

May 12, 2011

**REPORT OF THE
ELEMENTARY SCHEDULING
COMMITTEE**

When a Study is Initiated

Two public forums are required.

- **First Forum**
 - **outline purposes** of the study and
 - **listen** to public concerns/suggestions
- **Second Forum**
 - **share recommendations** of Study Committee
 - provide opportunity for **public feedback before Board action** is taken
- Recommendations require Board approval.

Study Committee Membership

- **Teachers** from nearly **every grade** and every elementary **school**
- Teachers from every **special subject** area: art, vocal and instrumental music, physical education, Spanish, library skills
- Teachers in **support and specialized roles**: reading, magnet, special education
- **Administrators**
- **Parents**



Committee Members

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Kathy Sexton

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- ⦿ Alternates

Anne Maurer

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Goals of the Study

- ① Review the selection of non-core subjects in the elementary program
- ① Review current scheduling practices to ensure time during the student day is effectively used
- ① Address several major scheduling issues

Areas of Study

- ⦿ Recess
- ⦿ Instrumental music
- ⦿ Elementary block schedule
- ⦿ Scheduling of library and Spanish
- ⦿ General scheduling concerns

Work of the Committee

- ⦿ Research on best practices
- ⦿ Survey of parents of elementary school age children
- ⦿ Survey of elementary staff
- ⦿ Survey of most districts in the tri-county area to assess scheduling practices
- ⦿ Public Forums

Recess

◎ Current status

- 20 minutes daily
- All grades
- Schedule determined at building level

◎ Recommendation

- Maintain current practice



Instrumental Music

◎ Current Practice

- Optional pull-out program in grade 5
- 3 instrumental music teachers provide instruction at same time in different rooms
- Separate brass, strings, woodwinds instruction
- Twice a week schedule
- 45-minute periods



Instrumental Music



Recommendations:

- Maintain grade 5 program in current form
- Continue efforts to balance requirements of instrumental music with the instructional needs of classroom teachers and students

Note:

- Consistent with recommendations of professional organizations for time allotment and continuity

Block Scheduling

⦿ **Current Status**

- 4 day rotation of special subjects
- Art, General Music, P.E. in all grades
- Library in grades K-3
- Spanish and library alternate in grades 4-5

⦿ **Recommendation**

- Maintain current status of block schedule except for Spanish and library in upper grades

Spanish, grades 4-5

Current Practice

- Spanish classes every fourth day for four weeks followed by a four-week period when Spanish is not taught.
- Teachers attempt to provide continuity of learning through independent projects and homework assignments
- Outcome: while students benefit from the introduction of foreign language, learning is severely compromised by lack of continuity in the delivery system

Spanish

⦿ Recommendations

- Schedule Spanish within rotation in grades 3-5
- Benefits
 - Spanish instruction begins at younger age
 - Improved frequency of instruction
 - Every fourth day
 - 45 minutes per period
 - Instruction throughout entire school year
 - Schedule is consistent with recommendations of professional organizations
 - Consistent with direction of State to require 2016 graduates to have demonstrated a specific level of mastery in a world language

Library Skills Instruction grades 4-5

○ Current Practice

- Library classes are conducted every fourth day for four weeks followed by a four-week period when the library media specialist is not available

○ Effects of Current Practice

- Library media specialists are unavailable to teachers in grades 4-5 for weeks on end , making it very difficult to plan research units together
- Even when they are present there is no time in the schedule for collaboration with classroom teachers
- No time in the schedule for library management
- What is taught by the library media specialist is seldom integrated with the curriculum taught by the classroom teacher
- Fragmented schedules result in 3-4 library media specialists assigned to a building, severely compromising continuity of skill development
- Inordinate amount of time spent traveling building to building by library staff is inefficient and expensive

Library Skills, grades 3-5



◎ Recommendation:

- Schedule the library media specialist outside of the block schedule rotation in grades 3-5

◎ Benefits

- Library media specialist available throughout school year for all grades
- Classroom teacher and library media specialist have opportunity to collaborate to develop research units that integrate research skills and acquisition of course content
- More time for library management duties
- In most instances only one library media specialist is assigned to a specific building, providing greater consistency in grade-to-grade skill development

Library Skills, grades 3-5

◎ Benefits

- Curriculum that library specialists are trained to teach—internet research, evaluation of information sources, internet safety, etc. is integrated into the classroom program
- Library media specialists support efforts of classroom teachers to effectively use technology resources
- Significantly less travel time reduces costs
- Consistent with recommendations of American Library Association

Cost for Program Improvement

- ⦿ Addition of .7 FTE library media specialist
- ⦿ Addition of 1.5 Spanish teachers
- ⦿ Total = 2.2 FTE teaching staff

Summary of Recommendations

- Continues program elements that are working
 - Art, all grades
 - General music, all grades
 - P.E., all grades
 - Library, grades K-2
 - Instrumental music, grade 5
- Provides a greatly improved foreign language program in grades 3-5
- Provides a greatly improved library skills program in grades 3-5
- Greatly improved scheduling of traveling staff
 - reduced costs
 - enhanced program effectiveness