

Edina Middle Level Review Recommendations

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THANK YOU - Middle School Task Force

Shawn Dudley

Karen Dummer

Geneva Fitzsimonds

Steve Freese

Jolynn Gamble

Peter Hodne

Carolyn Jackson

Mark Laven

Bruce Locklear

Julie Morales

Jane Oh

Beth Russell

Rachel Shoger

Leanne Villano

Cathy Weller

Advisors: Larry Leebens, Jenni Norlin-Weaver,
Thel Kocher, Chad Schmidt

Charge Statement

- Develop recommendations for 21st century middle level education providing personalized learning experiences, maximizing available resources and ensuring success and preparation for high school and beyond for all learners- socially, emotionally and academically.

Personalized Learning = *Personalized Partnerships for Achievement...*

- Accessing and using *data* to plan instruction
- Cultivating *relationships* with students and their families
- *Responding flexibly* to needs

“Enhancing student achievement through personalized learning experiences”

Unacceptable Means

- Unaligned district programs and services
- Increase budget expenses on an ongoing basis
- Recommendations developed without periodic school board updates

Review Process

- 6 Task Force Meetings
 - First meeting was on November 17, 2009
- 2 staff presentations
- Focus Groups
 - Staff
 - Parents
 - Students
- 2 School Board Updates
- Website
 - Committee Updates and Information
 - 2 online input opportunities

Decision Making Framework

- A. Shared Reality
- B. Creating Options
- C. Choice Making
- D. Implementation
- E. Refinement

Step 1: Defining the Shared Reality

- Middle School Staff presentation: What is working well at SV/VV? What should we be paying attention to during the study?
- Student achievement Data using MCAs and NWEA test results.
- Focus Groups:
 - Staff
 - Students
 - Parents
 - Community (on line)
- Current trends and practices
 - This We Believe
 - Breaking the Ranks
 - Gaining Ground in the Middle Grades

Current Trends: What is changing in the middle school learning environment?

- Committee members identified...
 - Changing Expectations
 - Changing Language and Behaviors
 - Changing Relationships
 - Changing Mission, vision and values
 - Changing Products and Services
 - Changing Knowledge and Skills

Current Trends: *What is changing in the middle school learning environment?*

- What are the new issues, problems and situations that are arising?
- What are the facts and perceptions that currently exist?
- What are the local, state and national trends, influences, and implications that are evolving?
- What are the current and arising stakeholder needs and wants?

Focus Group Questions

- What do you believe are the major social, emotional and/or academic needs for middle school students that are different than elementary or high school needs?
- What is working well in Edina Middle Schools that help to ensure the success and preparation for high school and beyond for all learners-socially, emotionally and academically?
- What do you wish for that would further enhance the social, emotional and/or academic success for students in Edina Middle Schools?
- Do you have any other ideas or comments you want to share with the Task Force?

What we found in our Current Reality scan...

- No issue or new idea was cited by a significant number of people across groups.
- There is a significant amount of new literature related to best practices at the middle level.
- Review of student achievement data provided insights on strengths and needs.
- Recent research and literature shows that changes closest to the classroom- instruction and assessment-create the greatest impact on student achievement results.

Middle School Student Achievement Data

We used a metro area district comparison from the 2009 Mahtomedi Public Schools study and found....

- In math, 6th graders had average scores when compared to 11 districts, 7th graders were 4/15 and 8th graders were 1/15. No statistical difference between VV and SV.
- In reading, 6th graders had average scores when compared to 11 districts, 7th and 8th graders were 1/15.

District Achievement Data

In addition, the task force found...

- Less than 50% of Black and Hispanic middle school students were proficient in math as measured by the 2009 MCA-IIs.
- This is compared with nearly 86% math proficiency of all middle school students.
- This local evidence calls attention to the racial predictability of learning outcomes in Edina and focuses attention on the need for equity-based thinking and action.

Research and Best Practices

- Although there is little specific research on the impact of middle school practices, there is a large a large amount of information based on best practice.
 - Structural changes may be necessary but have not shown to increase student achievement
 - Focus is on an articulated curriculum with direct instruction and ongoing assessment
 - The importance of student-student and student-adult relationships and the impact on learning
 - Importance of high quality teachers and dynamic teacher teams
 - The role family and community involvement play in successful education
 - New and emerging skills that are developmentally appropriate.
 - Every child is held to high expectations...”a trajectory toward excellence”

Input from Middle School staff:

Middle school staff focused on:

- Their value for team time and “middle school” philosophy
- Have varying beliefs about the current schedule
- Have created a caring learning environment focused on students through individual attention

Input from Community

- Mirrored in a general sense the goals of the Task Force
- Some interesting, conflicting thoughts and impressions
- Provided some specific ideas to consider:
 - Changing start times
 - 6/7 8/9 specific sites
 - HS program alignment/access

Input from Task Force Members

Task Force Members focused on:

- Creating confident and independent learners by learning new 21st century skills
- Balance of creating a learning environment that provides rigor for all while simultaneously closing the achievement gap
- All students find a place where they feel successful and challenged
- Changing society impacts middle school student relationships (technology, mass media, family structures, etc.)

Step 2: Creating Options and Possibilities

Once the current reality was defined...

1. We identified “the differences that would make a difference.”
2. These “differences” or changes were stated in the form of goal statements and prioritized by committee members.
3. Each goal had a rationale statement and tentative action plan ideas.
4. The goal statements were given to staff at both middle schools and put online for community input.

Step 2: Creating Options and Possibilities

5. The feedback was compiled and reviewed by committee members.
6. The goals were changed based on inputs from staff, parents, community and committee expertise.

Introductory Statement

- *Our comprehensive Middle School program is based on rigor and equity, providing all students access to a rigorous learning program. We will create an inviting, safe, inclusive and supportive learning environment for all. Students will be prepared for high school and beyond with 21st Century skills. We will provide personalized instruction and student attention by maintaining small student teams where all students' needs are known and addressed. We believe that teaming is a necessary component for providing personalized instruction.*

Broad Goals based on these themes...

- Rigor and Equity
- Prep for high school and 21st century success
- Student/Adult relationships in a safe learning environment
- Curriculum, personalized instruction, assessment, and results

Goal Recommendations

1. Facilitate access and use of electronic tools at home and school for every student.
2. Students will develop skills to manage their own learning including a.) Identifying learning style b.) Identifying goals, c.) Monitoring progress d.) And using available resources.

Goal Recommendations

3. At a minimum, all students will make a year's amount of growth. Additionally, students currently performing below proficiency will exceed a year's growth at the rate such that they will be reach proficiency in no more than 3 year's time. High achieving students will make gains appropriate to their personal levels of performance.
4. Students, staff and parents will develop data literacy skills to improve learning.

Goal Recommendations

5. Student participation and achievement in enriched opportunities will be representative of the general demographic population of the school and/or grade level.
6. Every student's academic and personal development is guided by an adult advocate.
7. Develop and implement an advisory program that meets best practice for students in middle level education.

Goal Recommendations

8. Engage staff in professional learning to maximize 21st century personalized instruction guided by the district's strategic roadmap.
9. Middle level education must use multiple learning and teaching approaches that prepare students with 21st century skills through:
 - A. Access to rigorous learning experiences for all students as defined by Edina Public Schools;
 - B. Thematic/interdisciplinary student learning opportunities;
 - C. Service learning opportunities;
 - D. Collaborative learning opportunities for students.

Goal Recommendations

10. Create a “flexible” school day for students and staff that allows for differing amounts of learning time depending on student needs.
11. Review and redefine all course offerings.

Action Step Planning

- In order to create these learning and teaching opportunities, it is necessary to:
 - Review and redefine course offerings.
 - Review student course requirements and options for choice (electives/selectives).
 - Align curriculum with elementary and high school.
 - Examine school schedules to determine amount of time allocated to courses, number of offerings per day, options for specific, flexible or blended schedules.

Next Steps

- Create action teams of Middle School staff to design and implement:
 - Strategy for students to manage their own learning
 - Develop monitoring/assessment strategies and strategic interventions
 - Developing Data Literacy skills
 - Course and schedule review
 - Student participation in enrichment
 - Adult advocate/advisory program
 - Create a safe, inclusive environment

As a result of this study...

- And when the work has been completed...
 - Courses will be reviewed for relevancy, alignment, and level of rigor with an eye on transition needs/concerns.
 - Students will learn identified 21st century skills.
 - A plan will be in place to create equity in learning (achievement and access to rigor).
 - Data will be used to monitor student progress and allow students to monitor their own progress with attention to managing their learning.
 - Student attention will be personalized and students will be connected to adults in a safe learning environment.
 - Staff will engage in new learning to support curricular, instructional, assessment and other improvements.

**Thank You for your
Support!**

Questions or Comments?