

# Dueling Blades



## Academy decreases stress by giving students time for homework in school



**Opinion**  
Fiona Dean

The average student is in school for seven hours a day, Monday through Friday. This adds up to a total of 35 hours a week. That time doesn't even include homework. Having a class where students are focused and comfortable can make all the difference in the amount of time spent outside of school working on school.

Fortunately, we were given a solution to this age-old problem.

There were a few motives behind creating an Academy class. These included built-in time for school-wide lessons, class meetings and make-up time. From picture retakes to tests for absent students, Academy time is invaluable.

Having time to handle these problems can actually save class time in the long run. No one wants to be listening to homecoming updates in science class, or have to leave social studies to go talk to their math teacher. You can spend more time in class on class. It's more beneficial to students' learning and to the teachers if the 52 minutes goes uninterrupted.

There is an argument that because we lose class time for Academy we don't get as much work done in between the bells, or our class time gets "interrupted", but, first of all, it's only five minutes. That's one passing time, or an extra couple minutes for good things. Oftentimes that's how long it takes to just get the class quieted down. The five minutes that have been cut from our class times this year are hardly enough to make much of a difference in the long run.

Second of all, Academy

doesn't disrupt anything. Having shorter classes can make that time more sacred. If teachers and students are worried about running out of time, there's going to be more productivity. They're going to, for lack of a better term, "light a fire under it" because the constant goal is no homework.

Last year, I managed to complete the vast majority of my AP U.S. History notes in Academy and this year has been great for catching up on my Psychology, English and Government notes.

It's a reliable time that I know I can use for homework I might not have time for at home. I'm on the ski team and it can get pretty time-consuming, especially when we have meets and don't get home until 9 o'clock or later. It's always a weight off my shoulders when I can get homework done sitting at a table instead of on a bus.

For students, myself included, who balance jobs, clubs and athletics, any free time they have is valuable and no one wants to be doing homework instead of hanging out with a friend, going for a walk, or just catching up on their favorite show. Giving us a class that can help relieve stress can become vital to a busy student's mental health as well.

Having time to relax and giving your brain a break from the chaotic world outside is critical. We haven't had "normal" for years due to COVID-19 and it's been stressful trying to find that normal again. We need the 45 minutes that Academy gives us to do anything we can to stay healthy, both mentally and physically.

## Academy is inefficient and takes away students' valuable in-class work time

This year, we bid adieu to the old block schedule and welcome a completely new one (again). Like every schedule, it has problems. It steals time from classes and between periods, giving it to Academy.

Some students feel Academy is not beneficial to their learning. When asked, many admitted that it did not improve their overall learning. However, our current schedule still imposes shorter classes. It cuts class time down to 52 minutes and adds a 45-minute slot for Academy, hindering the time spent in the classroom.

Before COVID-19, classes were 58 minutes. That's only a six-minute difference for each class. However, six minutes a day, five days a week, adds up. In a semester, it combines to a total of nine hours lost in each class. Class time vanishes and is turned to unstructured and unsupervised work time.

Like all problematic programs, it started with the best of intentions. It allowed for students in need to reach out to teachers. However, the time lost is unacceptable. Students struggle to receive all content as teachers try to fit class into schedule.

"I think I'm a better teacher in a longer period," history teacher Kim Eikenberry said. "That's just my style and what I'm comfortable with. I like to build different pieces into a lesson and take our time going through it to make sure that students master ideas. I like having longer class periods where I can actually stop and have some one-on-one conversations during class."

Longer class times allow students to ask questions,

demonstrate skills and get the required help. This schedule is forcing teachers to cut valuable work time and without it, the prospect of homework is daunting to all students that need support. If they do not get appropriate help before being sent to complete an assignment, students will struggle. Then, like dominoes, one class after another, homework becomes increasingly challenging, and the classes seem even shorter.

Academy punishes the thriving students, the ones who seek challenges and love to learn. For every second these students are forced out of the classroom, it causes them to lose valuable education. A gap is created inside the school day, a void of knowledge.

This time is not only a loss for thriving students. It's also a detrimental loss for those who are struggling. Academy is only 45 minutes long, and students have six classes in their schedule. Students cannot efficiently use a 45-minute block for more than one class. Due to the strict request policy during this period, students are ultimately restricted from getting the help they need.

Everyone ends up wasting time.

Academy started with the best intentions, a period where seniors could share experience, a place that fosters a productive and healthy work environment. However, it has turned into an institution mismanaging students' time. It creates a space free of learning and growth.

It's time to say goodbye to Academy.



**Opinion**  
Riley Vining

### KEY POINTS:

- **Academy hinders the learning process of students**
- **The stress of completing a homework assignment unguided can be daunting to students**
- **The academy request program blocks the efficiency of the period**
- **Academy cuts in-class work time to a minimum**

### KEY POINTS:

- **In-school homework time allows more freedom at home**
- **There's less stress doing schoolwork in school then doing homework at home**
- **School events held during Academy don't take time away from classes**
- **Shorter classes increase in-class productivity**