

TO: Pleasantdale Board of Education
FROM: Mr. Griffin Sonntag, Principal at Pleasantdale Middle School
DATE: April 11, 2019
SUBJECT: Proposed Middle School Schedule (Executive Summary)

This Executive Summary provides information about the potential of a new master schedule at the middle school for the 2019-2020 school year and the process that has been taken to reach this recommendation. The impetus for reviewing the existing schedule is predicated within the District's Strategic Blueprint. In the Building Human Capital goal area, one of the action steps states, "*Establish building and district schedules allowing staff the time to have the greatest impact on teaching and learning.*" In addition, over the past year and a half, I have observed challenges that have been brought on by certain nuances contained within the current master schedule. In the end, a priority for our building from a teacher and administrative point of view is to review the current master schedule and make improvements to it for our students.

The largest change to the overall proposed new master schedule is that we are suggesting moving from a nine (9) period day to a ten (10) period school day for the students. This additional period would allow the students to have more class time in the area of math daily, Spanish, intervention, or resource every day, and more time for our staff to work together to plan for instruction. The length of classes would move from 44 or 43 minutes to 40 or 39 minutes. The cost of this change would be one (1) additional staff member at the middle school.

Process:

November 7, 2018, Staff Meeting-Previewing the Schedule Review Process

At this staff meeting, I presented our schedule review process to the staff and provided a tentative timeline for completion of a review and proposal of a new master schedule for our students.

November 14, 2018, Department Meeting

During this Wednesday Department Meeting, departments were asked to create lists of priorities that would be considered to be implemented within the new master schedule. It was requested that these priorities be student-centered and along with the priorities, the rationale and positive impact from that department's perspective were provided.

December 5, 2018, Staff Meeting-"Prioritizing the Priorities"

At this meeting, our staff engaged in an activity to review and "prioritize the priorities" that were submitted by each of the departments. This exercise provided the staff with the differing perspectives of their colleagues and helped us clarify the components of the schedule that are most impactful for students. From here, the staff contributed by placing dots on the priorities of each department. Because the number of dots per person was limited, trends emerged and we reviewed the data at the following the meeting.



Priorities (not necessarily in this order):

- Additional time for math
- Classes meeting every day instead of some classes being every other day
- 5th grade flexibility to support student transition to middle school
- Grade level specials' classes back to back
- Spanish every day in every grade level
- Resource and intervention classes every day
- Co-planning and curricular meeting time during the school day

Scheduling Committee Meetings

Once the priorities were set, all staff were invited to join the Middle School Scheduling Committee. There were three teachers with an interest and passion for serving in this capacity. Mr. Reid, Mrs. Ayala, and Mrs. Beronio joined Mrs. Malatt and me to work on creating the new schedule, keeping in the forefront of our minds the priorities developed over the preceding months by the staff. The scheduling committee was able to develop a schedule that allowed the school to realize the stated priorities. We cannot thank these individuals enough for all of the extra time and efforts they have put into this process.

April 3, 2019, Staff Meeting

At this staff meeting, updates were shared with the entire staff regarding the proposed new schedule. The vision of a better schedule seemed to be possible and the feedback from staff was very positive. Teachers and administration are hopeful that the draft schedule would ultimately be approved and implemented.

April 10, 2019

A draft schedule was sent to staff for their review and feedback. While we know that there is no perfect master schedule that meets all needs, we feel like this proposed schedule incorporates many of the priorities into it.

In this proposed schedule, the following are the biggest changes from our current schedule:

1. Additional time for math

In 5th and 6th grade, math time will be very similar to our current schedule, but the additional time will be daily, instead of every other day. In 7th and 8th grades, math will be a double period.

2. Classes meeting every day instead of some classes meeting every other day

Spanish, resource and intervention (math/reading lab) classes will meet daily.

3. 5th grade flexibility to support student transition to middle school

This proposed schedule will allow 5th grade teachers the flexibility to adjust their schedule during the day in order to best meet the needs of our youngest students in the building. This allows for a smoother transition for students and eases them into a middle school schedule.

Pleasantdale Elementary School
8100 School Street
La Grange, IL 60525
708.246.4700 Fax: 708.246.4625



Pleasantdale Middle School
7450 S. Wolf Road
Burr Ridge, IL 60527
708.246.3210 Fax: 708.352.0092

Pleasantdale School District 107 | 7450 S. Wolf Road | Burr Ridge, IL 60527 | 708.784.2013 | Fax: 708.246.0161 | www.d107.org

4. Grade level specials classes back-to-back

When teaching very different topics to different grade levels, placing the specials classes back to back will help the setup and preparation for the teachers and maximize the time for student learning in these areas.

5. Spanish every day in every grade level

When learning a new language, daily usage has been shown to be the most effective way. In the new schedule, all grade levels will have Spanish every day (instead of every other day for 5th and 6th grades).

6. Resource and intervention classes every day

In addition, resource and intervention classes will be every day to support our students' learning when they need additional learning experiences and repetition with material.

7. Co-planning and curricular meeting time during the school day

We believe that we are stronger and better when we work together. By having co-planning and curricular meeting time during the school day, we will be able to better devise, develop, and differentiate lessons and units to meet the individual needs of our students.

When I interviewed for the position of Principal at Pleasantdale Middle School, I was asked by the parent interview committee how we can make Pleasantdale Middle School the number one feeder school into Lyons Township High School. I firmly believe moving toward this new collaboratively developed schedule will support our students being even better prepared for high school and beyond. This schedule will also support the growth and development of our teachers into even better teachers. I don't know if it will make us the number one feeder into LT, but it will provide more opportunities for our students to reach their potential.