



Oak Park Elementary School District 97

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To: Members, Board of Education
Dr. Carol Kelley, Superintendent

From: Dr. Amy Warke, Chief Academic and Accountability Officer
Emily Fenske, Director of Organizational Learning
April Capuder, Principal
Dr. Todd Fitzgerald, Principal

Re: Middle School Master Schedule for 2020-2021 School Year

Date: February 26, 2019

Purpose: The purpose of this informational report is to provide the Board with a high-level overview of the goals of the middle school master schedule initiative, and a status report on the work done to date, and the plan moving forward.

Introduction

The vision of District 97 is to provide a positive learning environment for all District 97 students that is equitable, inclusive, and focused on the whole child. In reflecting on the student experience at our D97 middle schools, our principal leaders, along with the Teaching & Learning Department, embarked on an initiative to redesign the middle school master schedules with this vision in mind. The initial goals were to evaluate how the current master schedule plays out in the day-to-day experiences of students, staff, and families, and how we might think more innovatively about the master schedule to better create positive learning environments for all students.

After gathering data through surveys and focus groups, the following goals were established for the new master schedule:

1. Implement new schedule 2020-2021 school year
2. Lengthen class periods, especially for literacy instruction, math and science labs
3. Continue to support the implementation of district co-teaching initiative
4. Meet requirements in all 8 IB courses, while maintaining the excellence of existing programs
5. Better leverage trimesters to meet IB course requirements to provide additional opportunities for student exploration, especially in the arts
6. Preserve common plan time for departments/teams
7. Preserve the middle school teaming structure
8. Maintain Advisory course to support social/emotional learning
9. All classes will be offered between 9:00 am-3:30 pm

The core planning team consists of Principals April Capuder and Dr. Todd Fitzgerald, along with Emily Fenske and the support of consultant Furman Brown. The planning team acknowledges that there is no perfect schedule. The work to redesign how the day functions is complex. The planning team, however, is committed to the 9 goals listed above, and will work to achieve them in a new model. Additional details about the 9 goals are provided in the Evaluation section below.

The shifts required by a new master schedule will be substantial. Principals will need to manage this as a change initiative, and in partnership with the Teaching & Learning Department, offer support and professional learning to staff members as we prepare to roll out a new schedule. In thinking about managing this change, the planning team worked through [this planning document](#) to outline how the team will consider each phase of change management. This [change management framework](#) comes from Ambrose's 1987 work, *Managing Complex Change*, which outlines the successful components of change management, and what is at risk if each component is not in place.

Change in Timeline

The original timeline for this initiative involved implementation in 2019-2020. However, as the planning team worked through schedule models and their potential implications, the principals felt that more time was needed to develop a schedule with stakeholder input and support. The task of redesigning a schedule to something more innovative has been immensely complex, with multiple variables of time, staffing, and space. Additionally, the principal team felt that more time was needed to provide professional learning and support for teachers in order to successfully implement the new model.

The planning team ultimately did not meet the deadline for 2019-2020. In hindsight, the team should have worked to gather parent and student feedback prior to the end of the 2017-18 school year to establish goals earlier in the process and spend more time developing schedule models in the summer of 2018. While the team apologizes for the delay in timeline, the team is confident that by providing additional time for the process, we are more likely to be successful in achieving the goals of the new schedule.

The following sections illustrate the considerations and implications of the master schedule initiative, with respect to areas of interest to the Board.

Equity

The primary equity concerns in the new master schedule are around students with IEPs and ensuring they have access to opportunities across the IB program, and working to ensure that students are not “tracked” intensively throughout the day. Strategically placing the leveled math courses along with year-long arts courses (such as orchestra) are important considerations as students flow through all their courses in the day. Additionally, the new schedule should provide additional opportunities for differentiation to help teachers meet the needs of all students, particularly in literacy and mathematics. To do this successfully, the new master schedule should also provide common planning time for teachers to work through cycles of inquiry to measure the impact of their teaching and adjust instructional practice to support learner needs.

Communication with Key Stakeholders

The following table outlines the communication and collaboration efforts thus far in the project. The planning team has made strategic efforts to engage with administration, the Board, teachers, students, and families throughout the process.

Stakeholder	Communication	Date
Administration	Dr. Amy Warke, Dr. Todd Fitzgerald, Ms. April Capuder engaged with Furman Brown virtually to discuss support consultant may be able to provide OP97	10/19/2017, signed contract to begin relationship in January 2018
BOE	Master Schedule (Elementary and MS) Presentation	1/23/2018
Administration	Dr. Amy Warke, Dr. Todd Fitzgerald, Ms. April Capuder, Ms. Emily Fenske met with Furman Brown, consultant to discuss OP97 Vision for MS Master Schedule and draft timeline and stakeholder engagement	1/25/2018, 2/15/2018, 2/16/2018
Teachers	<p>Conducted Middle School Teacher session at Brooks. Our purpose was to reflect on and get feedback from our teachers on how the current structures in our master schedule connect with reaching our D97 Vision and Goals.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What does positive learning environment mean for our students and how does our current schedule support those student experiences? • What potential changes may need to be considered to better align our systems and structures to meet our vision? 	3/20/2018
Teachers	<p>Conducting School Visits with teams of teachers representing our varied content areas to area Middle Schools that have similarly sized student populations to Oak park and have incorporated unique ideas into their master schedules</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attea Middle School in Glenview • Churchville and Sandburg Middle Schools in Elmhurst • Avoco Middle School in Wilmette 	<p>4/11/2018</p> <p>5/7/2018</p> <p>5/24/2018</p>
Teachers	Held an in-person session recapping School Visits for Staff and shared presentation electronically with both Middle School Staffs	5/30/2018
Teachers	Shared email communication with Staff at both Middle Schools to summarize the feedback gathered during the spring of 2018 and outline plans for gathering parent and student feedback.	9/19/2018
Families	Our purpose was to reflect on and get feedback from our families on how the current structures in our master schedule connect with reaching our D97 Vision and Goals.	<p>10/17/2018 from 6pm to 7:30pm at Brooks</p> <p>10/23/2018 from 6pm to 7:30pm at Julian</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What does positive learning environment mean for our students and how does our current schedule support those student experiences? • What potential changes may need to be considered to better align our systems and structures to meet our vision? <p>There were two evening events and 1 morning event to seek family feedback.</p>	11/16/2018 from 9am to 10am at Brooks
Students	<p>We gathered feedback from student groups at both Brooks and Julian around the following questions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What are some learning activities that you like to do in your classes? 2. What are some things that you like about our school day schedule? 3. What are things that you don't like about the schedule? 	Brooks 10/4/2018 Julian 10/1/2018
Administration	Met with consultant virtually to start investigating draft scheduling options that would align with our MS Scheduling Priorities	Numerous Dates, including weekly sessions October-December 2018
Teachers	Shared with staff Master Schedule Priorities and gained feedback	1/16/2019
Teachers	<p>Send Interest Form to staff to form MS Scheduling Committee with the following goals of the committee:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Build shared understanding of the complexity of the master schedule 2) Provide feedback and identify implications of a new schedule model 3) Identify supports needed to implement new schedule and help plan those supports 	1/16/2019
Teachers	MS Master Schedule Committee to meet on the following dates	2/14/19 2/28/19 3/14/19 4/11/19 4/25/19 5/9/19 5/23/19
BOE	Share progress and next steps for Middle School Master Schedule development	2/26/2019
Families	Send written communication to Families to share Master Schedule update	3/2019
Teachers	Share update from Master Schedule Committee work which includes professional learning plan to support the shifts demanded by the new Master Schedule	5/2019

Administration	Todd and April will work with Liz Battaglia to build the master schedule within PowerSchool	11/2019
Families	Meeting for families to share details of changes for the 2020-2021 school year.	1/2020

Common Concerns/Positive Comments

The following table illustrates themes and commonalities the planning team heard across stakeholder engagement opportunities.

Stakeholder	Common Concerns/Positive Comments
Teachers	Maintain Collaboration Time, Middle School Teaming as well as Co-Teaching
Teachers, Students & Families	Increase class time in literacy, math & science
Families	Greater opportunity for students to engage in the Arts Reconsider course requirements for Integrated Studies/WIN and World Language
Students	Crowded hallways/stairwells during passing periods and more elective course opportunities
Through our listening sessions with Teachers, Students and Families, our master schedule goals were drafted that encompassed the feedback above.	

Evaluation and Ongoing Improvement

What are the goals of this particular activity?

In addition the goals of the master schedule, there are considerations per the State of Illinois and IB accreditation. The list below provides more detail on the considerations and goals:

- Ensure that all students receive a minimum of 50 hours in the following subjects per year: Language A, Individuals & Societies (Humanities), Math, Science, Design, PE, Arts while maintaining the excellence of existing programs
- Ensure that all students receive a minimum of 50 hours in visual AND a minimum of 50 hours in performing arts at some point during their 3 years in D97 middle schools which will provide additional opportunities for student exploration, especially in the arts
- World Language courses must be “sustained across the entire year”, over the 3 years
- The State of Illinois requires daily PE for all students
- Lengthen class periods, especially for literacy instruction, math and science labs
- Preserve common plan time for departments/teams
- Preserve the middle school teaming structure
- Maintain Advisory course to support social/emotional learning
- Continue to support the implementation of district co-teaching initiative
- All classes will be offered between 9:00 am-3:30 pm

How do we know if it is successful or not?

- Successful implementation will occur during the year 2020-2021. We will know the success of this initiative based on the number of goals we were able to accomplish. Teachers will have more opportunity to differentiate their instructional practices to meet the learning needs of our students.

What is the plan for measurement of how implementation is going?

- Once a professional learning plan is in place, the planning team can track progress against that plan.
- Successful meeting of technical deadlines for PowerSchool implementation will provide another marker for success.
- The planning team will also track completion of the communication plan listed above.

What "hard" data will be captured and what 'soft' data (impressions, opinions, etc.) will be incorporated?

- We have collected information from parents, students, and staff members over the course of the past year to make this a collaborative process. We will be updating the stakeholders groups as we get closer to finalizing a schedule that meets our goals.
- As teams are developed, the middle school principals will examine student academic data, such as MAP scores, to ensure that teams and eventual classes are heterogeneous to the greatest extent possible according to achievement data.

What information (not anecdotes) is available at this stage?

- The current master schedule is a traditional 9-period day with 40 minute classes. The new schedule would potentially reduce the number of class periods and introduce periods of varying length. This would result in fewer students in the hallways at each passing period because there would be less of them moving from class to class at the same time.
- We have formed a scheduling committee of Julian and Brooks teachers and administrators. With this group we are building shared understanding of the complexity of the master schedule, they will provide feedback and identify implications of a new schedule model, and also identify what will be needed to implement the new schedule and help plan those supports.
- We have been working with a scheduling consultant for the past 6-8 months and are currently in the process of drafting a schedule that we believe will enable us to meet our goals.

Resource Requirements

The support for teachers and progress made in these areas will need to be monitored by district office administrators, building principals and assistant principals, as well as teacher leaders like Department Chairs and MTSS grade level team leaders. When considering the resources needed to implement a new master schedule, the following items must be taken into consideration:

- Potential shifting of teacher positions to remain as staff neutral as possible.
- Some additional FTEs may be needed to support additional time in literacy and the arts. The exact count of FTEs needed will be finalized when the final schedule model is adopted.
- Curriculum planning for departments to prepare for the schedule changes in 2020-2021 will incur costs for paying teachers for additional time, along with the investment of time.
- Professional development related to changes in the master schedule, including potentially bringing in outside partners for learning. The role of the scheduling committee will be to provide input on the professional learning that needs to occur in order to effectively implement the new schedule.
- Potential need to reorganize classrooms spaces to accommodate the additional course opportunities, which may require materials, instructional supplies, and furniture.

Next Steps

The next key part of the process is the work this spring with the staff master schedule committee. The committee will meet up to seven times from February - May 2019. The committee will be providing feedback on potential schedule models and helping to identify supports needed to implement the schedule. This feedback and input will be critical to fleshing out the support plan for staff for the 2019-2020 school year to be ready to implement in 2020-2021. The support plan will be finalized by the end of the school year in June 2019. Additionally, the planning team will be working with Liz

Battaglia to prepare the technical changes needed in PowerSchool to be ready for student course selections in January 2020, and student schedules prepared by July 2020.