Is Hawk Huddle Productive?

By Jillian Hammer

Recently, I polled almost 200 students and 16 teachers with the purpose of answering several questions: How do students spend Hawk Huddle? Do teachers like Hawk Huddle? Is Hawk Huddle productive? Most importantly, should Hawk Huddle be changed? Below, I have the answers to all these questions, and the data to back it up.

First, let's examine how Hawk Huddle is spent across all grade levels. In my survey, I asked what students do most days during Hawk Huddle. The data shows that 41% of students spend Hawk Huddle talking with friends, compared to 30% doing homework, taking tests, or asking teachers questions. Freshmen are the most likely to do homework in Hawk Huddle. Some students use Hawk Huddle to go to other classrooms to catch up on classes they may have missed. One teacher with a senior Hawk Huddle said that they use the time to help seniors with scholarship applications. To summarize, Hawk Huddle is used for studying, but not as much as teachers and administrators might have imagined. In one teacher's words, "for others, it is social hour."

In another survey, I asked teachers about their Hawk Huddle and what they like and don't like about it. In general, teachers are much less likely to describe their Hawk Huddle as "crazy" or "loud" compared to students. However, some teachers wrote about how managing students going to different classrooms with the SmartPass system can be overwhelming and time consuming. One teacher even described the constant back and forth over email as "chaotic." 63% of teachers polled said that if they could change Hawk Huddle, they would put it at the end of the day. Most of the teachers' opinions are similar: Hawk Huddle is good, but not "optimized."

Since a relatively small percentage of students use Hawk Huddle for working on assignments, does that mean Hawk Huddle isn't productive? I think it's important to consider the other benefits of Hawk Huddle besides the time to catch up on work. In my student survey, 15% of high scholars use Hawk Huddle to simply rest or listen to music. According to the data, that's more students recharging and relaxing than playing games. One teacher noticed this trend too, and wrote that "having some downtime in the schedule is important to be calm [later in the day]." Seniors are almost twice as likely to spend Hawk Huddle resting, and the least likely to spend it talking. This may be due to Senioritis (seniors checking out because they are almost graduated), but also could be attributed to their extra busy and stressful schedules. Seniors are 4 times more likely to describe their Hawk Huddle as silent compared to other grades. Overall, Hawk Huddle has other benefits besides study time-- especially for seniors.

Considering all this information, should Hawk Huddle be changed? Do we need it at all? My survey found that one third of students think that Hawk Huddle doesn't need to be changed and they like it how it is. Only 18% of teachers agree with this, and they are more likely to have complaints about Hawk Huddle in general. The most popular response was to move Hawk

Huddle to the end of the day with 43% of students and 62% of teachers voting for this option. This seemed like the most simple answer to improve Hawk Huddle, until one student took extra time to email me an option I hadn't even considered. They proposed that Hawk Huddle should be at the end of the day, and students in good academic standing would be allowed to leave. One teacher also suggested something similar. In their words, "an end of day structure with a tiered system to allow students to leave who have earned a certain GPA or attendance threshold would be even more productive." This ensures that students who need the extra time don't blow it off. Even if they aren't required to go, students can still use the time to meet with teachers or retake tests if they choose so.