

School Board Meeting:

May 29, 2018

Subject:

6th/9th Grade First Day Proposal

Presenters:

**Matt Lubben, BCMS Principal
Mark Mischke, BHS Principal
Pam Miller, Director
Teaching & Learning**

SUGGESTED SCHOOL BOARD ACTION:

Recommend board approval.

DESCRIPTION:

Background Information

BCMS: We have added many transitions throughout the past seven years to ensure success for our incoming sixth graders. We have taken the Middle School 101 summer class offered by Community Education and made it cheaper and more accessible for all students. We also have offered a Bonus Night for students and their parents on the third Monday in August to welcome them to our school and ease anxiety. Finally, we started a WEB (Where Everybody Belongs) Program here three years ago, and students come for a full day, the week before the start of school, to be welcomed and meet their eighth grade WEB mentors.

BHS: For the past 10 years we have held a spring Impact Retreat at BHS on our Senior Appreciation Day (early May). The main focus of the Impact Retreat was to introduce our 8th grade students to the building as well as the culture of BHS. After visiting with our 9th graders this year about their 8th grade Impact Retreat, our students felt there was little carry over into the next school year.

Identification of Need

BCMS: We have received many positive comments for the transition options that we offer parents and students of incoming sixth graders. The only negative comment we occasionally get is that it is a lot of days to schedule family vacations around before school starts. Even with the success of the programs, we are still missing the 25-30%

of our 6th grade students that also need that information. We want all students to start with very clear expectations and set all students up for a successful middle school experience.

BHS: We are looking at making a direct impact for 9th grade students on day 1 of their high school career. We feel that being connected to each other, our teaching staff, and to BHS itself, gives students a chance on their first day of school to start on a positive note. Having a day on campus to start the school year would allow us the opportunity to help foster a long lasting connection. This directly supports our building goals in reaching 100% of student-to-student connectedness, and 100% of student-to-staff connectedness. In addition, it aligns with our building mission of *Doing What's Best for Kids*.

Research Conducted

BCMS: There are a number of schools who have participated in a similar format on the first day of school. We have talked to schools such as Monticello, Princeton and Chippewa Middle School about their experiences. The feedback has been very positive and all have stated that they can't imagine starting the year without it.

BHS: We have a number of staff members who have participated in a similar format on the first day of school. The positive feedback we've received from them has been noteworthy. We've also reached out to other school districts about similar first day transitions for 9th graders with very positive feedback.

Recommendation

BCMS: We would like you to consider our request to have our 6th grade students start school one day before the rest of our students for the 2018-2019 school year. This would eliminate Middle School 101, our WEB event days, and ensure that all students, not just the ones who attend our events, are ready for the start of middle school.

Our "In the Middle Day" would function as a full-day orientation. We would start with a "pep rally" in the auditorium where we would greet the students, welcome them, show them a slide show of all the teachers in the building, have Student Council speak with them, and then have them follow a modified schedule.

Each content area would teach them an essential part of life at BCMS. For example, math teachers would help with lockers, English would give the students portal

passwords, social studies teachers would give tours, and so on. We would have a long lunch period and teach the students how to go through the lunch lines and cafeteria protocols. We would also dismiss a few minutes early at the end of the day and have students find their buses, as this is one of the biggest first day stressors for them in middle school.

BHS: Our recommendation is to have the first day of school be specifically a transition day for our 9th grade and new students. Grades 10-12 would start their school year on the second day of school. Final planning for the day would be determined after board approval. A number of potential ideas being considered include the following:

- Welcome and Introductory assembly
- Team Building activities
- Group Activities to meet staff members
- Scavenger hunt to learn building/campus
- Mock Schedule
- Lunchroom procedures and lunch
- Activities fair
- Keynote speaker
- Bison Time/Advisory
 - Meet Student Mentors
- Fire Drill and Lockdown procedures
- Question and Answer sessions
- Closing social on BFW (Bison Field West) (potentially sponsored)

Financial Implications

BCMS: There would be a cost savings for us and the BHM community. Savings would come from things ranging from Middle School 101 supply costs to wages for the instructors during the summer. 6th Grade students would be able to have a chance where **all** of them would get a consistent message as to what being a part of the BCMS family is all about! This aligns perfectly with our school-wide AVID focus on **All Students!**

BHS: We believe there would be short and long term financial implications on having a first day retreat at BHS. Short-term, we would eliminate resources that were allocated for the spring Impact Retreat (speaker, sub coverage and transportation). Long-term impact may involve a sustained student enrollment due to an increase in student connectedness at BHS.

Next Steps

BCMS

Use information gathered from other schools and our Teaching and Learning Leadership Committee to plan the first day schedule:

- Teacher/staff roles and responsibilities
 - Ensure plan utilizes all staff to the benefit of the kids
- Detailed schedule for day planned
 - Identify important portions of the WEB program, Middle School 101 and Bonus Night, and combine into a great first day

Communication:

- CAMPUS message notify all students of the plan
- Social Media
- Insider
- Bison Blast Newsletter

BHS

Team planning time for first day schedule:

- Summer planning date in June and August
- Teacher/staff roles and responsibilities
- Plan the detailed schedule for the first day

Communication:

- Utilize messaging system to notify all students of the plan
- Social Media
- Insider
- Newsletter