The Impact of High School Scheduling on Test Scores

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While the Department of Education mandates how many hours of instruction a school must have within a year, they do not specify how those hours are distributed between subjects. Each school district decides how many hours of instruction students receive in any given subject. In addition, the school district decides the type of schedule that works best. However, there is little statistical research on how high school scheduling impacts student performance on state proficiency tests, as the Department of Education does not collect this information. I analyzed over 21,000 test scores (over 20% of all test results) from 36 high schools throughout the state to determine if scheduling impacts student performance on the 10th grade Reading and 11th grade Math Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments (MCAs). I discovered that while the number of classroom hours of instruction does not impact test scores, there is a statistically significant difference in test scores between schools that operate on a block schedule versus those that operate on a traditional schedule. Schools that operate on a traditional schedule have higher rates of proficiency on both the Reading and Math MCAs.

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