

Regular Board template

Tuesday, February 14, 2012 5:30 PM

Board of Education Auditorium, 129 Church Street, Bristol, CT 06010

1. **Call to Order, Pledge of Allegiance, Moment of Silence**

2. **Deliberated Items**

2.1. Consideration of the Middle School Curriculum Plan

3. **Adjournment**

Presenter: Barbara
Doyle

Bristol Public Schools

MEMORANDUM

To: Bristol Board of Education Commissioners

From: Philip A. Streifer, Ph.D

RE: **Middle School Educational Program**

Date: February 10, 2012

Executive Summary

In anticipation of the opening of the two new K-8 schools, we engaged in a thorough review of the current middle school program. Our goal was to ensure consistency in the middle school program across all of our schools and to make necessary programmatic changes. A committee of twenty-seven Bristol teachers and administrators met for over a year to review and revise the program. A national expert in middle school scheduling also was engaged to assist with the program design.

The plan was presented to middle school staff on September 28, 2011 and to the full Board at the October 5, 2011 Board of Education meeting; the Board gave tacit approval to the plan. After receiving feedback at the October 5th meeting, the plan was adjusted to restore physical education and wellness and create choice within the Encore Block; it was also necessary to eliminate general music. This plan was presented to the Personnel Committee of the Board on November 9, 2011.

This was not an easy process to work through because so many variables had to be dealt with that are inherently in conflict with one another. Inevitably hard decisions had to be made among difficult choices. The resulting option is the only one that works within the framework of our complex school day. In the end, when physical education and wellness were restored, we had to create a choice among other offerings and eliminate general music.

Guiding Principles. We gave critical consideration to several guiding principles, which are:

- Ensure consistency of middle school programming throughout the district
- Ensure consistency in class size, grades 3-8
- Increase instructional time for core subjects in science and math
- Institute a middle school world language program
- Simplify the middle school schedule
- Eliminate the FLEX period and recapture that instructional time for core subjects
- Resolve the inconsistent learning opportunities for students within the Unified Arts program
- Improve on ways intervention services are scheduled/provided
- Remain within current budgetary expenditure levels
- Remain within current contract limits to the greatest extent possible
- Adhere to the recommendations of the middle school planning committee, as much as possible
- Design the middle school program based on appropriateness of programming for students

A description of the 'revised middle school program' (as per BOE meeting October 5) for the 2012-2013 school year follows.

1. Core classes and instructional teams. Instructional time in math, science and social studies was increased, essentially by eliminating FLEX. The four core subjects, language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies have equal instructional time and the time for all but language arts was increased. Instructional time for core classes is increased from 240 minutes per day to 273 minutes per day.
2. World Language was added at grades 7 and 8 for approximately 25% of the population.
3. The Flex period was eliminated and this time was reallocated to increase instructional time in the core areas of mathematics, science, and social studies.
4. The double language arts block was eliminated and the curriculum is being changed to meet the new Common Core State Standards that stipulate these literacy concepts be taught throughout the core curricular program.
5. A REACH (Reteach, Enrich, Accelerate, Challenge, Help) period of 45 minutes was added daily. During this period, a variety of instruction will occur, including World Language for 25% of the grade 7 and 8 students, support services such as special education instruction, and enrichment and additional support in the core content areas for students.
6. The Encore (formerly, Unified Arts) program was simplified and redesigned. (*A change in structure was made in the Encore Program as a result of feedback from the Board at its October 5, 2011 meeting*). Instructional time was increased from 78 to 80 minutes per day in the Encore Program.
 - a. Students will have the same 4 encore programs all year. The Encore programs are:
 - i. Physical Education (45 classes)
 - ii. Wellness (45 classes)
 - iii. Engineering/Technology (45 classes)
 - iv. Art, Band, Chorus (45 classes of one of the three options)
 - b. Students and families will make choices as follows:
 - i. Grade 6 students choose (1) art or (2) band or (3) chorus for their fourth encore class.
 - ii. Grade 7 and 8 students choose their third and fourth encore class from four options: (1) engineering/technology, (2) art, (3) band, (4) chorus.
 - c. The Study Skills class, which currently is a unified arts class, was eliminated as a separate class. Study skills will be integrated into all classes.
 - d. The computer education class, which currently is a separate unified arts class, was folded into the engineering/technology class.
 - e. General music, which consists of 15 classes in the current program, will not be offered.

On the next page, you will find two charts that depict the changes in the Encore program that were made as a result of feedback from the Board at its October 5, 2011 meeting.

October Encore (UA) Plan:

Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8
Each student takes four encore classes each year for a total of 45 classes for each subject.		
PE/Wellness	PE/Wellness	PE/Wellness
Technology-engineering	Technology-engineering	Technology-engineering
Art	Art	Art
Music: choice of band, chorus or general music	Music: choice of band, chorus or general music	Music: choice of band, chorus or general music

New Encore Plan:

Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8
Each student takes four encore classes each year for a total of 45 classes for each subject.		
PE	PE	PE
Wellness	Wellness	Wellness
Technology and Engineering	Student choose 2 classes from 4 options, which are (1) Technology-engineering (2) Art (3) Band (4) Chorus	Student choose 2 classes from 4 options, which are (1) Technology-engineering (2) Art (3) Band (4) Chorus
Fine Arts choice: (1) Art or (2) Band or Chorus		

The Revisions to the Encore Plan:

1. In the October 5th plan, physical education and wellness were combined into one course meeting for 45 days; physical education classes were reduced to 36 classes and wellness classes were reduced to 9 classes to total 45 classes. In the new plan, physical education was restored to 45 classes, which is the number of physical education classes in the current program, and wellness was increased to 45 classes.
2. In the October 5th plan, general music occurred for 45 classes, which was an increase from the current 15 classes. In the new plan, general music was eliminated and students were offered choices as depicted above.



Middle School Program Revision Proposal

Bristol School Administration

October 5, 2011



K-8, K-5, 6-8 Program Review Committee Mission

**Modifying the instructional program
to meet the current needs of our learners**

Key Constraints

- Contractual length of the school day
- Proposed 'Program' could not cost more than existing program
- Some programming solutions irresolvable unless we add more time, money [teaching positions], and/or restore FLEX

Impact of Common Core (National) Standards

- CT Standards are changing to comply with Common Core (national) Standards effective 2015
- Require more rigor and instructional time in all core subjects, particularly, math, science and social studies
- LA skills to be incorporated into the other core subject areas

Planning

- Evaluation of the middle school educational program began in the spring of 2010
- Consultant, John Hennelly, conducted interviews with staff about our current middle school program and needs
- Middle school committee formed and convened throughout the 2010-2011 school year.

K-8 Planning Committee

- Representatives from the elementary and middle levels
 - teachers and administrators
- Established Guiding Principles
- Met as a full committee and as subcommittees for the past year and a half

Committee Membership

- Committee comprised of 27 members:
 - Chair – Denise Carabetta
 - Deputy Superintendent, Director of HR, Director of Special Services
 - Elementary and Middle School Principals; High School Assistant Principal
 - Teaching and Learning Supervisors
 - Special Education Supervisor
 - A BFT representative and later, the BFT president
 - Two elementary teachers; two middle school teachers
 - Art and music department heads
 - High school world language department head
- Committee met throughout the 2010-2011 school year

Middle School Committee

- Four subcommittees formed:
 - Supports and interventions for students with special needs
 - Reaching the whole child – design of the academic and unified arts program
 - Professional learning for teachers and administrators
 - Partnering with students in learning

Outcomes of the Committee Work

- Committee agreed upon:
 - the components of the educational program
 - the non-negotiables which the committee wanted in the program
- These became the basis for the work from the spring of 2011 until now

Educational Program

Recommendations of the Committee

(Key Constraints Limited Solutions)

- Add world language
- Core subjects:
 - Double period language arts
 - Increase mathematics instruction to 60 minutes
 - Science and social studies daily

Educational Program Recommendations (Continued)

- Continue current Unified Arts subjects except for study skills
 - Integrate study skills into core subjects
 - Students choose band, chorus, or general music as a unified arts class
- Design an early intervention and support program with time within the school day

Educational Program Recommendations (Continued)

- Teachers have planning and teaming meeting time during the school day
- Continue the team based structure
 - Eliminate split teams

Program Consultant

- Engaged the services of a national specialist in middle school programs and schedules – Elliot Merenbloom
- Consultant worked with the subgroups of the committee beginning in February 2011 and continuing through September 2011
- Assisted and guided the committee in development of the educational program and schedule

Final Development of Program Proposal

- Committee chair, Denise Carabetta, had ongoing discussions with principals, supervisors, art and music department heads, and central office
- By the end of August, developed a model for the educational program at the two new K-8 schools, Northeast Middle School, and Chippens Hill Middle School

Considerations and Constraints

- The length of the middle school day of 6 hours-35 minutes
- *Length of the periods for language arts, math, science, and social studies needed to be the same*
- Scheduling and staffing the same middle school program design with three different sizes of schools –
 - 800-900 students – CHMS
 - 500-600 students – NEMS
 - 300 students – West Bristol and Forestville K-8's

Considerations and Constraints

- Elimination of flex resulted in the need to create time in the school day for:
 - Band and chorus
 - Support services for students

Final Proposal and Guiding Principles

- Ensuring consistency of middle school programming throughout the district
✓ ACHIEVED
- Increase instructional time for core subjects in science and math
✓ ACHIEVED
- Create a middle school world language option
✓ ACHIEVED

Final Proposal and Guiding Principles

- Simplification of the middle school schedule
 - ✓ ACHIEVED
- Eliminate FLEX and recapture that instructional time for core subjects
 - ✓ ACHIEVED
- Resolve the inconsistent learning opportunities for students within the Unified Arts program
 - ✓ ACHIEVED

Final Proposal and Guiding Principles

- Improve on ways intervention services are scheduled/provided ✓ **ACHIEVED**
- Eliminate the 'split' team – Administration
Current Proposal but...
 ?? TBD following redistricting
- Remain within current budgetary expenditure levels ✓ **ACHIEVED**
- Remain within current contract limits to the greatest extent possible ✓ **ACHIEVED**

New Instructional Schema Grades 6-8

- Language Arts, Math, Science and Social Studies are taught by the core four-teacher team.
 - Core math, science and social studies instructional time increases by 8-10 minutes per day
 - Language Arts instruction will vary based upon individual student needs
 - All students will have one 57 minute fixed instructional period daily
 - Additional instruction may be scheduled as Read 180, REACH intervention and/or special education services

New Instructional Schema Grades 6-8

- In addition to the core program, each student will have a REACH period ~ Regroup, Enrich, Accelerate, Collaborate and Help
- REACH options include: Tier II and III interventions in math and/or reading, re-teaching, Spanish language (grades 7 & 8), ELL, special education, speech/language services, occupational and/or physical therapy, curricular enrichment
 - One 45 minute period per day taught by core teachers and support staff

New Instructional Schema Grades 6-8

- **Encore includes four programs:**
 - Physical Education/Wellness, Art, Music and Technology & Engineering, with a some students enrolled in Read 180 during 2 of the 4 day rotation.
- **Band and Chorus are part of the music program during Encore**

Summary

- Most guiding principles achieved
- There will be changes in some staffing as required by the program changes
 - We will assist displaced personnel to find other jobs either within the district for which they are certified or outside the district
 - We met with impacted middle school teachers this week and will meet with other impacted staff once redistricting is completed.
- Proposal represents an improvement in the rigor and breadth of the instructional program for all students
- Key constraints kept us from a 100% solution