

## South Middleton Board of School Directors – Curriculum and Instruction Committee Meeting Notes Monday, January 29, 2018 – 6:00 PM

- 1. Welcome & Introductions** – The meeting was called to order by Stacey Knavel, Chair with the following committee members present: John Greenbaum, Chris Morgan, Elizabeth Meikrantz, Randy Varner (ex-officio), Caitlin Miletto (IF), Jen Chamberlin (YBMS) and Tracy Mersch (BSHS). Also present were Bruce Deveney, Joe Mancuso, Joel Hain, Jesse White. Angie Fisler (Rice) was absent. It was announced that the newly formed committee would meet on the 4<sup>th</sup> Monday of the month from 6:00 PM until 8:00 PM.
- 2. Draft Calendar for 2018-2019** – Mr. Deveney reviewed the proposed district calendar with the committee. He indicated that in developing the calendar he (1) coordinated with Vo-Tech (surrounding school districts), (2) attempted to create in-service days during the school year (this is consistent with the district plan) and (3) met with SMEA representatives to solicit input. Mr. Deveney also noted that each school district in the area selects a different in-service day in March to allow for “rounds” or observations of staff in other school districts.

Discussion items included:

- Most area school districts end the school year in May unless they are making accommodations for building construction.
- It was noted that the allocation of conference time at YBMS is currently insufficient. (Each student has 3-4 teachers and each teacher is currently meeting with the parents of every student.) After discussion it was determined that additional time could not be reasonably incorporated into the calendar. Dr. White agreed to look at alternatives to increase the length of conferences (e.g., parents would meet with one teacher with notes/comments from the other 2-3 teachers not in attendance.)
- Snow Make-Up Days – A discussion ensued regarding whether students should lose holidays as snow-make-up days, or if make-up days should just be added to the end of the year. The committee determined that when feasible, the Easter Holiday/Spring Break should be preserved, with those two make-up days (if needed) added to the end of the school year. Next year this is not feasible. The reason is if the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> snow day are not needed, there would be a full week between the last day of school and graduation.

**The committee recommends the draft district calendar for board approval.**

### **3. BSHS Educational Planning Guide for 2018-2019**

Discussion items included:

- The need for Personal Finance & You and Your Career were questioned as a graduation requirement, especially since some students struggle to fit all of their requested academic classes into their schedule and there is no differentiation for these courses. BSHS has begun allowing students to ‘test out’ and students with a GIEP may be deemed exempt from the requirements. The administration is looking at the addition of alternative classes that could fill the requirements. Dr. Mancuso noted that the You and Your Career class may be needed to meet new career readiness mandates. (These requirements and how the district is working to meet them will be presented at a future board meeting.)
- There was considerable discussion regarding scheduling difficulties and the challenges of fitting all the students’ requested classes into their schedules. Part of this discussion was whether the district should move away from block scheduling. The consensus of teachers, administrators and parents that have had high school students was that block scheduling was effective. Teachers have more time to conduct labs, etc., and students appreciate that they only need to focus on four classes per semester. Mr. Hain agreed to look at ways to improve the scheduling process including getting more information out to students and families. **Mr. Hain will supply the committee with data regarding the number of students who are unable to schedule their requested classes and which classes they are unable to schedule.**

- The committee asked Mr. Hain to review the educational value of electives and further investigate the possibility of adding additional advanced classes (e.g., an advanced coding class, Calculus III, AP Econ, etc.)
- The committee also asked Mr. Hain to look more closely at the necessity of core requirements (e.g., two math courses and two English courses in 9<sup>th</sup> grade). Eliminating or modifying these requirements could create more room in students' schedules. This could also allow the English department to add electives. There are currently only enough faculty to teach the core English courses.
- Mr. Darren Asper (parent of two SMSD students) addressed the committee. He requested a review of current AP offerings and the addition of a Calculus III course, as some students run out of math courses in their sophomore or junior year.

BSHS scheduling and course offerings will be revisited by the committee in March or April.

**The committee recommends the BSHS Educational Planning Guide for 2018-2019 for board approval.**

- 4. Committee Process & Future Agenda Items** – The committee chair will work with Dr. Mancuso to determine future agenda items. The committee will move through items in an old business/new business format, as needed to close out past agenda items.
- 5. Next Meeting** - February 5, 2018 @ 6:00 PM

- *Respectfully submitted by Stacey Knavel, 2/1/18.*