Middle School Study Team
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Introduction

Goal
The District will conduct a Middle School Study Team to review the current practices at the middle level; review state, local and regional data; review state and national best practices; and to provide recommendations for systems improvement to the Executive Cabinet and the Board of Education.

History
Middle Schools in the School District have morphed dramatically over the time. The four middle schools have gone from having three grades at the middle level, grades 7 through 9, to having two grades at the middle level, grades 7 and 8. Along with this grade-level change, the middle schools have transitioned through dramatic administrative and teacher changes. All four middle school principals currently have less than four years of principal experience.

Membership
The Middle School Study Team is comprised of 20 members. The composition of the team include the four middle school principals, the four middle school executive directors, the executive director for special education, the executive director for ESL, assistant superintendent for special education, the president of the teacher’s association, four middle school teachers, and the alternative school principal.

Timeline
July 2008-June 2009 – monthly meetings with the broad study team and monthly meetings with smaller study groups.

Recommendations

BELIEF STATEMENTS

Leadership
✓ Advocacy and Accountability
✓ Understanding the Needs of the Middle School Student
✓ Appropriate support to ensure student learning
✓ Hire effective staff that value and are prepared to work with middle school students

Rigor/Engagement
✓ High Expectations
✓ Curriculum is relevant and challenging
✓ Students are supported through academic and extracurricular extensions
✓ Assessments is continuous, authentic, and aligned to learning goals.

WORK GROUPS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment
✓ Have a viable, engaging curriculum that connects learning to the world outside of school
✓ Help students access technology resources
✓ Ensure all teachers have access to professional development pertinent to school and District goals

Rigor/Engagement
✓ High Expectations
✓ Curriculum is relevant and challenging
✓ Students are supported through academic and extracurricular extensions
✓ Assessments is continuous, authentic, and aligned to learning goals.

Systems/Schedule
✓ Develop a flexible schedule
✓ Embed an advisory period for each student
✓ Develop teams for core classes
✓ Expand the student day

School Culture/Climate
✓ Provide professional development to help staff understand the developmental needs of middle level students
✓ Establish systems that support the school atmosphere
✓ Provide extracurricular opportunities for all students

Contact Information and Acknowledgements

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References


Budget Implications

☑ Expanded staffing costs at each school
☑ Staff development costs
☑ Intervention and extension material costs
☑ Costs for expanding extracurricular activities
☑ New staff professional development

Outcomes

☑ Staff that are prepared to work with middle level students
☑ Staff on professional learning communities
☑ More effective school systems
☑ Expanded extracurricular programs
☑ Concentrated staff development
☑ Principal mentoring
☑ Students being more successful in high school beyond

Conceptual Framework for Middle School Excellence

Budget Implications

Increased Student Success

References


