

Jonas Clarke Middle School

School Site Council Meeting

November 30, 2017

7:00AM

Main Office, Jonas Clarke Middle School

17 Stedman Road Lexington, MA 02421

Agenda

In Attendance: Anna Monaco, Principal; Mary Barry-Ng, Assistant Principal; Jonathan Wettstone, Assistant Principal; Kerry Richmond, Teacher; Casey Siagel, Teacher; Anne Witt, Teacher; Tiffany Zides, Teacher; Amy Selinger, Parent; Christina Cohen, Parent; Cathy Swan, Parent; Angela Chang, Parent; Jennifer Roney, Parent.

I. Welcome / Review of 10/26/17 Minutes

- Minutes approved by all

II. Review of SIP goals

1. New Middle School Schedule

- Principal - want to evaluate the middle school schedule (both Diamond and Clarke). Hope is to go through process to get each stakeholder's feedback in this process.
- First step is to have a department head meeting, including our district department directors (Fine and Performing Arts, ELL, Physical Education, Technology)
- Discussion to focus on what we want students to experience by the time they leave the middle school.
- Does the current schedule meet your current needs? Yes, No, what do you need?
- Dept. Heads then go to their own departments and speak with staff about this vision and idea.
- In January, hope is to provide all staff with a detailed overview of why our schedule is the way it currently is. Also ask similar questions that the high school has asked their teachers.
 - In what important ways does our current schedule work well?
 - What important needs are not addressed by our current schedule?
 - What new teaching opportunities could exist with a new schedule?
- Obtain volunteers from both schools as well as 1-2 parents, department head, 1 or 2 students (February-March)
- Committee gather data from departments and other sources, review all data, create themes and report back to staff and site council.
- April-May Form Sub Committees, research other schedules
- Summer - Ideas and possible scenarios
- Fall 2018 - Present options to faculty, site councils, feedback

- December 2018 - Decision Finalized, Shared with all stakeholders
- Parent - When do you see project based learning becoming the way of teaching?
- Principal - Don't want to push teachers into this, would rather teachers grow that organically. Want it to be a natural desire for all.
- Parent - My son has project based learning at his school and the blocks are longer for that.
- Principal - Agrees, and some of the teachers feel that they do need more time.
- Teacher - We do end up frontloading on Monday and Tuesdays, as the blocks are longer.
- Parent - If spoke with two teachers of same subject, would they feel that way?
- Teacher - Really depends where we are in a unit, what we are doing.
- Teacher - Will the start times have an impact on middle school?
- Principal - I am on the start time committee, and it looks that if it is implemented it would be the 2019-2020. Expert that was at the last open meeting brought in expert that cited numerous medical reasons for this.
 - Elementary has 6 hour 30 minute school day
 - Middle has 6 hour 50 minute school day
 - LHS has 6 hour 40 minute school day
- Really all comes down to transportation and the amount of busses. Money needed for more busses is too expensive.
- Teacher - It would be important to have multiple ways for feedback. There will be people that might not say much in front of department head or administrator.
- Principal - On January 11th, during the presentation to staff, we have discussion groups. The idea is not to have it run by administrators, but just groups of people that could write ideas down on sticky notes or paper.
- Teacher - That would be good, but a survey would also be a way that might get more honest feedback. Important to have multiple ways.
- Parent - What was the reason to change the schedule?
- Principal - When we put in W.I.N. block, had longer and shorter blocks and some staff have mentioned how blocks impact teaching. So this is really a review. Does not necessarily mean that we will change the schedule, we might not. What we need to do is see if the schedule we have truly allows the students to meet the expectations and have the experiences we want them to by the time they leave.
- Parent - Do all subjects meet 5x a week?
- Principal - no, only team blocks and World Language
- Asst. Principal - Even that is not perfect. We have teachers we share with other schools in district.
- Principal - Assistant principals at both schools spend entire summer basically hand scheduling all students.
- Parent - What about (for example) the orchestra teachers, if they want a two-hour rehearsal or class during the day, but they teach at other schools in the district? How do you meet this?

- Principal - Yes, there are many constraints. That is why I really want to start with what do we want students to experience and have by the time they leave here.
- This is why many schools have six or seven day rotating schedules
- If I am an art teacher and I have Friday art classes - miss half the class meeting with all the conferences and holidays, very tough.
- Teacher - Are you going to present some schedules for teachers to look at first?
- Principal - Don't want to start with those details, I hope this is something the committee will do.
- Teacher - It would be interesting at some meeting to ask teachers to make/create their own "ideal" schedules just to see what teachers have in their head about what a great schedule would be.
- Principal - Yes, we could ask a question that
- Parent - When is last time schedule was changed? Except for WIN?
- Principal - Always been this way, only minor change has been WIN.
- Parent - Is this the same as Diamond's schedule?
- Principal - for the most part. They have two WIN blocks, but other than that yes.
- Teacher - Why not have cohorts of kids in homerooms and they travel class to class together. My sons had this as their experience.
- Principal - Difficulty with leveling in math, and nice to see different groups in middle school
- Parent - Just this discussion is a perfect example of why this discussion over a new schedule is a great idea.
- Teacher - Could homeroom be their A block and we take attendance their and begin school earlier? We now schedule for WIN in minutes.
- Principal - Reason longer homeroom on Monday and Tuesdays, is to keep times the same on those days.
- Parent - More complex schedules might be able to be implemented at the high school level. Middle schools might need a more simplified schedule.
- Principal - students are pretty flexible and know where they need to be.
- Parent - It would be important to make sure you get parents of special needs so they can share their perspective.
- Principal - Yes, and we should have Special Education staff members also on the committee.
- Teacher - How do you see the schedule change affecting class size? Could this actually help to keep off-team class sizes smaller?
- Principal - It could, we don't know. This might also change contract language. Last year with the WIN change, we changed the wording of the contract from teaching blocks to discretionary time over the course of the week. We never want class sizes to get too big, and sometimes this happens in P.E. and Art.
- Principal - one of the benefits of enrollment going up, the half-teams have helped to keep the on-team class sizes down. We are at capacity.
- Principal - If Hastings is approved, there will be some of Bowman and Bridge that will get re-routed to Hastings and they will then go to Diamond.

- Teacher - With the new wing, the hallways are a bit less crowded.
- Principal - Yes, but the cafeteria still same size and it is very crowded. That is why with review of schedule we might even need to go to four lunches.
- Parent - Some other concerns to consider is long enough lunch-time, having recess for students.
- Principal - Yes, and this is why we have WIN three days following lunch. However, with lunch time, most all students are more than finished lunch.
- Parent - I still hear on a daily basis, if I had more time, I would go through the lunch line and get more food, but I don't have time.
- Parent - I also hear that biggest change from fifth to sixth is the loss of snack time. That is a problem for students, they are hungry.
- Parent - Yes, and they are going through a growth spurt - they are always hungry.
- Principal - I would really appreciate if you, as members of the JCMS Site Council, would speak to parents and get some feedback that you could bring back to our next meeting.
- Parent - Would it be alright to send out this idea in newsletter to parents?
- Principal - Yes, that would be fine. Prefer not a formal survey, but more along the idea of could you share your thoughts.
- Parent - Could this be the topic of a PTO meeting?
- Parent - I can talk to Tricia and see if we can work this into a meeting?
- Parent - Just a reminder for parents, 7pm Diamond Library, Julie Fenn is talking about substance abuse.

2. Budget updates

III. Questions, Comments, Concerns.

V. Adjourn. Next Meeting: January 25th, 2018.

