

Middle School Model

Committee Update

October 3, 2023





Our Journey with the MS Model

MN Ten Commitments to Equity

9. *Improve Conditions for Learning:* Focus on school culture, climate and social emotional development. Connect teaching to the experiences, assets and needs of students.

10. *Give Students Options:* Empower students with high-quality options to support every learner's success.

MS Model Committee Team Membership

Facilitators: Jen Larva and Ethan Fisher

Chrissy Valento - Art Teacher

Dale Uselman - Curriculum Coordinator

Dani Smilanich - Social Studies Teacher

Heidi Lyle - Media Specialist

Jason Crane - Director of Special Services

Katie Oliver - English SWS Teacher

Kristin Paschen - MTSS Coordinator / Music

Joan Lancour - Administrative Assistant

Charlotte Aschman - World Language Teacher

Doug Hughes - Business Teacher

Heather DeMeyer - FACS Teacher

Heather Harvick- Content Specialist / SD Coor

Kurt Drengler - Special Education Teacher

Sally Weidt - Student Achievement Coordinator

Morgan Costley & Tory Rock - Counselors

Brian Kazmierczak & Sue Lehna - Principals

Parameters

We are tasked to creatively envision a **middle school model** and an accompanying **innovative** schedule that keeps **best practices** and the **desired daily experiences** of our students at the center of our focus.

- No reduction of core content minutes
- Cost responsible
 - Up to \$2M (Personnel, busing, PD, etc.)
- Aligns with the Desired Daily Experiences of our students
- Addresses standards outcomes

Standards and Implementation

- [2018 Minnesota Arts Standards](#)
- Separated into 5 Fine Arts Areas
 - Visual Arts
 - Media Arts
 - Theater
 - Dance
 - Music
- Secondary benchmarks are now established by individual grade level (formerly they were banded)



Impacts on Middle School

- Middle school students must be offered/have access to at least three (3) and are required to meet benchmarks in at least two (2) Arts areas **every year**
- All benchmarks in an area must be met in a year in order to fulfill this requirement



[Image source](#)

Timeline of Work

March:

- Formation of committee
- Defined parameters of our work
- Explored definition of MS Model

April:

- Reviewed literature and resources to support MS Model
- Discussed the 18 characteristics of a Successful MS Model
- Began reviewing different schedule models

May:

- Drafted belief statement
- Developed Work Groups

June:

- Group attended AMLE Leadership Conference
 - Key Takeaways
- Identified Cornerstones of a MS Model
- Discussed Young Adolescent development
- Analyzed first version of a schedule

August:

- Schedule revisions
- Begin discussion on course options

September:

- More schedule revisions
- Prepare to present to board and sites

Desired Daily Experiences

Students:

- Kids want to feel like they **belong** regardless of the color of their skin
- Desire strong, meaningful **connections** with other students and staff
- Desire many **choices and options** for courses including “real life” classes and extracurricular activities
- Access to **mental health supports** and to feel **safe** at school
- Knows what is expected of them and knows they will be **treated fairly** if mistakes are made

Staff:

- Have time during the work day to **collaborate**, prepare and grow professionally
- Have **systems and resources** to support students’ academic social-emotional and socio economic needs
- Resources are provided to support **safety** at school and within departments of all students and staff
- Class sizes that allow to reach the individual, social/emotional and academic needs through **differentiation** and building **relationships**

Co-Created Belief Statement

We believe that middle school students build *community* and positive *relationships* through *exploration*, *choice*, and *student-centered learning*.

We will accomplish this through *educator teams* that are committed to supporting students' *academic*, *emotional*, and *social* development by providing an environment that is *welcoming*, *inclusive* and *affirming* for all.



[Image source](#)

AMLE Leadership Conference

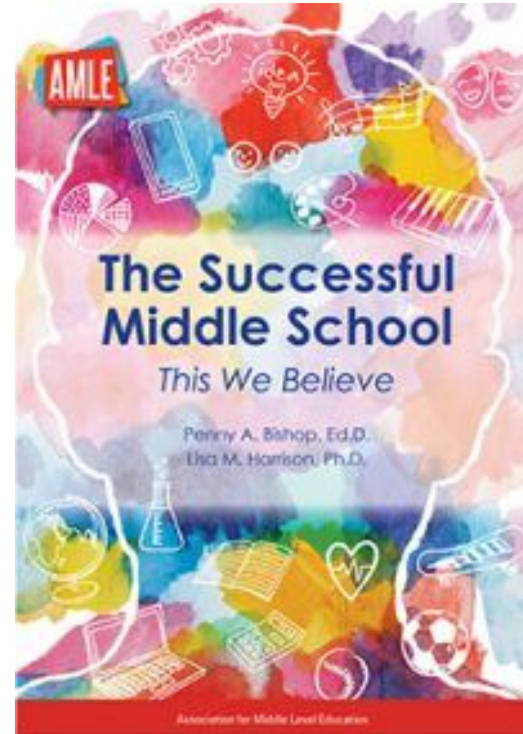
Key Takeaways

Cornerstones

- Advisement
- Teaming
- Exploratory
- Intervention/Enrichment

Young Adolescent Development

- Movement
- Sense of Belonging



Work Groups and Deliverables

Culture and Climate

- Focus: Climate and Communication
- Deliverables:
 - What is a Middle School Model
 - Family Engagement and Communication

Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment

- Focus: Course Offerings
- Deliverables:
 - Exploratory vs. Elective Offerings
 - MN Arts Standards Implementation

Leadership and Organization

- Focus: Structures
- Deliverables:
 - Schedule



4x4 A/B Option

Overview of Schedule by Grade

Block Schedule

70 min	Block 1	Advisory	Block 2	Block 3 / Intervention & Enrichment / Lunch			Block 4	
6th grade	8:45-9:55	10:00-10:20	10:25-11:35	11:40-12:10 (L)	12:15-12:45 (I&E)	12:50-2:00	2:05-3:15	
7th grade	8:45-9:55	10:00-10:20	10:25-11:35	11:40-12:10 (I&E)	12:15-12:45 (L)	12:50-2:00	2:05-3:15	
8th grade	8:45-9:55	10:00-10:20	10:25-11:35	11:40-12:50		12:55-1:25 (L)	1:30-2:00 (I&E)	2:05-3:15

4x4 A/B Example

Week 1

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
"A" Day	"B" Day	"A" Day	"B" Day	"A" Day
Pds 1, 2, 3, 4	Pds 5, 6, 7, 8	Pds 1, 2, 3, 4	Pds 5, 6, 7, 8	Pds 1, 2, 3, 4

Week 2

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
"B" Day	"A" Day	"B" Day	"A" Day	"B" Day
Pds 5, 6, 7, 8	Pds 1, 2, 3, 4	Pds 5, 6, 7, 8	Pds 1, 2, 3, 4	Pds 5, 6, 7, 8

2024-2025 Possible Middle School Course Offerings

Grade 6

1. English 6
2. Math 6
3. Earth Science
4. Minnesota Studies
5. Physical Education
6. Music
7. Visual Art 6
8. Business Ed (Computers)
9. *New Exploratory

Grade 7

1. English 7
2. Math 7
3. Life Science
4. U.S. Studies
5. Physical Education
6. **Fine Arts Req. Option #1
7. **Fine Arts Req. Option #2
8. FACS
9. Industrial Technology
10. *New Exploratory

Grade 8

1. English 8
2. Algebra 1 or Int. Algebra
3. Physical Science
4. Global Studies
5. Physical Education
6. Health & Wellness
7. **Fine Arts Req. Option #1
8. **Fine Arts Req. Option #2
9. *Elective Options

Exploratory and Elective Options

The Exploratory and Elective Options will be created by the Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment subgroup. A student interest survey will be sent to all middle school students as part of the process to develop exploratory and elective offerings.

Time Comparison

Current Schedule

- Six 49 minute periods per day
 - 141 hours per year
- Some classes on A/B schedule
- 8 courses over a school year
- No formal advisory period
- WIN every day
- Seven 5-minute passing periods
- Electives offered in 8th grade
 - 71 hours per year

Proposed Model

- Four 70 minute periods per day (A/B)
 - 102 hours per year
- All classes on A/B schedule
- Up to 10 courses over a school year
- Pull advisory activities out of WIN time
- Interventions and Enrichment every day
- Six 5-minute passing periods
- Exploratory in 6th and 7th grade (TBD)
- Electives in 8th grade (TBD)
 - On a wheel for one Q
 - 51 hours per year

Impacts

- Provides time for building community and making connections within Advisory time
- Maintains PLC time for content area alignment
- Allows time for Interdisciplinary Teaming and planning for Interventions and Enrichments
- Exploratory and Elective teachers will have time for teaming

Block Scheduling Benefits:

- Time management- fewer class periods and disruptions during the day improves teacher's lesson quality.
- Allows alternate methods of teaching
- Promotes Cooperative learning
- Allows time for individualized teaching
- Less daily load for students

Disadvantages:

- Less total class time per course
- Requires revising curriculum pacing
- Absent student may miss more content

Cost Analysis

The 4x4 model will result in increase costs:

- Offering more classes to students and
- Hiring more teachers to deliver the additional programming for students
- Art standards requirements impact the number of required Art offerings

However, block scheduling is not implemented to be a cost savings but instead is implemented ***to create a more positive school climate and increase offerings.***

Realizing the benefits of blocks schedule is dependent on changes to teaching practices, adequate ***professional development*** to support teaching in a block schedule, and securing staff buy-in.

Next Steps

- Begin conversations with stakeholders
- Gather questions and feedback from stakeholders
- Student Input into course offerings

Family and community sharing opportunities

Plan for course changes for 2024-25 school year