

Mahtomedi Public Schools
Independent School District #832
1520 Mahtomedi Avenue
Mahtomedi, MN 55115

Regular Meeting - Board of Education

Date: May 12, 2016

Agenda Item #9. C

TOPIC: Adjusted Mahtomedi High School Scheduling embedding time in the current school day (8:00 a.m. - 2:30 p.m.).

BACKGROUND: Last year, MHS implemented "No New Homework" weekends to allow students, families and faculty to work together to improve our students' experience as high school students. The vast majority of our students move through 6 classes each day with a structured 30 minute lunch and six minute passing times between classes. The "No New Homework" initiative was met with support from students, families, and staff.

"No New Homework" was developed by teachers and counselors to find an answer to the increased anxiety and stress noted by our students and families due to the schedule of six classes each day with little time for reflection and reinforcement of learning. Students involved in after school activities, working outside of the school day, and wanting more family time were not able to do everything they needed to accomplish. High School staff offered the "No New Homework" as a response to give more time each month for students to reduce the anxiety and stress while continuing to strive for academic excellence.

Dr. Larson's survey reports the following findings from students:

- Greater than 70% of MHS students feel pressure to get good grades
- Greater than 76% of MHS students feel pressure to get into the "right" college
- Greater than 70% of MHS students report they currently earn A and B grades

Staff participating in our SEED professional development read the book *The Price of Privilege: How Parental Pressure and Material Advantage Are Creating a Generation of Disconnected and Unhappy Kids* by PhD Levine Madeline and came to consensus that we need to address the structure of our schedule to support students and families. MHS staff also asked the question "are we preparing our students to be college & career ready?" MHS staff found that the structure of our school day doesn't always allow students to be in control of their own learning or acquire strategies to help them use their time appropriately. We believe that building a system to allow our students to make choices with open time will give them tools to be successful as members of the work force, military, and in college.

However, we have learned that the "No New Homework" initiative has created unexpected consequences for our students and faculty. The main consequences are the limited number of days

for summative assessment, curriculum flexibility and the infrequency of the weekends (only once each month). This has resulted in students having multiple assessments on the same day and reducing the ability to balance the number of assessments throughout the week (i.e...no exams on Monday after a "No New Homework" weekend or on Wednesday's because of advisory). The alignment of curriculum, scope and sequence has been adjusted to accommodate the once a month "No New Homework." The time between each "No New Homework" is lengthy and doesn't allow our students and staff time to plan learning needed on an individual basis. Faculty report that the timing of assessments and projects are, at times, out of the curriculum sequence due to the "No New Weekend" initiative. Students and families continue to support the "No New Homework" while faculty continue to seek options to build upon our initiative.

In an effort to build upon our "No New Homework" initiative and address the reporting by families of increased pressure on students, we developed a committee in the fall of 2015 to study other high school scheduling models throughout the nation and locally. The scheduling committee found a wide variety of adjusted schedules currently used in public high schools and continues to identify and build a model best for Mahtomedi High School.

The current proposed schedule reduces the a class period from 54 minutes to 50 minutes per day. This restructuring would schedule 30 minutes for students/staff lunches and 30 minutes for students to use the time as needed for individual students. The "No New Homework" weekends would be eliminated when this schedule is adopted. The number of days for traditionally shortened class time would be reduced to three or less days. This adjustment and the reduction to 50 minutes per class day would be approximately three fewer days each semester for traditionally structured class time.

This schedule would allow students time for the following:

- Academic Support
- Retakes and make-up for assessments
- Involvement in a wider variety of activities
- Attend off-campus appointments (with parent/guardian approval)
- Reflection on learning
- Group learning
- Rest
- Physical movement and exercise
- Grade level social-emotional assemblies
- Counseling services
- Post-secondary research and planning
- Increased club participation

Through the research done by the HS Scheduling Committee, National Association of Secondary School Principals conference, and visits to other high schools, we found high schools locally and throughout the nation have adopted schedules to build a time for students and staff to interact in a less structured format. Staff will have this time in the day for collaboration, small group sessions with students and the opportunity to interact with students to build social-emotional strategies to

help our students prepare for their futures. There are many different models and we continue to meet with other schools, attend workshops, and meet as a committee to decide how best to implement an adjusted schedule for MHS. The scheduling committee is 100% in favor of adjusting the high school schedule and is waiting for feedback from students, parents, and staff as to the best proposal for Mahtomedi. Current suggestions include full daily implementation to piloting the program one or two days each week beginning in the fall of 2016.

Administration has met several times with members of the Student Leadership Council and are preparing a survey for students to gather input from a wider audience. Student Leadership Council students are overwhelmingly supportive of adjusting our current schedule to allow time in the day for them to use as needed. Students failing in their class will be assigned to an academic support advisory on a temporary basis while they work to master the learning outcomes and find academic success.

Administration has met with members of the Parent Communication Network and are preparing a survey for parents to gather input from a wider parental audience. Parents involved in the Parent Communication Network are overwhelmingly supportive and have offered to help with the adjusted schedule change. Parent Communication Network members have already initiated wellness sessions and final exam stress busting events for students at the end of semester 1 and 2. Parents report to us the demands on students are overwhelming and hope to work with us to make certain the adjusted schedule works best for Mahtomedi High School.

After reviewing survey responses from parents, students, and staff, the scheduling committee will have input from all stakeholders and the data to create an adjusted schedule that works best for Mahtomedi. Once an adjusted schedule is implemented, the scheduling committee will continue to gather evidence, monitor, and improve as needed.

District and high school administration have adjusted staffing to allow 0.2 FTEs to complete the final planning stages, develop, communicate and coordinate an adjusted schedule for 2016-2017. Additional remodeling is proposed for the food service area to allow more students to get their lunches in a shorter amount of time.

PURPOSE OF PRESENTATION: The purpose of this presentation is to provide the Board and community with an overview of our initial findings and goals.

Initial Findings from other high schools:

- Decrease in number of failing grades for students
- Decrease in discipline referrals
- Decrease in reporting of truancy to county
- Increased student involvement with activities/clubs
- Increased student reports confirming stronger relationships with adults in the building
- Increased respect for facilities
- Increased opportunity for grade 9 and new students to become involved and adjust to high school

Student Goals:

- Enhance Schedule (advisory change)
- Reduce stress (student and staff)
- Increased opportunity to connect with students
- Enhance college & career readiness
- Academic Support
- Complete missing work
- Time to retake assessments
- Meet with staff during the school day to allow participation in after school activities
- Embedded study and reflection time

Staff Goals:

- Time to interact with students to provide individual attention
- Time to build relationships with students through a variety of activities
- Time to collaborate with colleagues

Timeline:

- May 12 - initial presentation to school board
- May 16 - send survey to students and families
- May 18 - visit Moundview HS
- May 23 (week of) - committee meets to evaluate results of survey and all information gathered
- May 29 (week of) - present findings and 2016-17 proposal to MHS staff, students, and families
- Summer of 2016 - finalize plans and implement fall of 2016
- 2016 - 2017 - committee meets on a monthly schedule to monitor and adjust if needed
- April 2017 - committee recommends 2017-2018 schedule staff, students, and families

LEARNING OBJECTIVE: As a result of this presentation, the Board will have an understanding that MHS staff are working together to find best to adjustment to the high school schedule. The scheduling committee feels that the earlier we have conversations with the board, answer questions and listen to feedback, the better informed we will all be to engage in conversations with our community and identify the best options for our students, staff, and district.

ACTION RECOMMENDED: Is this item for Discussion Only.

Submitted By:

Concurrence By:



Name Kathe J Nickleby

Dr. Mark Larson
Superintendent of Schools

Title MHS Principal

