

Grosse Pointe Public Schools

Middle School Study Committee

Summary Report

April 2009

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Executive Summary

As a result of a Board of Education directive, a study committee of teachers, parents, counselors, and administrators representing each of our three middle schools was formed for the purpose of reviewing the Grosse Pointe middle level program design. The review process was initiated in June, 2008 and the Study Committee finished its work in February, 2009. The study was driven by two questions:

1. Is there a middle level program design that better meets the needs of middle school age students other than the 6-period day structure now offered in Grosse Pointe?
2. If the middle level 6-period day design currently in place can't or won't be changed, are there changes that should be made within the confines of the 6-period day program structure that would better serve middle level students in Grosse Pointe?

In order to complete its work, the Study Committee sub-divided into three sub-committees; *program philosophy*, *program structure*, and *elective program*. Collectively, the committee engaged in a series of activities including meeting with Dr. Michael Rettig, nationally recognized expert in school scheduling, conducting a Metro Bureau survey of tri-county middle schools, and completing staff and parent surveys.

Early in the study process, the committee determined that several of those program features typically identified as beneficial for the support of middle school age children should also be in place in Grosse Pointe. Those program features include:

1. teaming (smaller groups of students with a limited number of teachers – smaller school within the school),
2. teacher time for communication and planning,
3. double block of English Language Arts for 6th grade students,
4. more opportunity for students to take more non-core courses in an elective/exploratory program, and
5. required PE and Health during the middle school years.

As an outcome of the middle level program review, the committee identified several program features that are unique in Grosse Pointe relative to our current middle level program design. Those features (priorities) include:

1. Students are able to take courses above grade level.
2. Honors courses in English and Math are available at 6th grade and are available in all core areas at 7th and 8th grades.
3. Beyond the required 6th grade computer class, all non-core classes are elective in nature; students are not required to take specific non-core courses.
4. Conversely, students are not required to take PE or Health at any time during their middle school years in Grosse Pointe representing a program feature, as best we could determine, not found in other middle school programs locally or nationally.
5. A full year study of foreign language is available at both the 7th and 8th grade levels enabling middle school students, if successful in their language study, to earn high school credit in their 7th and 8th grade years.

6. Music programs are available for 7th and 8th graders, if elected, on a daily basis for one or both years.

While these program features are unique and speak well of opportunities built into the middle level program for students in Grosse Pointe, they also serve, to some extent, as barriers to program re-design. Given that the cost containment measures (class size, percent of teacher day dedicated to instruction) remain in place, and given that these Grosse Pointe middle level program priorities remain available to middle level students, the Study Committee concluded that the only viable option for our middle level program is to continue with the 6-period day program now available to students.

Having come to that conclusion, however, the committee also recognizes that those components typically featured in exemplary middle level programs (teaming, student grouping, exploratory courses, required PE/Health, etc.) will not be able to be integrated into the 6-period day middle level program in Grosse Pointe as it currently exists. To some extent, that in turn impairs our collective ability to support middle school students at the level we could or should be providing that support, should those program features be in place.

Consequently, if or when the economic conditions and the funding levels might again support such a program design, the committee recommends returning to some form of a middle school program format which features the important middle level program goals (teaming, student grouping, exploratory courses, required PE/Health, etc.) named in this report and widely recognized as advantageous to the support of students at this stage of their development.

II. Middle School Study Committee

The middle school study committee was organized and operated as outlined by the following:

Goal: Study of the Current Middle School Program Structure and Design

Product: Report recommendations to the Superintendent and Board

Process:

- >Discuss and identify concerns/problems with the current 6 period day program/structure
- >Discuss and identify desired middle school program structure and components
- >Research and Identify model middle school program structures and best practices
- >Visit schools as appropriate
- >Discuss and Compile Recommendations
- >Public Hearing/Forum if necessary
- >Write and Submit Report
- >Board Report

Committee Membership: A study committee was formed to complete the directed review. The committee membership included two core teachers per school, one elective teacher per school, one counselor or support staff member per school, one special education teacher per school, one parent per school, and one building administrator from each middle school. Committee membership included:

Members	Brownell	Parcells	Pierce
Core Teachers			
	Bill Deneau	Chris Geerer	Bill Thompson
	Margaret Bubeck	Deb Duffey	Claudia Zwirner
Elective Teachers			
	Gina Francis	Stefani Makowski	Bonnie Middeldorf
Spec. Ed Teachers			
	Mary Goodheart	Kathy Letscher	Andrea Lappin-Roth
Counselor/support			
	Marie Fachini-Kurly	Denise Manns	Angie Niforos
Parent	Suzy Daudlin	Karen Fontanive	Teri Brown
Admin	Mike Dib	Mark Mulholland	Judy Gaffrey

The Middle Study Committee held several meetings between June 2008 and February 2009. During the course of its work, the committee engaged in several activities in response to the committee charge.

- >The committee identified priority areas and divided itself into three related sub-committees. Those sub-committees were:
 - >Philosophy
 - >Program structure/schedules
 - >Electives
- >the three sub-committees conducted internet and document searches for information related to their assigned topics;
- >the committee held numerous discussions related to the former 7-period day, the new 6-period day, the features of each, and the advantages and disadvantages of each;
- >the committee spent a full day with Dr. Michael Rettig, nationally recognized expert and consultant on school program design and school schedules, to review our middle school program structure within the context of national middle school design trends;
- >the committee identified several middle school program components considered important in support of middle school age children;
- >the committee conducted a Metro Bureau search on the topic of middle school program structures in the tri-county region;
- >the committee members conducted telephone interviews with school personnel from specified surrounding school districts regarding their middle school program designs;
- >the committee conducted a Grosse Pointe Public Schools middle level staff survey related to middle school program design;
- >the committee conducted a Grosse Pointe District middle school parent survey related to middle school program design;

Background Literature

The literature related to middle school age children and middle school level program design is replete with myriad books, articles, discussions, statistics, and general and specific research regarding the needs of middle school children and those related components of any school program structure required to support middle school children and their learning at this age and stage of development. The National Middle School Association (NMSA) and the various state-level middle school professional organizations provide virtual libraries of materials related to this topic. The Department of Education at the Federal level and the various state-level education departments also provide numerous titles in support of middle level children and their related school needs. Widely recognized as pivotal in the literature of middle school program review and development are three titles that emphasize the need for school organizations that are designed to meet the needs of young adolescents.

In 1989, the Carnegie Corporation published *Turning Points: Preparing American Youth for the 21st Century*. The book offered research and advocated reform of middle level education in our country. In 2000, the Carnegie Corporation followed that publication with *Turning Points 2000; Educating Adolescents in the 21st Century*, a book also published to advance the argument for the need for continued reform in middle level education and to continue to highlight the needs of adolescent children and the important school components necessary to create and maintain effective middle school programs and student learning in children at this stage of development.

In 2003, the National Middle School Association (NMSA) released *This We Believe; Successful School for Young Adolescents*. In this book and its companion volume, *Research and Resources in Support of This We Believe*, also released in 2003, the NMSA added their voice to the already large volume of literature that argued for a better alignment of middle school programs to specifically respond to and support the needs of young adolescents. The NMSA states “For

middle schools to be successful, their students must be successful; for students to be successful, the school's organization, curriculum, pedagogy, and programs must be based upon the developmental readiness, needs, and interests of young adolescents. This concept is at the heart of middle level education." (*This We Believe*, p. 1) The literature seems endless and is constantly expanding. While the topics will vary, at the core of this body of literature, and generally any middle school information search, is the argument that in order for schooling to be successful with students at this stage of development, schools need to recognize the developmental characteristics of early adolescence and respond with people and program structures that support those age-related needs. While there are many publications which identify program components which any middle school responsive to the needs of young adolescents will feature, the following list represents those program components most often identified.

- >smaller school within the larger school building; often represented by the teaming of select teachers with select students.
- >programs in support of the affective; often represented by advisory programs and counselor programs dealing with respect, responsibility, self-worth, peer pressure, etc.
- >programs in support of healthy choices; often represented by health education classes, required PE classes, counselor and advisory programs related to helping children respond positively to peer pressure and to potentially damaging decision making. (alcohol, tobacco, illicit drugs, adolescent sex)
- >programs in support of exploring learning in areas beyond academic classes; often represented by required exploratory classes in predetermined areas (art, life skills, technology education, computer education, foreign language) and elective classes in those same exploratory areas in addition to classes in music and foreign language.

III. Middle School Program Design - Why Does it Matter?

The 7-period middle school day was instituted in the Grosse Pointe Public Schools District in the early 1990's in response to a growing national movement to re-structure middle level programs, all driven by the goal of better meeting the needs of students at this stage of development. In Grosse Pointe, and across the country, a significant number of schools were making the transition from Junior High School to Middle School. "According to Alexander and McEwin (1989) the number of U.S. 7 – 8 grade junior high schools decreased from 4,711 to 2,191 between 1970 and 1986, while the number of 6 – 8 grade middle schools increased from 1,662 to 4,329." (*Focus on the Wonder Years*, p. 12) At that time in Grosse Pointe, in light of the overwhelming shift at the national level away from Junior High Schools to a middle school program design, a decision was made to redesign the middle level program to incorporate those program components believed to best support middle level age children. While there are numerous variations on the theme that will be found in local school districts, the initiative to change to a middle level structure was driven by a number of common beliefs regarding schooling for students at the middle level age. They were:

- a belief in and shift toward providing support for the affective or social/emotional side of the child. Program components implemented to support children included counseling programs, advisory programs, clustering of groups of students with a limited number of teachers, and the purposeful linking of caring adults to individual children, particularly children who were struggling with life and/or school-related issues.
- a belief that smaller was better in terms of support for students. Program components implemented in support of children included the creation of small 'teams' or 'houses' within a school building which could, by virtue of their small size (i.e. 4-5 teachers sharing a common group of 130 students) provide a small school almost 'family' feeling for children in the school. In turn, due to the increased adult support for children, it was believed that the 'team' or 'house' setting would provide for a better transition for students from the elementary through their middle school years into high school. Unlike the then traditional junior high setting, the 'team' or 'house' structure ensured that students had a limited number of teachers to whom to report and conversely, teachers only had a limited number of students to have to get to know and therefore better be able to support.
- a belief that the traditional junior high type schedule consisting of 6 or 7 class periods of 50 – 55 minutes each was disjointed and disallowed students and their teachers the flexibility to use time in a way to best support teaching and learning. Program components originally implemented in many middle schools assigned groups of students to groups of teachers and gave the teachers the responsibility to create weekly plans for how their overall instructional time was best divided and used to support teaching and learning on a day by day basis within a week or month period of time. Daily team time, among other components, was critical to teachers' ability to plan their weekly instruction and related designated instructional time.
- a belief that children at this age should be provided the opportunity to explore and experience various courses of study in a variety of areas, not only to enrich their overall learning experience, but also to provide them with the knowledge and basis

for later decision making in terms of later middle school and high school course selection. Program components implemented included exploratory rotations in many middle schools which required students to take predetermined elective or exploratory courses so that students would not only have the experience in a given number of elective areas (Technology, computers, life skills, art, music, foreign language) but would also form the knowledge necessary to make course selections in later schooling. These courses were viewed as important in providing students with the experiences which would contribute to formation of a well-rounded student.

- a belief that students at this stage of development are experiencing puberty, the onset of the development of their own individuality, the negative and positive impact of peer pressure, and the sometimes decision and/or desire to make unhealthy or dangerous choices. Program components implemented in response included health education, drug-tobacco-alcohol awareness education, reproductive health programs, physical education classes, and after-school athletics and club activities.

At the center of the original 7-period day decision was a recognition that the junior high organizational structure was not meeting the needs of students at this stage of their development.

Likewise, at the center of this current study is the recognition that some of those components considered key to support of middle school age students were lost in the move to a 6-period day. While the change was driven by an ongoing set of circumstances related to budget and funding difficulties, the committee operated in the collective belief that certain program components represented in the middle school literature do provide students with a greater degree of support and more chance of success in school during their middle school years than if those components were not present. Indeed, early on in its work, the committee identified several key components that members believed make a positive difference for students and should, therefore, be incorporated into any school structure design that might be recommend to the Board. While there are other components normally found in the literature related to the design and structure of a middle school program, the following represent the key components the committee felt were priorities in terms of any recommendations that might be made:

- >Team time for teachers: team planning, communication with counselors, other support personnel, meetings with parents, meetings with students.
- >Student grouping by team: increase the support level for students by creating the 'smaller school' setting within the school to ease the transition from elementary through middle school to high school, and to provide the opportunity for students to have fewer but more meaningful adult contacts during their school day.
- >Increase elective exploratory learning opportunities for students.
- >Add back Health instruction and PE for all students.

IV. Information Data Review and Related findings

Meeting with Dr. Rettig

On Monday, 6 Oct. 2008, the committee hosted Dr. Rettig and spent the day with him reviewing middle level school structures. Members introduced themselves to Dr. Rettig representing concerns or desires for our Grosse Pointe middle level schedule. Those concerns included: teaming for teachers (communication teacher to teacher and teacher to counselor), grouping of students, more elective time for students, getting PE/Health back into the schedule for students, 6th grade students having too many teachers and having to travel to too many classes/teachers in a day, among others.

1. Dr. Rettig provided information about his background and about various schedules available. He reviewed those potential schedules and characteristics of each.
2. Dr. Rettig and members spent the afternoon reviewing GP priorities and the schedules that would best fit those priorities. Several conclusions seemed appropriate regarding our Grosse Pointe Public Schools quest for the 'right' schedule. They are:
 - a. The 7-period day, abandoned for reasons of cost, is one of the most expensive schedules to operate. Teachers teach 5 of 7 sections spending the equivalent of 71% of their day in instruction.
 - b. The 6-period day is the least expensive of the schedules we reviewed. Teachers teach 5 of 6 sections or spend the equivalent of 83% of their day in instruction.
 - c. The 8-period day, in terms of cost, falls between the cost of the 7-period day and the 6-period day and causes teachers to spend 75% of their day in instruction.
 - d. In terms of cost, the selection of a schedule is driven by two factors; class size and the percent of the teachers' day dedicated to instruction. (5 sections of 6, 5 sections of 7, etc.) To control or reduce cost, either class size has to increase, or the percentage of the teacher day dedicated to instruction must increase, or both.
 - e. We reviewed and discussed several schedule options including the 6-period, 7-period, and 8-period day schedules as well as block schedules, 4x4 schedules, modified 4x4 schedules, and modular schedules. All of these schedule types are described in Dr. Rettig's book *Scheduling Strategies for Middle Schools* and are used in middle schools across the country.
 - f. Most of the schedules we considered did not appear to be feasible for several reasons related to our own Grosse Pointe middle level priorities; honors classes, students taking classes above grade level, the sharing of staff between schools at the middle level and from the middle level to the elementary or high school level, and the purely elective nature of our elective program. (with the exception of 6th grade computer skills classes, students are not required to take any exploratory classes and may select year-long music and foreign language in each of their middle school years.)
 - g. At the end of our day with Dr. Retting, given our own Grosse Pointe middle level priorities, the committee concluded that the 7-period day continues to be the schedule that best aligns with our stated program goals in support of students. However, given the limitations established by the ongoing need to contain operational cost, in conjunction with the Grosse Pointe middle level program priorities, it became clear that a limited number of options remained viable and worthy of further consideration. Those program design options include:

2. A 6-period day as is currently offered to our middle level students.
3. A 6-period day with possible modifications for electives and teacher communication time.
 - a. Schedule all electives on an every-other-day (EOD) basis at each grade level including Foreign Language and Music to allow students more time to take electives and required exploratory classes such as PE/Health.
 - i. If such a schedule were to be implemented, students would experience half the music instruction now available to them at 7th and 8th grade levels and it would take 2 full school years for students to be able to earn one high school credit in Foreign Language classes at the middle level.
 - b. Commit to using meeting time provided by late-start Monday meetings as grade level teacher/counselor meeting time and not to be used for dept. meeting business.
3. An 8-period day with teachers teaching 6 of 8 classes. This option would correct several of the problems we identified related to the 6-period day. They are:
 - a. 7th and 8th grade students have 3 hours of elective class time available to them.
 - b. 6th grade students block language arts (2 class hours). Elective class hours remain at 2 hours per day.
 - c. This option, while increasing cost over the current 6-period day, is less costly than the now abandoned 7-period day.
 - d. Students could be grouped in 'teams' thereby reducing the number of teachers they see in one day.

Metro Bureau Survey Results Summary

One method we chose to use to gather background information regarding middle school schedules and program structures was to request a Metro Bureau survey of middle school programs utilized by school districts in the tri-county region. Beyond any general information gained by such a survey, the committee was interested in four specific questions.

>How many class periods per day does the district middle level program employ and within that schedule, how many class periods do teachers teach?

>Is team time scheduled into the teacher day?

>Does the school program include advisory?

>In what elective or exploratory classes (and in how many daily class periods) do students enroll?

32 school districts responded to the survey request. A table representing the results of the survey can be found in Appendix 3.

(A word of caution...school districts use similar terms to define programs but often, district by district, the programs of similar names differ in their implementation. For example, some districts offer what we commonly identify as advisory. However, in some of those districts, advisory is simply daily silent reading. In another example, some districts reported that their teachers had team time but by our definition, they share a common teacher plan time and can use that time to

meet if they elect to do so, unlike the specific daily team meeting time available in the former 7-period Grosse Pointe Middle School day.

In summary, we learned the following regarding middle school program design in the school districts in the tri-county region responding to the survey.

>Class periods per day

- 4 districts provide 8 periods of classes for their middle school students. In three of those districts, teachers teach 6 of 8 class periods and have daily time for a team meeting and a daily planning period. One of the three districts (Fraser) that offer 8 class periods and a daily teacher team meeting time will alter their 8-period day program and drop the daily team planning time for the 09-10 school year, due to budget difficulties. Two of the districts (Bloomfield Hills and Walled Lake) will maintain the 8-period/4-block schedule. One of the four districts (Harper Woods) had and will continue having teachers teach 7 of 8 class periods wherein one of those class periods is an abbreviated 'advisory' (silent reading) linked to a student lunch period.
- 10 districts schedule 7 daily class periods for their middle school students. Teachers teach 6 of the seven class periods and are given a daily planning period.
- 18 districts offer a daily middle school schedule offering 6 class periods. Teachers teach 5 of six class periods and complete their day with a daily planning period.

>Team Time

- Only two districts (Bloomfield Hills and Walled Lake) will offer 8 class periods per day including a daily team meeting. Seven districts indicated that they provided team planning time via common teacher planning time. The remaining 21 districts indicated that they did not provide team time.

>Advisory

- Nine districts indicated that they offered a middle school schedule which included advisory. The remaining 22 school districts indicated that they do not offer advisory as a middle school program component. As noted above, at least two of the reporting districts (Harper Woods and Fraser) count daily silent reading time as the same activity we label 'advisory' in Grosse Pointe. One district (Bloomfield Hills) enrolled 6th grade students in daily advisory but did not cause 7th or 8th grade students to attend an advisory. Instead, the time expended on advisory in 6th grade is dedicated to core classes at the 7th and 8th grade levels.

>Elective and/or exploratory classes

- All reporting school districts offer some combination of elective and exploratory courses. For purposes of clarification, exploratory courses are defined as required and elective courses are defined as courses selected by students based on personal interest. The amount of time that students have available for these courses is determined by several factors. One such factor is the overall number of class periods in the school day. Other factors include the division of the school year (quarter, trimester, semester), and whether the courses are daily or every-other-day. It appears that virtually every reporting school

district offered some combination of required exploratory courses and self-selected elective courses. Course titles as well as pertinent course content vary district to district. It appears that all districts require some amount of PE and/or Health in their exploratory course offerings some time during the middle school years and many districts required PE every year. Typically, where they exist at all, year-long electives in band and chorus are available for students who are interested in music. Foreign language courses, where offered at the middle level, are generally semester-long introduction courses or enrichment courses offered for a limited period of weeks within the school year. Where districts provided specific information regarding their elective or exploratory courses, it appears that PE/Health and computer skills were the courses commonly found as requirements for middle level students.

Staff Survey Results Summary

About the survey

On 5 December 2008, the district posted a web-based survey aimed at gathering information from middle school staff members in regard to their perceptions concerning the Grosse Pointe middle school program. 135 staff responded to the survey. 112 respondents (84%) were teachers and 21 respondents (16%) identified themselves as support personnel. 51% of respondents identified themselves as core academic teachers. 23% identified themselves as elective teachers, 14% as teachers of special education, and 13% as support class (academic assistance, foundations, essentials) teachers.

The Learning Environment

96% of respondents indicated that they believed that middle school staff value working with this age group and that 84% are prepared to do so. However, on the question as to whether or not the middle school staff shares a common vision, only 46% believed that there is a shared common vision. 81% of respondents indicated that they believed that the middle schools provide an inviting, supportive, and safe environment for children. 75% reported that they believed that the middle school staff engages students in active learning.

With regard to the social, emotional, and physical needs of students, the numbers of staff members reporting that the middle school staff meets these needs of students dropped off significantly. Only 58% of respondents believe that the middle school curriculum meets the emotional/psychological needs of young adolescents. As to whether or not the middle school program meets the physical needs of young adolescents, only 33% reported believing that to be the case. 52% did not believe that the middle school program meets the physical needs of children at this age. 69% of respondents agree that the middle school program meets the social needs of middle level children while 22% indicate that they do not believe those needs are being met. 59% of respondents believe that the middle school program meets the moral/ethical needs of our students while 24% report not believing that to be the case.

With regard to the question of meeting the intellectual needs of young adolescents, 87% of respondents reported that the middle school program supports students' intellectual needs.

The Curriculum

With regard to physical education, the vast majority of respondents reported believing that some form of physical education should be required. 70% stated that PE should be required for some part of each year a student is enrolled in the middle school. Conversely, 9% believed that PE should not be required. In terms of health education, the vast majority of respondents believed that students should be required to receive health instruction during some portion of their middle school years. Like PE, 9% reported that students should only take health education if students elect to take it.

The topic of elective and/or exploratory classes generated numerous comments. Generally, staff members believed that some combination of required exploratory classes and student selected elective choices should be made available to all students.

The question that addressed the manner by which the middle school program structures English Language Arts (ELA) at 6th grade rendered a split response. 44% of respondents reported believing that 6th grade students should be enrolled in a 2-hour block of ELA daily. 26% reported believing that one hour per day was sufficient and another 20% reported that the current plan of a daily literature class and an every other day writing class is the minimum that should be required of 6th grade students. 19% of respondents reported that all students should be enrolled in an ELA class daily for one period and that only those students who score below district grade level standards should be required to take an additional every other day ELA class.

A question was asked of middle school staff members regarding honors classes in science and social studies. 42% of respondents reported that they believed honors classes in these content areas could be eliminated if a formalized process for differentiation in all science and social studies classes was put in place. 24% believe that the honors sections of science and social studies represent the best means of meeting the needs of high achievers. 41% of respondents believed that honors sections could be eliminated because the regular curriculum is challenging enough for high achievers.

With regard to struggling learners, 77% reported believing that the current support programs (foundations, academic assistance, essentials, homework help, etc.) were the best way to meet the needs of struggling learners. 19% believed these programs are not enough to meet the needs of struggling learners.

Advisory and Teaming and the School Day

Specifically related to advisory, there was a very mixed response. 24% believe that advisory should be maintained. An additional 24% believe that advisory should be modeled on the advisory program currently in operation at Pierce (exploratory/reward). 41% reported believing that advisory should be eliminated.

Two survey questions dealt with the topic of teaming in support of both student achievement and school climate. 94% of respondents reported that daily or weekly team meeting time would make a positive difference in school climate. Virtually all respondents reported believing that daily or weekly team meeting time would make a positive difference in student achievement. Only 11% of respondents reported believing that common planning time would be sufficient to make a positive difference in student achievement.

When asked about the design of the school day, 89% of respondents stated that they believed that it is best for students to have a seven period day with teaming for students and daily team and individual planning time for teachers. Only 10% of responding staff members believed that a 6-period day is best for students.

Parent Survey Results Summary

About the Survey

On January 12, 2009, the district launched a web-based survey to gather feedback from the community regarding our middle schools. The instrument was designed to collect data on a variety of topics, particularly seeking input from parents of current middle school students, but was not designed to be a random sampling of our constituents. In the district's efforts to increase two-way communication, this is one more tool.

In total, there were 284 respondents, equitably distributed among the three middle schools and the three grade levels. Ninety-eight percent (98%) described themselves as parents or guardians. Thirty-seven percent (37%) of the respondents identified themselves as being from Parcels Middle School, 32% from Brownell, 29% from Pierce, and 2% as not currently a parent or student at any of the three middle schools. Forty-four percent (44%) said they currently are or have a 7th grade student, 39% a sixth grader, and 23% an eighth grader.

The Learning Environment

A strong majority of respondents (85%) said their middle school provides a safe environment, 12% were neutral and 4% disagreed. Eighty percent (80%) agreed or strongly agreed that their middle school's environment is supportive and inviting, and 79% agreed their middle school environment engages students in active learning. Ninety percent (90%) of respondents said the current middle school staff values working with this age group, and 86% agreed with the statement that the staff is prepared to work with this age group. However, only 72% of respondents agreed that the middle school staff shares a common vision.

The Curriculum

The GPPSS mission states the district "in partnership with students, staff, parents and community, will be at the forefront of education. An evolving curriculum and the highest standards of instruction and learning in every class, every day, will ensure that each student is challenged to fully develop individual abilities, skills and character to succeed in life. We are committed to creating an environment that cultivates knowledgeable, responsible, and caring citizens who embrace life's possibilities with a passion for continuous learning." This survey provided an opportunity for respondents to say whether the middle school curriculum is meeting students' emotional/psychological, physical, intellectual, moral/ethical, and social needs.

Eighty-three percent (83%) agreed or strongly agreed that the district is meeting the intellectual needs of students, 10% were neutral, and 8% disagreed. Three quarters (76%) said the middle school curriculum meets the emotional/psychological needs of young adolescents, with 16% neutral, and 10% disagreeing with that statement. Sixty-nine percent (69%) agreed that the

curriculum meets the social needs of young adolescents, and 61% said it meets the moral/ethical their needs. The neutral response for both of the last statements was very high (23% for social, 30% for moral/ethical needs). In comparison, only 58% agreed or strongly agreed that the curriculum meets the physical needs of young adolescents, 16% were neutral and 28% disagreed or strongly disagreed.

When asked specifically about the minimum for instruction that most closely matches their beliefs for sixth grade reading and writing, the parent response was surprisingly similar to the responses given by middle school staff members answering the same question:

- 40% said daily, two periods taught in a double block with the same teacher
- 26% said daily one period, and one every-other-day period, same teacher
- 16% said daily, one period
- 11% said daily one period, and one every-other-day period, could be different teacher
- 8% said daily one period, with one every-other-day period for those who score below district grade level standards.

Over half (54%) said sixth graders should choose some electives and rotate through some predetermined exploratory classes, while one-third (32%) said they should choose their own electives, and 15% said sixth graders should rotate through a predetermined set of exploratory classes. When asked which electives they felt should be required courses, the most common responses were: foreign language (60% of respondents), life skills (34%), tech classes (33%), art (22%), and none/not applicable (18%). These numbers do not total 100% as more than one answer could be marked. The least commonly noted when asked which classes should be required were band (5%), choir (5%), orchestra (4%) and drama (3%). Respondents were also asked how many semesters and at what grade level students should be required to take certain courses, and foreign language, tech classes, life skills and art again garnered the most responses. More respondents showed a preference to one semester offering per subject at each grade level. The chart below shows responses. Please note the significantly larger percentage of respondents marking both semesters for foreign language every year than for any other subject area.

	1 semester 6th	2 semesters 6th	1 semester 7th	2 semesters 7th	1 semester 8th	2 semesters 8th	Total Number
Art	39%	4%	25%	2%	18%	3%	174
Tech	33	5	32	6	29	7	190
Lifeskills	30	4	30	4	25	5	180
Foreign Language	32	20	34	26	30	38	257
Band	10	4	5	4	5	4	56
Choir	10	3	6	3	4	3	57
Orchestra	6	3	4	3	5	4	47
Drama	8	2	5	1	5	1	42
None n/a	19	17	17	16	17	16	40

Respondents were specifically asked if physical education should be required even if it meant giving up an elective, and 48% disagreed or strongly disagreed, 41% agreed or strongly agreed PE should be required, and 13% were neutral. When asked to select which statement most closely matched their beliefs, 61% said PE should be required for part of the year every year, 28% said it should not be required, 8% said it should be required all year one of the years, and 4% said sixth

grade only for part of the year. When asked about health instruction, over a third (36%) said it should be every year as part of required PE, a quarter (26%) said health should be taught in 8th grade, 19% said only when students elect it, and 12% said every year as a semester or trimester course.

Two-thirds (66%) stated honors classes are the best way to meet needs of high achievers, while 16% favored differentiation in the classrooms, 10% said “don’t know” and 5% said the regular curriculum is challenging enough for high achievers. In the open comment section, a few parents requested more honors classes for sixth graders and more weight for honors classes in GPA calculations.

Advisory and Teaming and the School Day

Almost half (48%) of respondents said Advisory should be maintained/implemented with lessons on character development, while a third (34%) said it should be maintained/implemented as an exploratory/reward program with academic support, and a quarter (25%) said maintained/implemented with interest-based activities. Forty percent (40%) agreed with the statement that it improves school climate, but only 22% said it improves student achievement. Nineteen percent (19%) said advisory should be eliminated.

In the introduction to the survey, teaming/grouping was defined as groups of students sharing common core teachers. For example, approximately 130 students at one grade level would have the same math, science, social studies, and language arts teachers. The introduction stated, “This allows teachers to build group cohesiveness, set common rules and procedures, and plan interdisciplinary projects and activities.” When asked about teaming, 58% of respondents said it would make a positive difference in school climate if teachers had an opportunity to meet weekly, while 16% said it is not necessary, another 16% teaming should happen daily, and 11% favored no specific team meeting time but common planning/prep time. In regard to student achievement, teaming responses were similar with 60% favoring weekly time, 17% daily, 13% saying it was not necessary to meet high standards, and 11% preferring common planning/prep time. Strong feelings were expressed in the open comment section about the schools providing more explanation of what would happen during these teaming or planning times and how families felt about late start Mondays.

When asked about the school day, over a third (35%) of parents favored the seven-period day (26% with teaming, 9% without teaming), 20% favored a six period day (14% with teaming, 6% without teaming), while 19% said a combination of scheduling options could be used, 3% favored block scheduling, 3% trimester, and a relatively high percentage of parents (15%) didn’t know or were unsure. In the open comment section, parents described middle school as a “time for discovery,” to “explore their interests,” “for doing” and added that the current six-period schedule could not accommodate that. Proposed solutions were largely to return to the seven period day or to rotate through electives – particularly gym, foreign language and instrumental instruction. Many said they saw foreign language as a required course, not an elective, to truly prepare students for high school requirements.

V. Middle School Schedule Models Considered

Dr. Rettig's book, *Scheduling Strategies for Middle Schools*, provides a wealth of knowledge related to the types of schedules that are utilized in middle schools across the country. He identifies modular schedules, block schedules, 4x4 alternate day schedules, and 6, 7, and 8-period day schedules. In turn, each of these basic program designs can be modified to offer many variations on the original program design. As indicated above, Dr. Rettig reviewed each of the many possibilities the day he worked with the Grosse Pointe Middle School Study Committee. After an extensive review of schedule possibilities, the identification and/or reiteration of our own Grosse Pointe goals for middle level education, a review of related cost factors such as the percentage of time teachers' days are dedicated to instruction vs. planning, class size, and the length of the school day and the length of class periods, the committee concluded that there were, in reality, few options open for our consideration. Said conclusion was based on several factors that will continue to contain or limit our schedule and/or program options while those factors remain in place. Those factors are:

>cost containment

- class size
- proportion of teacher instruction time to teacher plan time per day
- number and length of desired class periods
- overall length of the middle level school day

>instruction

- total time available for instruction
- number and length of class periods per day
- proportion of instructional time dedicated to core classes vs. exploratory or elective classes
- number of class periods dedicated to exploratory or elective classes
- the status of non-core classes; elective, required, or some of each
- the type of elective courses available to students at each grade
 - foreign language classes daily for a full year at 7th and 8th grades
 - PE/health as an elective vs. required class
 - Full-year daily music classes at the 7th and 8th grade levels
- The certification and qualification of teachers and their related ability to teach one or more core content courses

>scheduling student courses

- availability and placement of honors vs. grade level courses
- elective, required exploratory or some of each and their interconnectedness within the scheduling process

The committee reviewed and considered several middle school program or schedule options. In the end, however, the schedules that best aligned with those priorities we originally identified are represented by the following three designs:

1. Modified 7-period day

Advantages

Those original goals or priorities identified as important to best serve middle level students are available in this program design;

- >Teaming and team time
- >student grouping by team
- >exploratory and elective classes
- >PE/health could be required still allowing students to take a year of music and a year of foreign language
- >students (especially 6th grade students) are provided a greater degree of support through the transition process from elementary to middle school with this program design.
- >advisory is available for students
- >daily double English Language Arts (ELA) block for 6th graders

Disadvantages

- >Increased cost (**See Appendix 2**)
- >class periods of 45 minutes are too short

Comments

- >The committee considered a modified 7-period day given the concern over the shorter class periods offered by this design. The modifications increased the class length to 50 minutes and extended the school day with the minutes necessary to achieve the extended class period length.

2. 8-period day

Advantages

Those original goals or priorities identified as important to best serve middle level students are also available in this program design;

- >Teaming and team time
- >student grouping by team
- >exploratory and elective classes
- >PE/health could be required still allowing students to take a year of music and a year of foreign language
- >students (especially 6th grade students) are provided a greater degree of support through the transition process from elementary to middle school with this program design.
- >advisory is available for students
- >daily double English Language Arts (ELA) block for 6th graders

Disadvantages

- >less costly than a 7-period day but does reflect increased cost over the 6-period day now in operation (**See Appendix 2**)
- >class periods of 40 minutes are too short

Comments

- >The committee considered an 8-period day because it does offer the program options that the committee believes supports middle level students. This program design is used by two metro districts (Bloomfield Hills and Walled Lake) but operates in a 4-block plan. That variation offers increased instructional time in the core (over the 40 minutes per class period when operated as an 8-period day. However, to gain the increased core instructional time, the elective or exploratory portion of the day is capped at two 44 minute periods. In Grosse Pointe, given our priorities, all non-core classes would have to be totally elective to allow students the choice of taking both a full year of music and a full year or foreign language. If not completely elective, Grosse Pointe students who wished both music and foreign language would be forced to select only one of those classes and then be required to take exploratory classes such as PE/health.

3. 6-period day as is currently in operation

Advantages

- >increase in instructional time with class periods scheduled at 55 minutes each
- >decreased cost
- >students (with parents) elect all non-core classes

Disadvantages

- >loss of program features to support students in transition
 - teaming, grouping
 - no exploratory requirements - all electives
 - PE/health taken as elective
- >move from daily double ELA block to daily literature and every other day writing

Comments

- >While cost drove the decision to move to a 6-period day, the specific losses most often cited as detractors in terms of supporting students at this age and stage of development are:
 - loss of teaming and grouping (smaller school within the school) to support students in transition
 - loss of time for professional interaction for communication and planning in support of students
 - loss of time for teacher – parent meetings (especially at the 6th grade level) in support of students
 - loss of daily ELA double block for 6th graders

VI. Conclusions

- The Grosse Pointe school district middle level program features a 6-period day which is the most common program structure represented in the tri-county region as identified in the Metro Bureau survey.
- Of the three districts still offering an 8-period day with daily teacher teaming, two districts will continue offering an 8-period (4-block) middle level program with daily teaming and student grouping by team and one will discontinue that program design due to funding difficulties and overall budget reductions.
- Advisory, strongly recommended in the middle school literature as an important program component to support students at this age of development and transition was only offered in roughly a third of the reporting tri-county districts and found mixed support amongst staff and parent survey respondents.
- The Grosse Pointe middle level program is unique regarding elective courses. Grosse Pointe, unlike all reporting districts, with the exception of 6th grade computer skills, offers all non-core courses on an elective basis and requires no exploratory courses be completed throughout the middle school years.
- In the tri-county region, as indicated in the Metro Bureau survey, Grosse Pointe is also unique in how and what it offers middle level students in the foreign language area of study. Several districts do not make foreign language available to their middle school students. Where they do, it is often limited to a semester or a several weeks-long enrichment experience. In those very few districts where it is available for a full year, that option generally only becomes available for students beginning at the 8th grade level. In one district, any foreign language study completed by the end of the 8th grade year (even if begun in elementary school) could be counted as the equivalent of the high school level I foreign language course enabling students to enroll in the equivalent level II course as 9th graders. Only Grosse Pointe allows middle school students the opportunity to enroll in foreign language in both their 7th and 8th grade years thereby providing them with the prospect of earning the equivalent of two years of high school foreign language credit while in middle school. (i.e. students having successfully completed Spanish I and Spanish II in middle school could enroll in Spanish III in their 9th grade year and would have earned two high school credits while still enrolled in middle school)
- The current Grosse Pointe middle level program is also unique in that it is the only middle level program making honors courses available in all four core content areas at the 7th and 8th grade levels
- The uniqueness of the Grosse Pointe middle level program offerings are a reason for accolades and serve as barriers to much of what the committee considered in terms of program change. For example, with regard to elective courses, if it is not a universal outside of Grosse Pointe, then it is certainly fair to say that the vast majority of middle schools have some form of PE/health requirements for students. It is quite uncommon for middle school children not to be required to take PE/health sometime in their middle school years. It is interesting to note that Dr. Rettig informed the study committee that he has worked extensively with hundreds of districts in most states of the United States and has never found a district that did not require PE at the middle level. Yet, if PE/Health were required with only two elective class hours in the day, students would not be able, if they so elected, to take a full year of music and a full year of foreign language.

VII. Recommendations

In summary, while acknowledging the impact and extent of the current economic downturn on the Grosse Pointe Public Schools, we also very strongly support those middle level program goals identified throughout this report. As a result, the committee recommends returning to some form of a middle school program format which would feature these important middle level program goals if or when the economic conditions and the funding levels might again support such a program design.

In the interim, however, after much study and discussion, the committee concluded that given the parameters within which we operate, the only current feasible schedule is the 6-period day schedule now in operation in our middle schools in Grosse Pointe. Having arrived at that recommendation, we believe that it is important to note that as a result, several program goals originally identified as important to the support of middle level children remain outside our ability to integrate them into our middle level program. Consequently, we believe, we are partially impaired in our collective ability to support students at this stage of development as these same middle level children transition through these often tumultuous times of their development. Based on the committee's work and those priorities initially identified by the committee, at least in terms of our present operational middle level program structure, the following remain without resolution and outside the realm of inclusion in the Grosse Pointe Public Schools middle level program:

- >greater support for middle level students, especially 6th grade, as they transition from elementary through middle school to their high school careers
- >a two-hour English Language Arts block for 6th grade students
- >PE/health requirements for middle school students
 - Specifically in terms of health education, instruction regarding human reproduction remains a required instructional component at each grade level but also remains an 'orphan' in terms of any specific curricular base.
- >more time for students to enroll in and experience the full dimension of exploratory classes previously available
- >team time for professional communication and planning
- >student grouping by teacher team

IX. Next Steps

With this report, for good or for bad, the original middle school study committee has completed its assignment; a review and consideration of potential middle school program design options which might be recommended to better support middle level students. In the course of the past year, several items were discussed which, though non-structural in nature, may be addressed at the middle level to support students. Each of these items, if adopted for further consideration and potential action, has the potential to increase support for middle level students. Each of them, if adopted for study and review, will require the formation of a review committee and the appropriation of time for the committee to complete the required work.

1. Common grading scale across the middle level
2. Curriculum review and revision of non-core classes to update course content in order to stay current and to build student interest in those courses
3. A different way to structure or offer advisory
 - Are there other ways (beyond teaming and advisory) to link school adults with middle school children to provide support?
4. School climate issues and building responses
 - If we are unable to create a smaller school within a school (teams), are there other mechanisms that can be identified and implemented to support children in this middle level transition?
5. Should 6th grade students be placed in a modified or different school program design from their 7th and 8th grade counterparts?
 - If the school program structure is to remain the same for 6th, 7th, and 8th grade students, is there a way to differentiate within the schedule for 6th grade students?

Appendices

Appendix 1-A

Middle School Study Committee

Electives Subcommittee

– **Talking Points** (updated 9/24/2008)

Gina Francis and Stefani Makowski: Co- Chairs

Margaret Bubeck, Suzy Daudlin, Mary Goodheart, Bonnie Middeldorf

The electives subcommittee has made the following suggestions:

- Establish an exploratory* rotation where students are able to experience all elective classes (art, band, choir, drama, foreign language, lifeskills, and technology). Preferably this schedule will be set for 6th grade students.
- Offer all electives in 7th and 8th grade equally as 1/2 year or full year options.
- Offer students the same elective classes currently available (keeping the current curriculum for each elective department).
- Keep the current computer requirement (All 6th grade students take a basic computer skills course. Students are tested for computer competency in 7th grade. Those students who do not pass the computer competency exam will be required to take an additional computer courses in 7th or 8th grade).
- Require students to take physical education in 6th grade and health at some point during their middle school career. If PE is not required in 6th, than it should be in the exploratory rotation.

* As recommended by the National Middle School Association. “An *exploratory* curriculum directly reflects the curious, adventuresome nature of young adolescents. Exploration is not a classification of content; rather, it is an attitude and approach to all curriculum and instruction. Exploratory learning opportunities

- Broaden students' views of themselves and the world.
- Help students discover their interests and aptitudes.
- Assist students with career exploration and decisions about their futures.
- Contribute to the development of well-rounded, self-sufficient citizens.
- Open doors to new ideas and areas to investigate.

<http://www.nmsa.org/AboutNMSA/PositionStatements/Curriculum/tabid/767/Default.aspx>

Appendix 1-B

Middle School Study Committee

Philosophy Subcommittee

Philosophy Statement Talking Points

The development of our Philosophy Statement has included the following:

1. Consider developmental characteristics of adolescents and implications for practices (adapted from NMSA)

- Emotional/Psychological
- Physical
- Intellectual
- Moral/Ethical
- Social

2. Define our philosophy:

Philosophy Statement

(Adapted from NMSA; based on their research)

To effectively meet the needs of young adolescents, our middle schools should include:

- Educators who value working with this age group and are prepared to do so
- Courageous, collaborative leadership
- A shared vision that guides decisions
- An inviting, supportive, and safe environment
- Students and teachers engaged in active learning
- An adult advocate for every student

3. Describe ideal middle school curriculum:

- Our middle school curriculum should be relevant, challenging, integrative, and exploratory (real world, challenging, allows for student choice, promotes exploratory vs. elective)
- Our middle school curriculum should include multiple learning and teaching approaches that respond to student diversity (brain research based, varying learning styles, collaborative learning, student choice)
- Our middle school curriculum should include organizational structures that support meaningful relationships and learning (advisory, teaming and/or looping)
- Our middle school curriculum should include school-wide efforts and policies that foster health, wellness, and safety (advisory, health, PE, recess)
- Our middle school curriculum should include multi-faceted guidance and support services (advisory, teamed teachers, counselors, support staff)
- Our middle school curriculum should include continuing staff development and reflection on our shared vision (for new, transfer teachers and for reenergizing the staff)

Appendix 1-C

Middle School Study Committee

Scheduling Sub-committee

Report out to school faculties

Sept/Oct 08

Co- Chairs: Judy Gaffrey and Angie Niforos

Members - Bill Deneau, Marie Fachini-Kurily, Denise Manns, Teri Brown, Claudia Zwirner

The committee has met two times. The first meeting in June was an organizational meeting to create the subcommittees, timeline and plan for the final recommendation.

September - the subcommittee met and shared information gathered over the summer. We are focusing on 4 specific Middle School Structures:

Six Period Day

Seven Period Day

Trimesters

Block Scheduling

The subcommittee is currently researching the pros and cons of all 4 structures. We are interviewing people in other districts and researching information about each of the structures.

We encourage staff members to share any expertise or feedback they may have regarding any of these Middle School Structures.

We will be meeting a couple of times in October to gather our information and findings and create our final recommendation.

Appendix 2

Meeting Notes

Meeting with Dr. Michael Rettig - 6 Oct. 08

Summary Notes:

Present: Margaret Bubeck, Bill Deneau, Mike Dib, Deb Duffey, Marie Fachini-Kurily, Gina Francis, Judy Gaffrey, Chris Geerer, Mary Goodheart, Andrea Lappin-Roth, Kathy Letscher, Stefani Makowski, Denise Manns, Angie Niforos, Teri Brown, Bill Thompson, Claudia Zwirner

1. Members introduced themselves to Dr. Rettig including concerns or desires for the middle level schedule. Those concerns included: teaming for teachers (communication teacher to teacher and teacher to counselor), grouping of students, more elective time for students, getting PE/Health back into the schedule for students, 6th grade students having too many teachers and having to travel to too many classes/teachers in a day, among others.
2. Dr. Rettig provided information about his background and about various schedules available. He reviewed those potential schedules and characteristics of each. (See slides in handouts)
3. Dr. Rettig and members spent the afternoon reviewing GP priorities and the schedules that would best fit those priorities. Several conclusions seemed appropriate regarding our GP quest for the 'right' schedule. They are:
 - a. The 7-period day that we abandoned for reasons of cost is one of the most expensive schedules we considered. Teachers teach 5 of 7 sections or 71% of their day is dedicated to instruction.
 - b. The selection of a schedule, in terms of cost, is driven by two factors; class size and/or percent of the day teachers teach. (5 sections of 6, 5 sections of 7, etc.); to save cost, either class size has to increase or the instructional time teachers spend in instruction has to increase or both.
 - c. The 6-period day is the least expensive of the schedules we reviewed. Teachers teach 5 of 6 sections or 83% of their day is dedicated to instruction.
 - d. The 8-period day we considered, in terms of cost, falls between the cost of the 7-period day and the 6-period day.
 - e. We reviewed and discussed several options in addition to the 6, 7, and 8 period day schedules including block, 4x4, modified 4x4, etc.
 - f. Most of the schedules we considered did not appear to be feasible for several reasons related to our own GP priorities; honors classes, students taking classes above grade level, sharing staff, etc.
 - g. Due to our own GP priorities and cost, we concluded that we remain with limited options in terms of alternate schedules. Those are:
 - i. 6-period day as is or with some modifications for electives and teacher communication time. (6th grade EOD {every other day}) trimester electives, or 6-7-8 grade EOD electives for all students, and using late-start Mondays as team time. If such modifications were to be adopted, Foreign Language and Music would be cut to half their current time at the 7th and 8th grade levels.
 - ii. 8-period day with teachers teaching 6 of 8 classes. This option addressed several of the concerns we have with the 6-period day. They are:
 1. 7th and 8th grade students have 3 hours of elective class time available to them.
 2. 6th grade students block (2 class hours) math and language arts. Elective class hours remain at 2 hours per day.
 3. Students could be grouped as supported by teacher HQ and certification. (see model below)

Cost Estimates:

6-period day

7-period day

8-period day

6-period day:

$1,986^* \text{ students} \times 6 \text{ periods} = 11,916 \text{ student seats required}$

$27.5 \text{ class size} - 11,916/27.5 = 434 \text{ class sections}$

$\text{teachers teach 5 sections (FTE)} - 434/5 = 86.8 \text{ Teaching FTE required}$

$\text{Full cost (average salary and benefits per FTE)} = \$115,750$

$\text{Percent of teaching time in teacher day} = 5 \text{ class periods in 6-period day} = 83\%$

$86.8 \text{ FTE} \times \text{cost} = \$10,047,186 \text{ (Baseline cost – current enrollment and average FTE salary and benefit cost)}$

7-period day:

$1,986^* \text{ students} \times 7 \text{ periods} = 13,902 \text{ student seats required}$

$27.5 \text{ class size} - 13,902/27.5 = 506 \text{ class sections}$

$\text{teachers teach 5 sections (FTE)} - 506/5 = 101.2 \text{ Teaching FTE required}$

$\text{Full cost (average salary and benefits per FTE)} = \$115,750$

$\text{Percent of teaching time in teacher day} = 5 \text{ class periods in 7-period day} = 71\%$

$101.2 \text{ FTE} \times \text{cost} = \$11,713,900 \text{ } (\$1,666,714 \text{ additional cost – approximately 15\% above baseline})$

8-period day

$1,986^* \text{ students} \times 8 \text{ periods} = 15,888 \text{ student seats required}$

$27.5 \text{ class size} - 15,888/27.5 = 578 \text{ class sections}$

$\text{teachers teach 6 sections (FTE)} - 578/6 = 96.3 \text{ Teaching FTE required}$

$\text{Full cost (average salary and benefits per FTE)} = \$115,750$

$\text{Percent of teaching time in teacher day} = 6 \text{ class periods in 8-period day} = 75\%$

$96.3 \text{ FTE} \times \text{cost} = \$11,146,725 \text{ } (\$1,099,539 \text{ additional cost – approximately 10\% above baseline})$

$^*(\text{based on 7 Oct. 08 enrollment of 1,986 at the middle level})$

Option 1: Current 6-period day with modifications

1. If this is the option we select (or is the choice due to funding), we talked about modifying our current schedule with two priorities in mind.
 - a. Can we or should we modify our elective hours to provide more elective class experiences for students?
 - i. We reviewed two possible modifications to the current schedule that would provide more elective opportunity to students.
 1. The first of these options had the 6th grade elective class schedule feature EOD trimester scheduling opposite those classes that are/might be EOD year-long.

Modified 6-period day schedule for 6th grade

Period 1	Math	
Period 2	Language Arts	
Period 3	Science	
Period 4	Social Studies	
	A days	B days
Period 5	PE/Health Year	FL If no FL, EOD Trimester classes 12-week classes EOD Life Skills Art Technology Computer Exploratory
Period 6	Music If no Music, EOD Trimester classes 12-week classes EOD Life Skills Art Technology Computer Exploratory	Writing

2. The second modification we discussed is the possibility of having all elective classes at all grade levels (6-8) scheduled on an EOD basis. This option would cause Music and FL classes for students to be half the time they currently have available to them.

Modified 6-period day schedule for 7 th & 8 th grades		
Period 1	Math	
Period 2	Language Arts	
Period 3	Science	
Period 4	Social Studies	
	A days	B days
Period 5	PE/Health Year	FL If no FL, EOD semester class electives Art, Life Skills, Technology, computers
Period 6	Music If no Music, EOD semester classes Life Skills Art Technology Computer Exploratory	EOD semester class electives Art, Life Skills, Technology, computers

ii The second modification to the current schedule we discussed is:

All weekly late-start Monday meetings are used for teacher team time
 >teacher to teacher communication
 >teacher to counselor/administrator communication

All dept. business would be conducted within IBMs (Inter-building meetings), after school building-based dept. meetings, and staff development meetings.

Option 2: 8-period day with blocking

6th grade 8-period day

Math and Language arts blocked

Within the existing day, single class periods will be 40 minutes in length and blocks will be 80 minutes in length.

8-period day schedule highlights

- >40-minute class periods
- >teachers teach 6 of 8 class periods
- >blocking classes within the schedule (differs by grade level)
- >5-minute passing time - 8 5-minute passing times at 7th & 8th grades
7 5-minute passing times at 6th grade
- >30-minute lunch
- >17-minute advisory

8-period day schedule within existing start and end times (8:25 - 3:17)

Class period	Class times	Length of peiod
Advisory	8:25 – 8:42	17 minutes
1 st hour	8:47 – 9:27	40 minutes
2 nd hour	9:32 – 10:12	40 minutes
3 rd hour	10:17 – 10:57	40 minutes
4 th hour	11:02 – 11:42	40 minutes
Lunch	11:47 – 12:17	30 minutes
5 th hour	12:22 – 1:02	40 minutes
6 th hour	1:07 – 1:47	40 minutes
7 th hour	1:52 – 2:32	40 minutes
8 th hour	2:37 – 3:17	40 minutes

6th grade teachers would teach some version of the following schedule, depending on the student grade level enrollment.

Teacher	Block 1	Block 2	Block 3
Language Arts	LA group A	LA group B	LA group C
Math	Math group C	Math group A	Math group B
Social Studies (blocked every other day with Science or six 40 minute classes daily – shown here blocked)	SS group B	SS group C	SS group A
Science (blocked every other day with Social Studies or six 40 minute classes daily – shown here blocked)	Sci group E	Sci group F	Sci group D
Language Arts (2 nd)	LA group D	LA group E	LA group F
Math (2 nd)	Math group F	Math group D	Math group E

If enrollment requires additional sections at the grade level, we reviewed the following as one option. Notice that this option requires teachers with dual certification and HQ designations. Different enrollment will require different configurations.

Teacher			
LA and Soc. Stds.	LA group G	LA group H	SS group G
Math and Science	Math group H	Math group G	Sci group H

Sample daily 6th grade student schedule:

Period 1	Language Arts Block
Period 2	
Period 3	Math Block
Period 4	
Period 5	Science and Social Studies Block 'A' days Science block and 'B' days Social Studies block
Period 6	
Period 7	Elective EOD**
Period 8	Elective EOD**

**Elective Hours - - 6th Grade Schedule Options

EOD schedule	A days	B days
Elective Hour 1	PE/Health Year	Music/Drama Year
Elective Hour 2	FL Year	Take 2 semester EOD classes (life skills, art, tech, etc.)
Because writing is taught in the Language Arts block, it no longer takes time from elective hours		

Or

EOD schedule	A days	B days
Elective Hour 1	PE/Health Year	Take 2 semester EOD classes (life skills, art, tech, computer)
Elective Hour 2	FL Year	Take 2 semester EOD classes (life skills, art, tech, computer)
Because writing is taught in the Language Arts block, it no longer takes time from elective hours		

Or

EOD schedule	A days	B days
Elective Hour 1	PE/Health Year	Take 2 semester EOD classes (life skills, art, tech, computer)
Elective Hour 2	Take 2 semester EOD classes (life skills, art, tech, computer)	Take 2 semester EOD classes (life skills, art, tech, computer)
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Because writing is taught in the Language Arts block, it no longer takes time from elective hours 2. In this schedule, there would need to be other course elective possibilities made available for students in order for the student to be able to fill his/her schedule 		

7th grade teacher schedules

Teacher	Block 1		Block 2		Block 3	
Language Arts	LA group A		LA group B		LA group C	
Language Arts (2 nd)	LA group D		LA group E		LA group F	
Math	Math group F	Math group E	Math group C	Math group D	Math group B	Math group A
Social Studies (blocked every other day with Science or six 40 minute classes daily – shown here single class hours daily)	SS group A	SS group B	SS group C	Sci group E	Sci group F	Sci group D
Science (blocked every other day with Social Studies or six 40 minute classes daily – shown here single class hours daily)	Sci group B	Sci group C	Sci group D	Sci group E	Sci group F	Sci group A

7th grade student schedule

Period 1	Language Arts Block
Period 2	
Period 3	Math
Period 4	Science
Period 5	Social Studies
Period 6	Elective (PE/Health required EOD/Year)
Period 7	Elective EOD
Period 8	Elective EOD

8th grade teacher schedules

Teacher	Block 1		Block 2		Block 3	
Math	Math group A		Math group B		Math group C	
Math (2 nd)	Math group D		Math group E		Math group F	
Language Arts	LA group F	LA group E	LA group C	LA group D	LA group B	LA group A
Social Studies (blocked every other day with Science or six 40 minute classes daily – shown here single class hours daily)	SS group A	SS group B	SS group C	SS group E	SS group F	SS group D
Science (blocked every other day with Social Studies or six 40 minute classes daily – shown here single class hours daily)	Sci group B	Sci group C	Sci group D	Sci group E	Sci group F	Sci group A

8th grade student schedule

Period 1	Language Arts
Period 2	Science
Period 3	Math Block
Period 4	
Period 5	Social Studies
Period 6	Elective (PE/Health required EOD/Year)
Period 7	Elective EOD
Period 8	Elective EOD

Option 1 to Option 2 comparison:

Comparison 6-period schedule to 8-period schedule

Factor	6-period day	8-period day	Result
Class length day/week	55 minutes/275 minutes	40 minutes/200 minutes	Significant decrease in per day/per week class time 75 minutes less class time per period per week
Advisory	17 minutes	17 minutes	Same: could be abbreviated to gain a minute per class - leaves 12 minutes for homeroom
Electives	6 th grade: 1.5 class periods 7 th & 8 th grades: 2 class periods	6 th grade: 2 class periods 7 th & 8 th grades: 3 class periods	Increase in elective experiences and opportunities Could return to an exploratory experience for students
PE/Health	PE elective/No Health	PE/Health required EOD/Year for 6 th grade PE/Health required EOD/Year for 7 th & 8 th grades	Add back Health and locate Human Reproduction in curriculum PE required EOD/Year for all students
Teacher teaming	No formal structure and insufficient time	Daily teacher team time available	Re-gain team time
Student grouping	None	Students grouped by team	Re-gain student grouping (teaming)
Contract	Teach 5 classes in 6-period day	Teach 6 classes in 8-period day	Current contract language specifies a teacher teaches 5 periods of a 6-period or 5 periods of a 7-period day The contract is silent on the topic of an 8-period day
Teacher plan time	55 minutes per day 275 minutes per week	40 minutes per day 200 minutes per week	Significant reduction in teacher personal plan time per day and per week

Conclusions to date:

1. After working with Dr. Rettig and reviewing many schedules, we are limited in our options.
 - A. A 6-period day as is
 - B. A 6-period day modified to allow late-start Monday meetings to be used for teacher teaming and communication.
 - C. a 6-period day with modifications to support
 - i. elective hour scheduling modification and
 - ii. some sort of teacher teaming to enable professional communication
 - D. an 8-period day which regains many of the desired middle school features to support middle school age children
 - teacher and student teaming/grouping
 - time for teacher and certified support staff communication
 - elective and exploratory classes and experiences for students
 - required PE
 - required Health with an identified Health curriculum location for Human Reproduction instruction
 - the potential for an effective advisory
 - improved transitioning for students 5th to 6th

-however, it increases cost, decreases class time for core classes and elective lab classes, is not addressed in the contract (teachers teach 6 of 8 classes), and it significantly decreases teacher personal plan time
 - E. a 7-period day is only an option if significant money is added back to the middle level program budget
 - a 7-period day gains back many of the features of a middle school that many of us believe are important to meeting the needs of middle school age children
 - teacher and student teaming/grouping
 - time for teacher and certified support staff communication
 - elective and exploratory classes and experiences for students
 - required PE
 - required Health with an identified Health curriculum location for Human Reproduction instruction
 - the potential for an effective advisory
 - improved transitioning for students 5th to 6th

-however, it significantly increases cost, decreases class time for core classes and elective lab classes, and it significantly decreases teacher personal plan time

Appendix 3

Metro Bureau Survey

Middle School Schedules

District	# of class periods	Teachers teach # of classes	Elective meeting pattern	Advisory	Team Time	Schedule (if available)	Notes
Walled Lake	8	6	Daily	No	Yes		
Wayne-Westland	7	6	6 th grade EOD 7 th & 8 th Daily	Yes	No		Attempt to schedule common planning time for team teachers
Warren Woods	7	6	Daily in patterns of years, semesters, quarters, and some mini course offerings	Yes	No		
Trenton	7	6	Daily	No	Common Planning time	Yes	
Lamphere	7	6	Daily by semester	No	Common Planning time	Yes	
Ida	7	6				Yes	
Ida 6 th grade PE 18 weeks Art/Music Appreciation 9 weeks each			Ida 7 th grade PE 18 weeks Skills for Adolescence 9 weeks Art/Computers 4.5 weeks each Woods/Life Skills 9 weeks each			Ida 8 th grade PE 18 weeks Art/Health 4.5 weeks each Careers/computers 9 weeks each Metals/Life Skills 9 weeks each	
Romulus	6	5	Daily	Yes	No		

District	# of class periods	Teachers teach # of classes	Elective meeting pattern	Advisory	Team Time	Schedule (if available)	Notes
Huron Valley	6	5	Daily	No	No		
Allen Park	6	5	Daily	No	No	Yes	
Centerline	7	6	Trimester Daily	No	No		
<p>Centerline note - - Lunch and reading combined represent one class period for students and teachers</p> <p>Monday – silent reading Thursday- lessons</p> <p>Tuesday – lessons Wednesday – teacher read aloud</p> <p>Friday – silent reading</p>							
<p>Centerline 6th grade PE trimester 6 weeks each Mini classes in keyboarding, health, home ec., music (not band), etc. Band daily/Year, Choir 1 trimester</p>			<p>Centerline 7th and 8th grades</p> <p>PE-Health 1 trimester at both 7th and 8th grades Computers 1 trimester at 7th</p> <p>Art 2d, 3d, tech ed., choir, Life Skills, foods, PE, keyboarding, drama, Daily trimester electives</p> <p>Band, Chinese, Spanish Daily/Year</p>				
Bloomfield Hills	8	6	EOD?	No	Yes		
Madison	6	5	Daily	No	No		
Hazel Park	7	6?	Daily	No	Common Planning time		
Troy	6	5	6 th grade EOD 7 th & 8 th Daily	No	No		
Fraser	8	6	Daily	No	Yes		
River Rouge	6	5	Daily	No	Common Planning time		
Novi	7	6	Daily	No	Common Planning time		
Birmingham	6	5	Daily Quarter daily at 6 th grade Semester/year daily at 7 th & 8 th grades	No	Yes – Activity period with parent instructors for mini courses		

District	# of class periods	Teachers teach # of classes	Elective meeting pattern	Advisory	Team Time	Schedule (if available)	Notes
Utica	6	5	Daily	No	No		
East Detroit	6	5	Daily	No	No		
Rochester	6	5	Some are Daily, some EOD, some are in rotation cycle,	Yes	No		
Warren Con	6	5	Daily Some semester daily and some quarter daily	No	No		
Dearborn	6 or Block	5	Varies by middle school	Some have and some do not	Common planning time?		
Southfield	7	6	Daily	Yes	Common planning time		
Lakeview	6	5	Daily	Yes	No		
Ann Arbor	6	5	Daily	Yes	No*		One middle school has used creative scheduling in building to give teachers time to meet in teams
Berkley	7	6	Daily – quarter-long elective classes	Yes	No		
Eaton Rapids	6	5	Daily/semester	Yes (30 minutes)	No		
Livonia	6	5	Daily	No	No		
Crestwood	6	5	Daily – quarter-long and semester-long electives	No	No		

District	# of class periods	Teachers teach # of classes	Elective meeting pattern	Advisory	Team Time	Schedule (if available)	Notes
Anchor Bay	6	5	Daily Band EOD Computers and Health Others semester daily electives	No	No		
Harper Woods	8	6	Daily	No	Yes	Yes	

Appendix 4

Staff Survey Instrument and Results

Staff survey instrument

Staff survey results
with comments

The staff survey instrument and the staff survey results including comments are posted on the Grosse Pointe Public Schools Web Site.
www.gpschools.org

Appendix 5

Parent Survey Instrument and Results

Parent survey instrument

Parent Survey numbers
with comments

The parent survey instrument and the parent survey results including comments are posted on the Grosse Pointe Public Schools Web Site.
www.gpschools.org

References:

- Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development, *Turning Points: Preparing American Youth for the 21st Century*, New York: Carnegie Corporation of New York, 1989.
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