

Schedule Committee Meeting

November 4, 2011

Committee responses to the questions posed:

What do we want for our students?

- Think critically about the content that we are covering
- Diverse Opportunities
- Opportunities to engage in learning and be active in the process, hands-on
- Ability to collaborate not only within the classroom but globally
- Accountable for their own learning
- Knowing how to work with people who are not your best friends – how to collaborate and cooperate with anyone
- Knowledgeable about content
- Competitive in the college/career market
- Motivated to be successful
- More global opportunities
- Imagine and create
- Feel connected to a community that is the school

How do we believe about how students learn best?

- Actively engaged
- Teacher Modeling
- Seeing the relevancy
- How it connects to other things/prior knowledge/ Meaningful activities
- Challenging content
- Integration of a concept across disciplines
- Have a say in their own learning –they “own” their learning
- Differentiated Instruction- recognize different styles and speeds
- Inquiry

What are the structures that make up our schools (In addition to those listed in the presentation)?

- Transportation
- Athletics
- Extra curricular activities
- Cycle schedules
- Testing
- Family expectations/support
- Student involvement in outside activities

Why do our current structures exist?

- Money
- Industrial Era
- Always been this way
- Designed to meet the needs of a past era

Do we believe that all of our students are engaged and want to come to school? If not -- why not?

What can we do to improve this?

- No
- Students who are advanced do not feel challenged
- Students feel bored, disengaged, disinterested
- Student home life is so difficult that it gets in the way of their engagement at school – sense of hopelessness
- Rules and regulations sometimes get in the way of us being able to communicate some of the needs of students that need more support – don't always get to know about outside situations
- We can't control all the societal issues
- Students are disinterested due to many factors

SWOT Activity: What is working now that we want to keep? (Strengths)

- HS
 - 30/15 minutes after/before school is important to keep
 - Related/Fine Arts offers a lot of opportunities (# of electives)
 - # of AP courses
 - Co-teaching model for special education
 - Applied/college/Honors/AP levels
 - Extra curricular offerings /clubs
 - Student support system
 - Lab for AP/Science – longer block of time
 - Resource Room
 - 9th grade transition
- MS
 - Teaming concept
 - # of related arts courses
 - Co-teaching model for special education
 - Extra curricular offerings (PEAK)
 - Teaming planning time
 - Student support system
 - Professional development- academy opportunities and conference attendance

What is not working that we want to improve? (Weaknesses)

- HS
 - Shared related arts causes certain teachers to miss time teaching a certain period in order to travel between buildings
 - At risk kids who can't get support because they aren't identified
 - Not enough time for teacher collaboration
 - Loss of instructional time due to athletics, field trips etc.
 - PSSA testing is just one grade but it affects everyone's schedule
 - Unbalanced class sizes
 - Issues of overlap of world languages and lab classes/ LCTI
 - Study hall period where students aren't productive (not the case for all students)
 - Scheduling labs (AP/Science)
 - Singletons
 - Locked schedule time of 7:30 – 3:00 prevents kids from being able to get more (utilizing time outside of the set brick and mortar schedule)
 - Lack of pre-requisite skills to be successful
 - Do we really meet the State standards that we are supposed to be meeting in the scope of the time in the level
 - Lack of blocked / longer time to do projects , labs etc.

- MS
 - Not enough time for re-teaching/remediation
 - Bubble class that is currently in 7th grade is very large- makes scheduling very difficult
 - Shared related arts staff prevents common planning time/attendance at faculty meetings – Staff feels disconnected
 - Shared related arts causes certain teachers to miss time teaching a certain period in order to travel between buildings
 - Sharing staff between the IS and the HS locks the Middle School classroom because they are operating between 3 different bell schedules and 2 different cycle schedules
 - Losing the transportation with the after school activities
 - At risk kids who can't get support because they aren't identified
 - Due to lack of planning time with related arts can't do integrated activities as easily
 - Mini cycle schedule can prevent opportunities from being taken advantage of due to the time of year when events occur (outside of our school)
 - Testing and other things interrupts the schedule and prevents instruction
 - Increased interruptions when trying to meet middle school standards in 2 years
 - Multiple bell schedules can be confusing
 - Not enough time for collaboration
 - Singletons
 - Locked schedule time of 7:30 – 3:00 prevents kids from being able to get more (utilizing time outside of the brick and mortar schedule)

- Student can fail a core content but will still move forward to the next course or grade level – eventually catches up because of lack of time to remediate
- Mid term/Finals – esp. in 7th – students not familiar w/ this coming from IS
- Do we really meet the standards that we are supposed to be meeting in the scope of the time in the level
- Lack of blocked time to do projects labs etc.

What do we hope to gain? (Opportunities) In addition to those what could be reversed as identified in weaknesses above.

- Related arts not being shared to allow for better integration
- Flexible system that offers choices to meet the needs of individual students

What are we afraid of(losing)? (Threats)

- Losing the teachers support because we make a change that they don't understand
- Lack of communicating
- Afraid that we are going to “ram” a new schedule down their throat
- MS feels like they are the dumping ground and that they are forced to conform to what the IS and the HS have decided – they don't get to have a voice
- Communicating any changes to the community
- Being asked to do something for which I feel unprepared

Next steps

- Communication from central office to the rest of the teachers
- How we get others to understand the change- is critical to the success of the buy in
- Email from CO that describes what occurred, posts the website, give them the timeline, and encourage them to communicate with their representatives (list those people)
- Also suggest a face to face with each building sometime soon where CO admin. goes and communicate the vision for the scheduling committee

Next committee meeting tentative activities

- Further discussions on concerns – threats, next steps, professional development etc.
- Begin to discuss priorities that we want to address – “weighting” different ideas to create a way to prioritize what we value