

Mr. Rasmus called the February 20, 2024 Millville School District Curriculum Committee Meeting to order at 5:01 pm.

Present were Joseph Rasmus, Chelsea Rosenberger, Lindsey Shultz, Mary Schrader, Shawna Schroy, Jestine Myers, Nicole Guise, Gerard Mattive, Brittany Fisher, Katrina Roth, Andrew Hemsarh, Kim Coleman, and Felicia Lingafelt.

Proposed Elementary Schedule Revision

- Mr. Rasmus began by discussing the Elementary schedule recommendations as well as the faculty and administrative concerns motivating the proposed changes. He explained that there have been uncertainties that may impact realizing the proposed schedule, such as the lunch schedule, special education, intervention, related arts teachers, and chorus/band. In order to move forward, he indicated that the team would need to garner additional input regarding the primary grades.
 - Mrs. Coleman explained that additional time would be needed at the end of the day for students to transition and prepare for dismissal. She also cited concerns about chorus, band, and instrumental lessons in these proposed schedule changes. Furthermore, she shared that recess should be thirty minutes instead of the twenty minutes noted in the proposed schedule.
- Mr. Rasmus then explained the Social Studies and Science rotation schedule.
 - Mrs. Myers commented that a similar rotation was employed the previous year for junior high students with STEM and Careers courses, and the students struggled to remember the material with a day off in between every lesson.
 - Those in attendance suggested that perhaps a “3 days Science, 3 days Social Studies or 6 days Science, 6 days Social Studies” model might be a better one to follow.
 - The teacher representatives agreed that this model would allow for a full FOSS Science lab inquiry lesson and likewise, Social Studies chapter lesson.
 - Mr. Rasmus then explained the benefits of utilizing the FOSS lab to maintain continuity within the FOSS inquiry set up of lessons.

Secondary Schedule and Course Selection Guides

- Mr. Rasmus began by explaining the basis for the course selection guide revision at the Jr./Sr. High School. He shared that he has been consistently committed to increasing course offerings for students. However, in an effort to add more courses, a side effect is that there have been low course enrollments in some elective courses.
- Mr. Rasmus then explained that Mr. Mills is currently reviewing student enrollments to consider appropriate course enrollment in order to inform the minimum course enrollment for courses to be offered next school year. He shared concerns that when some teachers have a course for only one semester, then the next semester course does not roster. He asked those present their thoughts on how to handle situations of that nature. Mr. Rasmus communicated that we need to be cognizant of the personnel implications when developing a schedule and reducing the period that teachers are encumbered as it does not always translate to what is most beneficial to students, citing the need for a balance.
 - Mrs. Roth commented that the teachers have noticed a rise in the number of juniors and seniors not in the building for electives because they do not need the credits.
 - Mr. Rasmus asked where they are going if not in the school.
 - Mrs. Roth answered that often, students sign up for college classes in the fall, but do not have classes in the spring yet are still out of school for the same part of the school day because their schedule is already built. Additionally, she explained that some students have work release built into their schedule every day, but they are not actually working every day. All of this, she explained, contributes to students not rostering in electives as well.
 - Mr. Hemsarh added that there are many instances where the students take a course online through our MVA program even when the class is offered at the school.
- Mrs. Roth then shared a concern about needing to put more restrictions on students signing up for dual enrollment to take courses at the local university. She explained that some students who take these courses are not doing well academically here in district in their other courses.
 - Mr. Rasmus agreed that we needed to revise the expectations for these students.
 - Mrs. Roth added that for work release, there should be someone checking in with students weekly to verify their employment, receive updates, etc.

- Mr. Rasmus agreed that there should be more checks and balances and that the district was working to set up a cooperative education instructor.
- Ms. Fisher then commented about some senior students having only one or two core classes with study halls the remainder of the day.
 - Mr. Rasmus acknowledged that the status of seniors who participate in ACE, STEM, and work release necessitates review and suggested that the district consider implementing reasonable parameters upon college enrollment such as situating times that they may enroll, as in the morning or afternoon only.
 - Then, Mr. Rasmus discussed the potentiality of increasing graduation credits to instigate enrollment in Millville classes. Additionally, he indicated that the district could implement expectations regarding college enrollment and high school enrollment. If a student is enrolled in the fall for college, he or she must be enrolled in the spring in college or a high school class and not remain at home.
 - Finally, Mr. Rasmus explained that the district is engaging the faculty in discussions regarding assuming coursework to ascertain co-op certification.

Quaker Time

- To begin, Mr. Rasmus explained that Quaker Time was conceptualized to address the learning loss resulting from the pandemic and to provide opportunities for personalized instruction.
 - Mrs. Roth shared a concern that students are not engaged nor motivated in Quaker Time. She explained that it fostered a perceived inequality in the students because students have been historically excused from Quaker Time for athletics and co-curricular activities, which diminish its importance. Due to these factors, it has become increasingly more difficult to motivate students to engage in an iReady lesson.
- Mrs. Roth then explained that the diagnostic data may not be correct because the students are not motivated and do not appear to take the assessment seriously. Therefore, the data is skewed.
 - Mr. Rasmus explained that this issue is common in most schools, regardless of the type of diagnostic utilized because student buy-in is a challenge and student engagement and assessment data fidelity are oftentimes a concern for discussion.
 - Mrs. Roth communicated that oftentimes the same students leave for athletics and if the time is counted as remediation, they are not motivated and are excused for a number of activities.
 - To this, Mr. Rasmus asked the group for suggestions as to how they could incentivize student engagement and diligence.
 - Mrs. Roth answered in speaking for the group of teachers that they would like to see the district reconsider Quaker Time as a stand-alone period and consider expanding the core content blocks to include iReady instruction. She explained that this would yield increased student engagement. Furthermore, she shared that having ELA or Math Quaker time on the same day as a double ELA or Math period, respectively, is simply too much of the core subject in a day, and the students become disengaged.
- After this discussion, Mr. Rasmus asked the team if the intention for Quaker Time was to address learning gaps and the group would like to reconsider this, how we could still personalize instruction.
 - Ms. Fisher explained that the previous model utilized an activity period at the end of the day where students could be pulled to complete missed work, finish a test, etc. A time like this could be used similarly when students need specialized instruction.
 - Mrs. Roth agreed that with activity period, teachers were able to hold students more accountable. She added that her preference would be to have double periods of core subjects every day instead of having Quaker Time.
 - Mr. Rasmus answered that if there was a double block and a learning support teacher had to pull a student out, there would also be time for that within that timeframe.
 - Ms. Fisher commented that this would work because she would be doing Spring Math during that second block, and the learning support teacher could provide intervention at that time as necessary.
 - Mr. Rasmus added that it would be critical to make those blocks work so that there would be a time to have the students work out some problems, project based learning, specialized instruction, STEM activities, etc. He stated that his concern with this was that there should not be new material being taught in the second block, but rather reinforcing activities. Finally, he added that he could see Quaker Time going away if that would be the model for the longer amounts of time.
 - Mrs. Roth answered that this structure is how most double periods are currently structured.

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- Ms. Schroy then asked about Keystone supplemental instruction in the upper grades. She asked why students are not placed into the supplemental instruction after the students do not do well on the Keystone exam.
 - Mrs. Myers commented that we used to follow a model whereby students were placed into remediation based on their testing outcomes.
 - Ms. Schroy shared her concern that the students she has for Biology supplemental instruction are not the ones who have done poorly on the Keystone exam for Biology.
 - Mrs. Lingafelt then added that she had a discussion with the principal Mr. Mills about this concern, and he stated that we do not receive the Keystone results soon enough for them to be placed into this for the fall.
 - Mr. Rasmus concurred that this is the case that results come much later now, however, he added that sometimes it is more related to personnel concerns.
- The Committee discussed the idea of activity period and the implications it would have on the Secondary schedule.
- In closing, Mr. Rasmus thanked the teachers in attendance for their participation in the meeting and for the helpful feedback and discussion. He explained that their concerns would be shared with administration and encouraged further dialogue on these subjects.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 6:23 p.m.

Chelsea Rosenberger
Assistant Board Secretary