

# Middle Level Committee

**Principals' Recommendations  
Dr. Cafagna, Mr. Dawson, Mr. Guy  
C&I Meeting on February 6, 2017**

# The work of the Middle Level Committee from April 2015 - January 2017

The middle level committee started its work in April of 2015 by discussing characteristics that students should possess and demonstrate when leaving our middle schools.

Here is a list of characteristics that the middle level committee came up with using “This We Believe” as a research support:

[Organized](#)

[Reflective](#)

[Confident](#)

[Resilient](#)

[Problem Solver](#)

[Skilled Communicator](#)

[Risk Taker](#)

[Curious](#)

[Well Rounded](#)

[Open Minded](#)

[Self-Advocate](#)

[Responsible](#)

[Globally Minded](#)

[Compassionate](#)

[Happy](#)

[Flexible](#)

[Collaborative](#)

# **This We Believe**

## **Article AMLE - Organization of Philosophy 4 Areas**

*This We Believe* posits that education for young adolescents should have four central attributes

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# Empowerment

*This We Believe* calls for middle schools to provide young adolescents with the knowledge and skills for future success and to empower them to imagine and construct their own future learning trajectories.

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# Developmentally Responsive

Middle schools that focus on the developmental needs and potential of young adolescents provide structured opportunities for activities that allow students to physically and mentally prepare for the day, engage socially with peers, and release energy.

# Equitable

*This We Believe* calls for creating a classroom environment in which all students can learn.

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# Rigor/Challenge

Administrators and teachers must hold high expectations for what young adolescents can do and create opportunities for them to push themselves, essentially raising the bar for their intellectual development.

# Be mindful of our purpose

Research found regarding middle level education has been rooted in philosophy and lacking a concrete roadmap for a model middle school. We have many things to celebrate and many things to continue monitoring as it is our responsibility to never remain stagnant, uncover trending issues, and provide the best opportunities for our students.



# Points of Pride Across our Middle Schools

- ★ Schedule that allows for a full-time advisory program
- ★ Interdisciplinary team model
- ★ Award-winning arts and music programs with a high percentage of student involvement
- ★ Students leave middle school with the option to enroll in level 2 of their selected world language
- ★ Students have access to complete Algebra 1 and Geometry in middle school
- ★ Nationally recognized schools of character

# Recommendations

# Recommendations Originally Presented to C&I 6/1/15

The committee has concluded that the attributes of being developmentally responsive, challenging, empowering, and equitable need to be used when shaping programs to address the needs of our middle school students.

Our hope is to grow our schools to best support well-rounded and consistent experiences for all our students at our three middle schools.

# Recommendations are aligned with the Board of Education achievement goal by examining the:

- Organization of students
- Daily schedule (allocation of time)
- Instructional programming
- Pedagogical approach

# Organization of Students

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# Organization of Students

## Increase transitional supports for our students

The following items need to be addressed with a plan for implementation during the 2017 – 2018 school year to provide more clarity in regards to programs offered at the Middle Level:

1. Students moving from 5th to 6th and from 8th to 9th.
2. Develop programs that address both peer to peer and teacher to student relationships.
3. Examine co/extra curricular program offerings at the three schools.
4. Informational meetings and other opportunities for parents to understand curricular pathways and co/extra curricular program offerings at the three schools.
5. Vertical articulation within our curriculum (see Instructional Programming slide).

# Organization of Students

Facilitated by Mr. Sidney Dawson

1. Strengthen transition process by increasing contact between students and staff at different grade levels. Enhance presentations to 5th and 8th grade students and families.
  - a. Schools aligning 6th grade orientation presentations for summer of 2017
  - b. Consistency in our 8th grade HS information nights and counselor support for choosing courses in 2017-2018
2. Desire to maintain Advisory & Character Education Program

# Organization of Students

Facilitated by Mr. Sidney Dawson

3. Create uniform opportunities for students to make connections to school
  - a. Have a comprehensive listing of those activities offered at our schools
4. Increase awareness with families about developmental characteristics of middle school students
  - a. Include specific language and information in consistent manner at all three 6th grade orientations
5. Increase vertical articulation, especially between staff at different levels.



# **Instructional Programming and Pedagogical Approach**

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# Instructional Programming and Pedagogical Approach

Increase instruction in the areas of study skills, time management, organization, and note taking

The following items need to be addressed with a plan for implementation during the 2017 – 2018 school year:

1. Create a formalized instructional model that is appropriately aligned with grade level needs to teach students the aforementioned skills during the advisory period.
2. Increase application of the aforementioned skills formally across current classes.

# Instructional Programming and Pedagogical Approach (Con't)

Increase opportunities for language acquisition within our schools

The following items need to be addressed with a plan for implementation during the 2017 – 2018 school year:

3. Focus Professional Learning Community (PLC) work on pedagogical approaches that support language acquisition for all students. Further examine ways to address literacy skills through inter-disciplinary work across the content areas.
4. Implement World Language consistently at all 3 middle schools.
5. Explore extended learning opportunities across all content areas with utilization of the pedagogical approach of conferring and feedback.

# Instructional Programming and Pedagogical Approach

Facilitated by Mr. George Guy

1. Reviewed the advisory program curriculum of “Responsive Classroom”. The subcommittee felt that Responsive Classroom has a strong social-emotional component but is flexible enough to allow integration of such units like “study skills” across the grade levels.
2. Worked on potential models of “feedback” for subjects such as English Language Arts, Science and Humanities. This feedback model could be enhanced with a review of “Six Traits of Writing” professional development done for the aforementioned content areas.

# Instructional Programming and Pedagogical Approach

Facilitated by Mr. George Guy

3. Implement World Language consistently at all 3 middle schools for 2018 - 2019
4. The subcommittee would like to see more literacy based professional development for all content areas including special education teachers.

# **Analysis of Schedule**

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# Analysis of Daily Schedule

This included the examination of the master schedule and advisory program to address the academic and social needs of a Middle School student

The following items need to be addressed with a plan for implementation during the 2017 – 2018 school year to provide more clarity in regards to programs offered at the Middle Level:

1. Consistency in Master Schedules across all schools with specific attention given to content area time allocation – similar to that of the elementary and high schools.
2. Revisit pedagogy, focus, and structure of advisory program to build consistency in implementation.
3. Offering choice for elective opportunities.
  - a. Such as exploring advisory mini-courses, exploratories, and other student choice selections.

# Analysis of Schedule

Facilitated by Dr. John J. Cafagna

1. Continue working through multiple models that would provide more consistency in the time allocations for subject areas at all three middle schools
2. Understanding time allocations have more of an impact than the way a schedule is programmed regarding bell schedule vs. flexible block vs. rotating blocks



# Analysis of Schedule

Facilitated by Dr. John J. Cafagna

3. We request the involvement of a scheduling consultant to look at our schedules and suggested models. Models we have explored will have an impact on the way instruction is currently delivered.
4. Identified scheduling musts are:
  - a. Time for advisory program to continue with options for supporting student needs for both intervention and enrichment
  - b. Use advisory/homeroom time to provide opportunities for Instrumental and Vocal music to continue to have group instruction
  - c. Standardized time allocation for content areas

**Moving forward...**

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# Moving Forward at our Cherry Hill Middle Schools

1. Change is challenging
2. Focus on what is best for students
3. No program changes for the 2017 - 2018 school year
4. Continue work on developing a schedule that provides consistency at all three middle schools
5. Continue to analyze all program offerings for consistency in delivery and scheduling

Questions?

