

School Committee Curriculum Subcommittee

Wednesday, January 8, 2020

4:00 PM-6:00 PM

5th Floor Conference Room, Town Hall

Curriculum Subcommittee Members Present: Barbara Scotto (Chair), Helen Charlupski, Susan Wolf Ditkoff, and Jennifer Monopoli.

Other School Committee Members Present: Suzanne Federspiel and Sharon Abramowitz.

Staff Present: Nicole Gittens, Casey Ngo-Miller, Mary Brown, Meg Maccini, Monica Crowley, Torrance Lewis, and Robin Coyne.

Others Present: Meghna Chakrabarti and Karine Gibbs.

1) Approval of Curriculum Subcommittee Minutes

On a motion of Ms. Charlupski and seconded by Ms. Monopoli, the Curriculum Subcommittee voted unanimously to approve the minutes of the November 5, 2019 Curriculum Subcommittee meeting.

2) Middle School Programming Discussion

Lawrence Principal Monica Crowley provided an overview of her work on researching, planning, and implementing middle school programming both at Old Lincoln School and Lawrence School. Ms. Crowley stressed the importance of providing the following: programming that meets the developmental needs of middle school students, a true advisory program, and common planning time for teachers. The skills learned during advisory transfer over into content classrooms. At Old Lincoln School, she had the flexibility to create schedules that included 90-minute learning blocks. It is important to have a conversation with staff and community on why middle school components are so important and to make sure that any programmatic changes are sustainable.

Baker Principal Torrance Lewis discussed his previous and current work on strengthening the middle school experience (should not feel like an elementary school or a high school). He discussed the team approach and the need to think about this in a holistic manner. He agreed with Ms. Crowley that having advisory is a key component, particularly in a larger school. It is essential that all students have at least one trusted adult at school that they can turn to with questions or issues. Time should be built into the schedule for teachers and staff to meet to plan and consult on student needs.

School Committee Comments:

- Requested input on whether access to constant grade updates on Canvas is putting added pressure on middle grade students, and whether reliance on Canvas reduces student-teacher interaction/relationship building.
- Stressed the importance of school connectedness, which can happen in different ways, e.g., advisory, participation in electives. Staff discussed factors that limit ability to provide advisory, e.g., staffing levels at some schools, the collective bargaining agreement.
- Consider whether some gradual changes could be implemented before the completion of the Program Review in two years.

- Review the Out of School Report for possible suggestions.

3) Understanding Scheduling at our K-8 Schools

Dr. Brown provided an overview of the scheduling process for our K-8 Schools (Attachment A). She has been working with school leaders on scheduling to ensure that students at all of the elementary schools have equitable opportunity in all content areas. Principals were asked to get feedback from teachers. Four schools piloted a new schedule (includes a 75-minute time block). The district has been looking at models from other districts. Scheduling will be an important component of the Middle School Program Review. The district needs to address the way in which use of shared staff drives scheduling. Conservatory works very well for a small middle school program, but also impacts scheduling.

The meeting adjourned at 6:00 PM.

Scheduling in Brookline

— January 8, 2020 —

Agenda

- Context for our Scheduling Work in Brookline
- Scheduling Process (2018-19)
- Current Challenges
- Moving Forward

Historical Context: Scheduling and Time Allocations

School Year: 1999-2000

Recognizing the correlation between equitable access/opportunity with student outcomes, the Public Schools of Brookline developed Time Allocations for content areas and specials. Schools were then charged with creating schedules that reflected these time allocations.

Of note, the district has not sent out time allocations to staff for the last two years.

Scheduling Process for 2018-19 School Year

- **Fall 2018:** Supt. meets with small scheduling team to review inequities in current scheduling across the district and make plans to ameliorate the discrepancies across the district. Goal to have consistent schedules.
- **November 2018:** Scheduling team creates a plan to work with principals, district leaders and coordinators to address inequitable opportunities
- **December 3, 2018:** Principals collaborate with Office of Teaching and Learning to identify their values when scheduling
- **December 2018- February 2019:** Curriculum Coordinators meet together **WEEKLY** to negotiate time allocations and discuss scheduling structures

Scheduling: Commonalities Among Most Principals

- **Equity:** Time allocations and some general content should be the same across all schools. *To promote equitable outcomes, there must be equitable opportunity.*
- **Time:** Offer some longer blocks of time for teachers to do more project-based learning and integrated units.
- **Support:** Provide opportunities for intervention, practice, and extension

Scheduling Process

During their weekly meeting (2+ hours per week), **COORDINATORS:**

- Came to consensus on time allocations
- Developed FIVE Concept schedules for principals to consider
- Responded to the feedback, requests and needs identified by principals
- Made recommendations to the Superintendent for K-8 time allocations

Scheduling Process: Tools (Optional)

ASC Timetables:

- Provides an opportunity for a principal to run multiple versions of a scheduling concept to determine which schedule best meets the needs of their building
- Allows the principal to more effectively schedule shared staff

Of note: There are a variety of scheduling concepts reflected in our K-8 schools!

ASC Timetables: Sample

	Thursday																								Friday																								Wednesday																								Tuesday																							
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24
5-3	M	PE5	Math5	Man	H	ELA-Int5	Writing5	LR4/5	Sci/SoM	PE5	H	H	H	H	Sci/So	Math5	WIN	H	LR4/5	ELA-IntM	H	ELA5	H	Writing5	Man	Math5	Mus5	LR4/5	Sci/SoM	Writing5	Art5	Man	ELA5	H	ELA-Int	WIN	LR4/5	Sci/SoM	H	Writing5	Math5	WIN	Conse	ELA-Int5	LR4/5	ED																																																		
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Current Challenges

- Inconsistent Time Allocations
- Staffing and Shared Staffing
- Facilities

Challenges: Time Allocations, Shared Staffing and Scheduling

Time Allocations Over the Years-Weekly Minutes

MATH	1999	2007	2012	2017	2019**
K (**)	200	300	300	300	240 + 90
1	315	300	300	300	240 + 90
2	315	300	300	300	240 + 90
3	315	300	300	300	240 + 90
4	300	300	300	300	240 + 90
5	300	300	300	300	240 + 90
6	300	300	300		240
7	250	225	225		240
8	250	225	225		240

Recommended by
Coordinators

Kindergarten was a HALF
DAY in 1999

Time Allocations Over The Years- Weekly Minutes

ELA	1999	2007	2012	2017	2019**
K (**)	450	500	500	560	570 (includes intervention)
1	500	500	500	560	570 (includes intervention)
2	500	500	500	560	570 (includes intervention)
3	500	500	500	530	585 (includes intervention)
4	495	500	500	500	585 (includes intervention)
5	495	500	500	500	585 (includes intervention)
6	495	500	500		300
7	250	225	225		240
8	250	225	225		240

**Recommended
by
Coordinators**

**Kindergarten was a HALF
DAY in 1999**

Current Challenges: Time Allocations Across the District

ELA: Grade 6

School A	225 weekly minutes
School B	240 weekly minutes
School C	480 weekly minutes

WL: Grades 7 and 8

School A	180 weekly minutes
School B	225 weekly minutes
School C	240 weekly minutes

Some Implications

- Curriculum (lessons) across the district must accommodate a 45 minute and 60 minute block of time
- Lesson structure looks different in a 45 minute teaching block than a 60 minute teaching block
- Time available for content varies among the schools which means that some students are getting much less or much greater opportunities
- Students transition to the high school with dramatically different time in content areas
- Shared staff may have to teach the same lesson very differently based on the schedule structure at particular schools

Shared Staff

Shared staffing **drives** building schedules. Most challenges are in **HEALTH** (grades 7 and 8), **MUSIC** (Conservatory) and **WORLD LANGUAGE**.

- School building schedules do not align
- Staff have less flexibility
- Staff are sometimes available, but classes aren't able to be scheduled
- School schedules are sometimes built around staff that teach .1 or .2 FTE

NONE OF THESE CIRCUMSTANCES ARE THE FAULT OF THE STAFF MEMBER!

Facilities

Some schools do not have the rooms to support effective scheduling.

EXAMPLE: Lawrence School has only ONE art room and must schedule 36 classes. There are not enough periods in the day to schedule each section.

Some schools have to allow for more passing time between classes due to the size of the building.

EXAMPLE: Pierce and CCS need to allow additional passing time in between classes which has a cumulative impact on instruction.

Next Steps

- Work with stakeholders to create a common vision of the scheduling we want in our schools (Example: Opportunities for Project-based learning?)
- Continue to gather feedback and input from teachers, coordinators, principals to affirm or adjust time allocations
- Most discrepancies occur at the middle school level. Address these challenges through collaborative work with teachers and administrators
- Continue “Essential Curriculum” work to ensure that curriculum is clear, accessible, and fits into the school year