

**ITEM FOR INFORMATION****MIDDLE SCHOOL SCHEDULE REVIEW****SUMMARY**

In 2022-23 BSD contracted with Education Northwest for a qualitative study of the current middle school schedule. Their final report includes findings and suggestions. Teaching & Learning staff and middle school principals will consider the review's findings and recommendations to create proposals for the superintendent's consideration. Any changes to the middle school schedule will be implemented in fall 2024.

**BACKGROUND**

For many years, schedule design and course offerings were site-based decisions at BSD middle schools. Beginning in 2014, a community-based middle school schedule committee was convened to standardize the middle school experience for students at all neighborhood middle schools. The committee included parents/guardians, students, teachers and administrators. From 2015–2019 middle school principals continued the research and development of a common schedule to ensure all students have choice in elective opportunities, provide a well-articulated and consistent transition to high school, and create a more common staff experience. Budget constraints led to staffing reductions which paused the implementation of a new, common schedule.

In the 2019-20 school year, a Common Middle School Experience Team was formed to develop a schedule based on six scheduling objectives that were guiding their work. The team included leaders from Teaching & Learning, Business Office, Human Resources and middle school administrators.

Due to the shift to distance learning in March 2020, the implementation of a common schedule was delayed until fall 2021. Recommendations from the Common Middle School Experience Team were modified to an 8-period day with extended time for math and science. In addition, the previous humanities course was divided into two courses: language arts and social studies.

In the current schedule most students' schedules include 7 classes in addition to an advisory period: language arts, math, PE/health, science, social studies, and two electives. Math and science have longer classes that meet for 54–61 minutes daily, while all other classes meet for 37–42 minutes daily.

The current schedule was implemented in fall 2021. During the first year of implementation several stakeholder groups raised concerns about the current schedule's impact on student learning:

- Students transitioned between classes more frequently throughout the day, contributing to disrupted learning.
- During 37–42 minute class periods, teachers reported difficulty ensuring students gained proficiency on learning targets within the time allotted, particularly for students who would have benefited from individualized attention and interventions.

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- Due to the difference in the number of classes taught by language arts and social studies teachers (6) and the number taught by math and science teachers (4), it was very challenging to schedule students in a team model for their core classes.
- In prior schedules, an interdisciplinary team of teachers typically taught and supported 3–4 cohorts of students. While the number of students taught by elective and PE/health teachers decreased under the new schedule, the number of students taught by language arts and social studies teachers increased.

In response to growing concerns about the current schedule, in the fall of 2022, Education Northwest was contracted to review the common middle school schedule that was implemented in September 2021. Education Northwest conducted an extensive literature review, surveyed classified and licensed staff, and convened separate focus groups of staff, students and parents/guardians over the course of the 2022-23 school year. Education Northwest shared the findings and suggestions in the September 12 study session.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

Education Northwest consultants and BSD staff will present information on the completed study of the current middle school schedule. No action is needed.