>20.25</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>12*</td>
<td>Y-</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JERSEYVILLE</td>
<td>904</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5-7</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>15*</td>
<td>Y-</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BETHALTO</td>
<td>949</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5-6</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>21.5</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>15*</td>
<td>Y-</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NORTH CHICAGO</td>
<td>954</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Y-</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MORTON</td>
<td>966</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4-7</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>10*</td>
<td>Y-</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DIXON</td>
<td>982</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6-8</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>20*</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LAKE ZURICH</td>
<td>997</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5-7</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### NOTATIONS:

1. A 6th class may be taken only after schedule is set for 5 classes and maximum has not exceeded 35 students
2. A No limits (philosophy 25-30 students)
3. B Only limited by # of work stations
4. C Limits set by area
5. * Exceptions to minimum # for advance placement usually approved by Board of Education
6. + Increase in graduation credits since 1985
7. O No change in graduation credits since 1985
8. = Slight yet steady decrease in elective/vocational enrollment