TPSD Pilot Program Proposal

Bundling Classes

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Abstract

Bundling is the practice of using blocked class time to allow students longer class periods to obtain a particular academic concept. This year we have utilized this practice to increase the number of freshman students successfully completing Algebra I and Biology. Research and our own school experiences have shown students that complete these two subjects in ninth grade are more likely to graduate than students who do not. In addition, with the new IHL requirements for a mathematics course beyond Algebra II, it has become imperative for students to complete Algebra I during their freshman year. Compounding the urgency is the required state assessments in Algebra I and Biology.

Introduction

Statement of the Problem

In spring of 2009 we realized that many of our freshmen would not take Algebra I and Biology their freshman year due to their class choices in middle school. At that time, MDE had not determined how they would grade schools, but suggested that schools whose students who took the Algebra I and Biology state tests after ninth grade would be penalized in some way. A third factor in this decision was the need for all incoming freshmen in the 2013 class to have four units of mathematics, science, social studies and English to enter a four-year college.

Academic Goals

- Improved student achievement
- Increased time-on-task through extended class time
- More time for academically challenged students to learn basic skills without the need of retention

Social Goals

- More students “on track” to graduate

Significance of Research

Through this study we hope to find how student achievement is affected by time gained in the classroom as a result of bundling. This study will give our counselors and administrators data they need to help them decide if this is something that we should continue for the benefit of our students.

Literature Review

Bundling is, in its most simplistic form, simply blocked classes. A great deal has been written about blocked classes, both good and bad. The positive aspects of block scheduling include students having fewer classes to study for each semester and giving teachers more time each day with their students. The major complaint about block scheduling is that students often go an entire year before they take a subject again. For example, a student my take math in the fall of 2009 and not have a math class again until the spring of 2011. We have tried to alleviate this problem by assigning math and science both semesters.

Project Narrative

Methods

- This project includes four math teachers and five science teachers in the freshman building
- Students meet the math and/or science class for two consecutive periods each day for a total of 90 minutes

Outcomes

- Increase student achievement
- Close achievement gap in science and mathematics
- Decrease the number of discipline issues
- Increase Rigor
- Expand Relevance
- Build stronger Relationships

Evaluation

- SATP results
- Pass/Fail Reports
- Benchmark Assessments
- Discipline Reports
- Interviews from all stakeholders

Dissemination

Results and outcomes will be disseminated in a report to the principal once SATP results are analyzed. Data will be discussed at weekly staff development training.

Personnel

This program will not require any additional personnel; current teachers are used.

Budget and Budget Justification

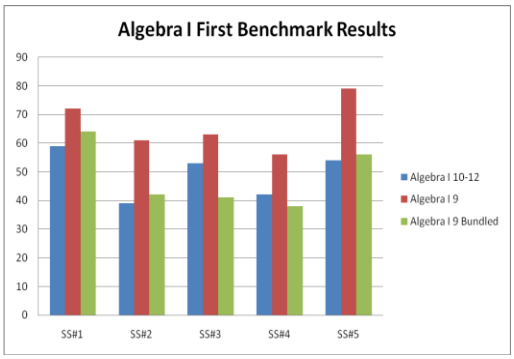
The only budget impact is on the teacher/student ratio. Each teacher typically teaches 100 students rather than 130.

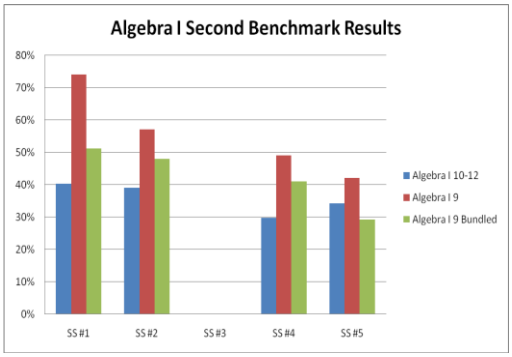
Results:

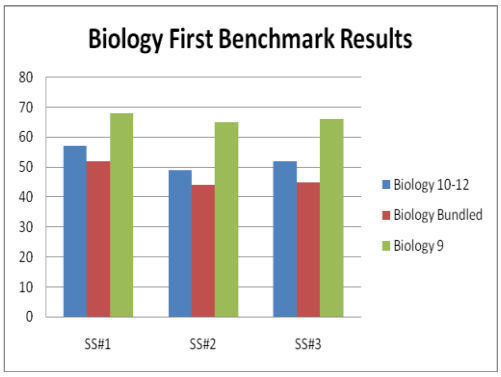
Although we do not have final grades or SATP results, we can show some promising trends from the bundled classes. Perhaps the most important trend is that we have doubled the number of students moving into Geometry from the ninth grade.

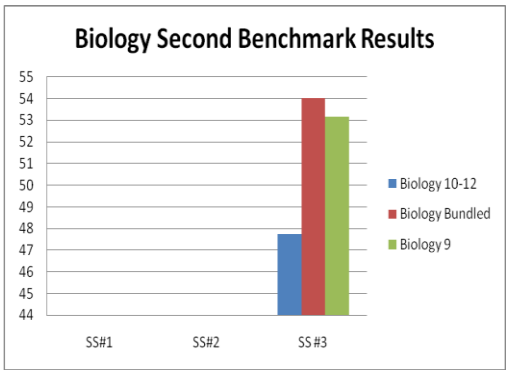
Because of the extra credits in academics that can be earned through the bundled classes, more students are passing into the tenth grade than in the past.

One interesting data trend is in the benchmark tests. Students taking Algebra I in the ninth grade bundled classes have out-performed students taking regular Algebra I in the upper grades. Please see the graphs below for more detail:









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