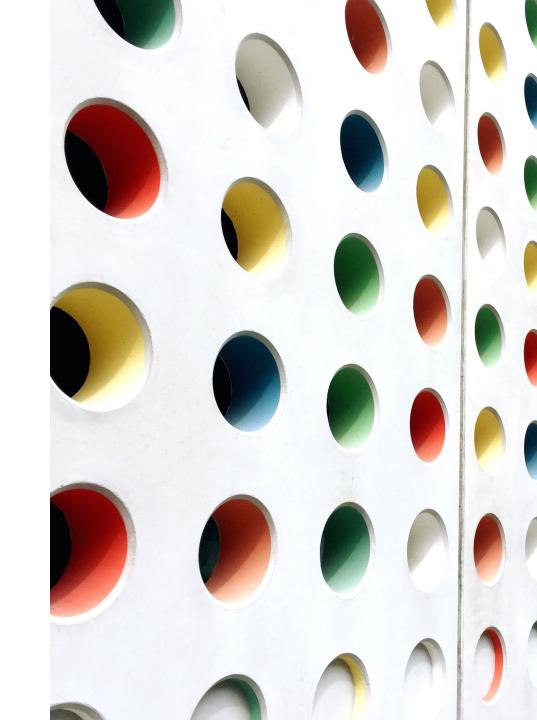# Reimagining Middle Schools

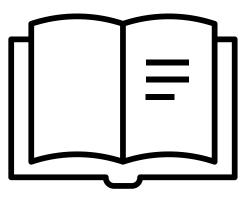BELLEVUE SCHOOL DISTRICT

2022-2023 SCHOOL YEAR

STAFF OUTREACH VISITS MARCH 2, 2023

Click the audio icon when you move through the presentation to listen to committee members

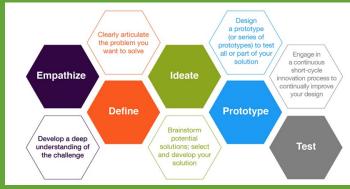The book icon indicates a slide for you to read (no audio)

Who We Are

➤ 32 members representing all five comprehensive middle schools (Chinook, Highland, Odle, Tillicum, Tyee) and key stakeholders (staff, students, family members).

➤ Our charge is to make recommendations to the BSD Executive Team that includes both a proposed reimagined middle school model and implementation plan.

➤ RMS Vision: "*To create middle schools that offer developmentally responsive, student-centered education*".

Why We are Here

➢ Using an Equity-Centered Design Thinking process (Empathize, Define, Ideate, Prototype, Test):

- **NEW** process for BSD
- Prioritizes **co-design** with educators, students, and families/guardians

➢ We are currently in the **PROTOTYPING** phase of this process

- Prototypes are "scrappy", in-progress representations of our current thinking – not finalized
- Goal is to get stakeholder feedback

➢ RMS Steering Committee will use your feedback to refine the prototypes

4 Big Ideas To Redesign the Middle School Experience:

Project / Problem Based Learning (PBL)

Teacher Teams with Student Cohorts

Scheduling

Homeroom / Advisory

Want to learn how we landed on these 4 ideas?
Visit: https://bsd405.org/departments/teaching-and-learning/reimagining-middle-school-steering-committee/ or scan this code →

Our Thinking about the "Prototypes"

The **four prototypes you will review and provide feedback on** are presented individually and not in any particular order: Project/Problem Based Learning (PBL), Teacher Teams with Student Cohorts, Scheduling, and Homeroom/Advisory.

We think about the prototypes as:

draft proposals of components of the middle school system that can be leveraged to better meet student needs. (We recognize that the components, like PBL and Advisory, may be/have been in use at individual schools and by individual teachers.)

not in competition with one another. (In fact, they may eventually be blended together in some combination(s) as we continue to iterate and refine, based on your feedback.)

Feedback Process

Listen and read this presentation to learn about our 4 prototypes

Two ways to provide your feedback:

➢ Posters on wall

➢ Electronic survey

"I like…"   "I wish…"   "I wonder…"

- "**I Like…**" provides us with **positive feedback** about the prototype.

- "**I Wish…**" gives us ideas how the prototype can be **changed** or **improved**.

- "**I Wonder…**" this opens possibilities for sharing **your questions** and **new ideas** to be explored in revisions of the prototypes.

PROTOTYPE

GETTING FEEDBACK

Prototype #1:

Project-Based Learning (PBL)

Project-Based Learning (PBL)

General Description: "Project Based Learning (PBL) is a teaching method in which student learn by actively engaging in local and global issues and personally meaningful projects"
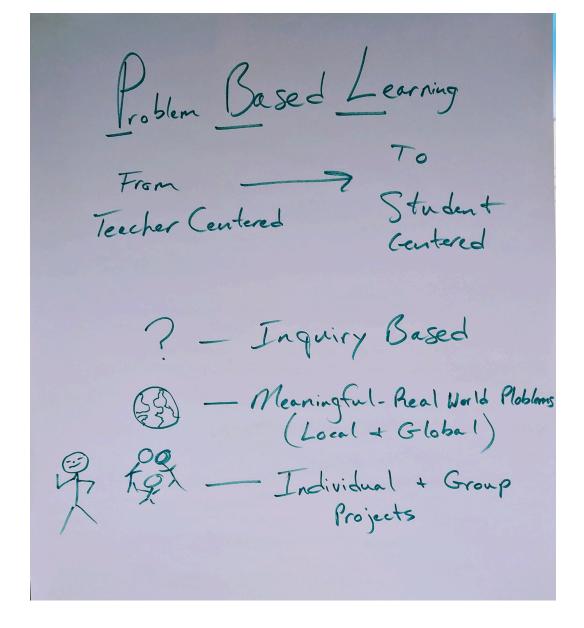
Goal: Students work on a project for an extended period of time that answers a complex question focused on solving local and/or global issues and demonstrate knowledge and skills through a public product or presentation for an authentic audience.

Problems/Opportunities Addressed: Academic instruction should be student-centered and focused on "21st Century Learning" in terms of topics studied, method of delivery, and skills developed (current issues, problem-solving, interactive, collaborative, empowering, authentic audience)
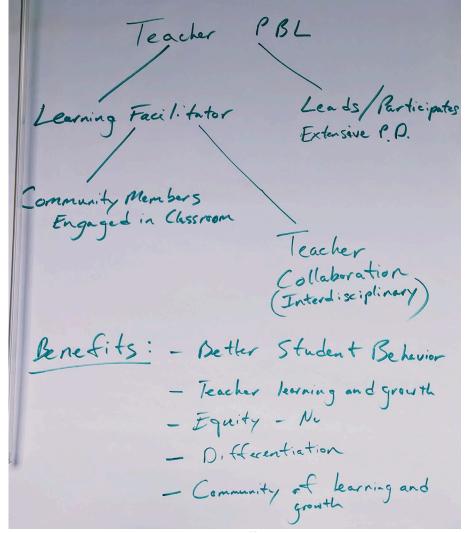
Sources: *ASCD; PBLWorks; PBLWorks*

Prototype #1:
PBL Overview

Prototype #1: PBL for Students & Teachers

Student PBL

Active Learner
From multiple Sources/
Community Contributers

Leader/Self
Directed —
Team Member

Benefits: — Deeper Understanding —
— Greater Engagement
— Stronger Motivation

Inquiry/
Presenting — Skills:
Critical Thinking

Collaborating
Growth mindset
Multiple Perspectives

Teacher PBL

Learning Facilitator

Leads/Participates
Extensive P.D.

Community Members
Engaged in Classroom

Teacher
Collaboration
(Interdisciplinary)

Benefits: — Better Student Behavior
— Teacher learning and growth
— Equity — No
— Differentiation
— Community of learning and
growth

Prototype #1:
PBL First Year

First Year -

- Every class in PBL design phase pilots at least one unit of PBL

- Every teacher will be engaged in learning about PBL

- All students will begin experiencing PBL

- Schools assess what worked - what didn't - what is needed to progress

- Year 2 Builds on these Learnings -

Prototype #2:

Teacher Teams with Student Cohorts

Teacher Teams with Student Cohorts

General Description: "Adults and students are grouped into smaller communities (e.g., teams, houses, cohorts) for enhanced teaching and learning" and these smaller communities are "characterized by stable, close, and mutually respectful relationships."

Goal: To **promote a strong sense of community and instructional coherence** by having a group of students get to know a few teachers well, while also interacting with a cohort of peers, and by having a set of educators dedicated to their assigned students' overall middle school experience and success, while also collaborating frequently and effectively on instruction.

Problems/Opportunities Addressed: Middle school is currently organized as mini high school where students' individual schedules determine who and how many people they interact with during the school day. Intentionally teaming teachers and cohorting students provides time for community, belonging, and relationship development.

Where we are now – Our current challenges...

Students

- There is no clear transition from elementary to secondary

- Navigating up to seven systems (routines, expectations, rules, workload expectations, homework, grading, etc.)

- Students occasionally get mixed messages with academic skills (e.g. how CER is different in different classes)

Teachers

- Teachers often teach in isolation and don't know what colleagues with shared students are doing

- Little time to discuss students and collaborate

- Challenging to be consistent with behavioral, academic and social-emotional supports

Teacher Teams with Student Cohorts

Teachers are teamed up

to support and teach a

common cohort/group

of students.

- Small group of teachers who share all the same students
- Time and support for collaboration during the school day
- Act as a sounding boards for teachers trying new things

- Streamline executive function instruction and practice
- Consistent expectations and rules across classes
- Co-construct and leverage learning experiences
  - Common language and utilization of academic skills
  - Cross-curricular lessons and units
  - Common calendar to support students
- Common grading structures
- Efficiently communicate with families

- Students are in learning cohorts within their grade level (cohorts might range from ~60-150 students depending on the model)
- Shared experiences help them work together to navigate social and academic challenges
- Supports building healthy and authentic peer relationships

A Few Logistical Considerations

- How does this bring up new/different challenges for schedule building?

- How do elective and other specialist teachers see themselves in this model?

- How are other staff (counselors, SpEd teachers, paras, MLL teachers, etc.) interacting with/participating in teams?

- How will we rethink physical spaces in order to best support the cohorts/teams?

- What specific professional development is needed for this to be successful?

What other considerations should we be thinking about?

Prototype #3:

Scheduling

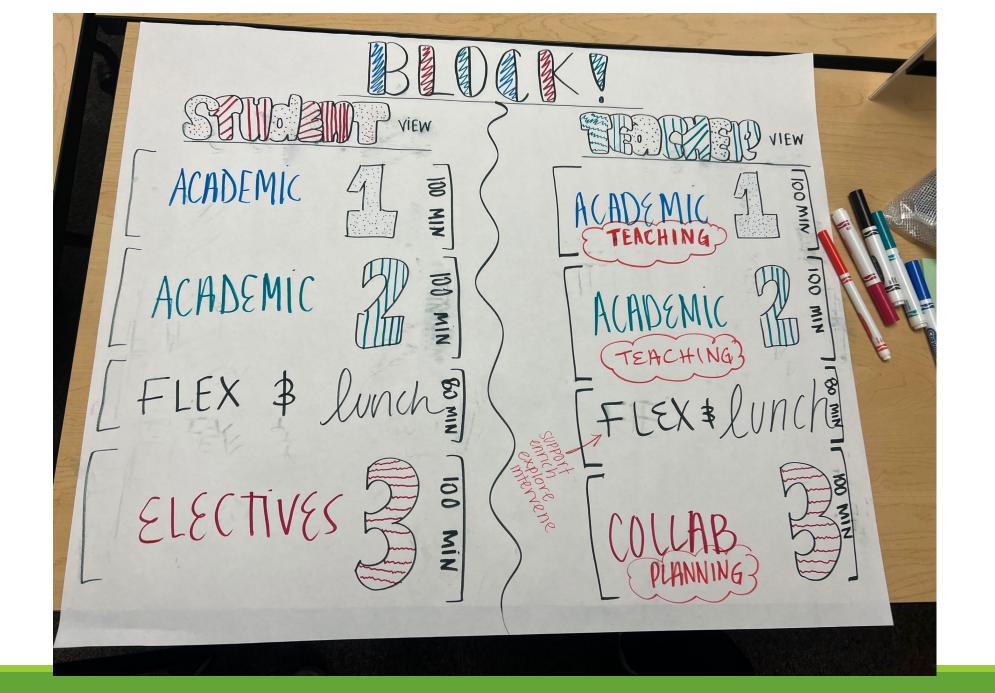# Scheduling

General Description: "A block schedule is a scheduling system for the middle- or high-school day, usually replacing a more traditional schedule of six or seven 40–50 minutes daily periods with longer class periods that meet fewer times each day and week. For instance, a typical block-schedule class might last 90 or 120 minutes and meet every other day instead of daily."

Goal: To maximize student learning by increasing the time spent each day in deep, extended learning and reducing interruptions (transitions to different classes, taking attendance, etc.) and stress (having to keep up with 7 different classes, teachers, sets of students); to promote deeper teacher-student relationships; to allow teachers to individualize instruction and support for fewer students.

Problems/Opportunities Addressed: Student and teachers are forced to rush through the seven-period daily schedule, without sufficient time for deep, extended learning, connection with others, or opportunities to take care of personal needs. The pace of the school day can be slowed to increase academic learning, social connection, and personal and collective well-being, and to decrease pressure and stress. Longer class periods with fewer teachers may also support 6th graders as they transition from elementary school to the secondary grades.

Prototype #4:

Homeroom/Advisory

Homeroom/ Advisory

General Description: Homeroom/ Advisory programs "are designed to create a strong support system that students need to develop academically, socially, and emotionally." Such programs can make a large comprehensive middle school feel smaller and more personal.

P=Problem Identified

Goal: Each middle school has an "homeroom" or "advisory" program to engage students, build community, ensure each student and family is known and supported by at least one teacher, explicitly teach SEL, bullying prevention and study skills, and prepare students for transitions (e.g., 6th graders entering middle school, 8th graders exiting middle school). Such a program not only supports students individually but can promote a positive overall school culture.

Problems/Opportunities Addressed: Middle school is currently organized as mini high school which results in a lack of protected time to explicitly build teacher-student bonds, help students navigate and explore the middle grades, and explicitly teach SEL, bullying prevention, and study skills.

What could we achieve if…

An adult advisor met regularly during the school day with a group of students to provide academic and social-emotional mentorship and support, to create personalization within the school, and to facilitate a small peer community of learners?

**Responsive!
Challenging!
Empowering!
Equitable!
Engaging!**

We could:
- Provide dedicated time for Social Emotional Learning.
- Closely monitor students' academic progress.
- Have a point of contact for small groups of families.
- Support students with bullying issues, friendship strife, homework dilemmas, and other "drama" of middle school.
- Teach study skills and provide executive functioning support.
- Help students strategize about classes and teachers, set academic goals, and belong to a group of peers striving for success.
- Support student led conferences

Advisory Structure and Routine

Structure:
- 4 days per week (M, T, Th, F)
- 35 minutes per session
- Periods 1-7 reduced from 50 mins to 45 min
- After 1st period
- All teachers facilitate an advisory
  - 15-18 students per advisory
- Cohort Looping

Routines and Cadence:
- Daily: Check-In
- Monday: Goal Setting/Study Skills
- Tuesday: SEL Lesson
- Thursday: Homework Support
- Friday: Choice Activities/Game Day

Period 1
Advisory
Period 2
Period 3
Period 4
Period 5
Period 6
Period 7
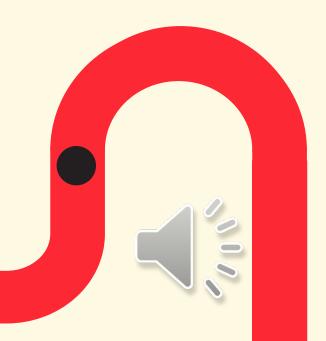
Additional Opportunities

- Supports student led conferences
- Embed service projects
- Fits well with team-based schedules, block schedules, and project-based learning
- 6th grade advisory groups could be based upon WEB orientation groups

Prototype Feedback

- "**I Like…**" provides us with **positive feedback** about the prototype.

- "**I Wish…**" gives us ideas how the prototype can be **changed** or **improved**.

- "**I Wonder…**" this opens possibilities for sharing **your questions** and **new ideas** to be explored in revisions of the prototypes.
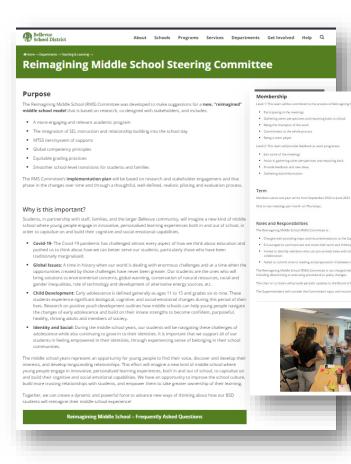
RMS Staff Outreach Survey March, 2023

https://forms.office.com/r/M2s1QZfReC

Survey closes at March 6 at 11:45 PM

To Learn More About RMS...

Reimagining Middle School Steering Committee

Purpose
The Reimagining Middle School (RMS) Committee was developed to make suggestions for a new, "reimagined" middle school model that is based on research, co-designed with stakeholders, and includes:

- A more engaging and relevant academic program
- The integration of SEL instruction and relationship-building into the school day
- MTSS tiers/system of supports
- Global competency principles
- Equitable grading practices
- Smoother school-level transitions for students and families

2022-2023 Steering Committee Members

Parents/Guardians:
- Wen LaCasse, Tillicum Parent
- Courtney Baxtron, Odle Parent
- Valeri Makam, Tyee Parent
- Anissa Bashey, Highland Parent
- Gaurav Malhotr, Chinook Parent

Students:
- Sahaj, Odle Student
- Hasini, Odle Student
- Diego, Tillicum Student
- Noelle, Tillicum Student
- Mishra, High School Student

Teachers:
- Kim Hay, Tillicum Special Education Teacher
- Dan Sakaue, Advanced Learning Odle Teacher
- Gabe Adams, Tyee Teacher
- Mathew Wright, High School Teacher
- Tori Knight, Drama Highland Teacher
- Scott Gregorich, Science Chinook Teacher

Administrators:
- Devonia Bryant, Tillicum Principal
- Danielle S Virata, Odle Assistant Principal
- Susan Thomas, Principal
- James Peterson, Chinook Principal

Staff:
- Kalena Crafton, Odle Literacy Coach
- Jessi Cassidy, Tyee Paraeducator
- Mariela Stockdale, Highland Graduation Success Coach
- Susie Challancin, Chinook ITCL

Central Office:
- Melisa Macias, Teaching and Learning Director
- Wendy Powell, Social Emotional Curriculum Developer
- Anna Van Windekens, Research Scientist
- Nellie Pogosian, Dual and Multilanguage Curriculum Developer
- Tom Duenwald, Director of Educational Technology
- Regen Lorden, BEA Vice-president
- Gargi Trichel, Communication & Engagement Specialist

Meeting Schedule
All meetings will be scheduled 4:30-6:00 p.m.

- August 17, 2022 – BSD WISC
- September 8, 2022 – Highland Middle School
- September 20, 2022 – Chinook Middle School
- October 3, 2022 – Tillicum Middle School
- October 20, 2022 – Tyee Middle School
- November 1, 2022 – Odle Middle School
- November 17, 2022 – Big Picture School
- December 12, 2022 – Chinook Middle School
- January 12, 2023 – Tillicum Middle School
- February 2, 2023 – BSD WISC
- February 16, 2023 – Odle Middle School
- March 9, 2023 – Highland Middle School
- March 23, 2023 – Chinook Middle School
- April 6, 2023 – Tillicum Middle School
- May 4, 2023 – Tyee Middle School
- May 18, 2023 – Odle Middle School
- June 1, 2023 – Highland Middle School

Extensive Stakeholder Engagement
The work of the committee will be augmented by one-on-one interviews and focus groups with other stakeholders and constituents. Findings from these intake sessions will be shared with the committee during the course of their regularly scheduled meetings.

Stakeholder Updates
- Reimagine Middle School Stakeholder Update November 2022 (PDF)
- Reimagine Middle School Stakeholder Update January 2023 (PDF)

Contact Us
Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions or concerns at RMS@bsd405.org

https://bsd405.org/departments/teaching-and-learning/reimagining-middle-school-steering-committee/