

Mr. Rasmus called the May 23, 2024 Millville School District Curriculum Committee Meeting to order at 5:30 pm.

Present were Joseph Rasmus, Susan Myers, Greg Hemsarh, Matthew Mills, Miranda Pell, and Chelsea Rosenberger.

Proposed 2024-2025 Elementary Schedule

- Mr. Rasmus began with an overview of the changes to the 2024-2025 Elementary schedule. He explained that this was reviewed with the Elementary teachers. First, the Elementary school would be moving into a departmentalized schedule with 92 minutes each for English Language Arts and Math. Mr. Rasmus explained that some of the benefits to this would be that Elementary teachers would only have to plan for two classes per day instead of four or five and that professional development could be streamlined to the content individual teachers are teaching. Along with the departmentalization, Science and Social Studies instruction would now be offered in alternating six-day cycles so that students would alternate between 6 days of science and 6 days of social studies. Doing this, Mr. Rasmus explained, would allow for more ELA and Math time because of not teaching Science and Social Studies every day. He shared that the schedule will benefit with the FOSS Science lab inquiries so that teachers could complete a full lesson over six days.
- Then, Mr. Rasmus shared some schedule implications for related arts instruction. He explained that they would be moving away from having ensemble chorus and band in a six-day cycle and will be moving to compulsory chorus for grades five and six. Currently, he explained, the students have careers and technology instruction twice in the six-day rotation because the Elementary Technology Teacher has historically only had an Elementary certification, which would not allow for split time with the high school. Therefore, Mr. Rasmus added the doubled up time would now go to music instruction for compulsory chorus. The band and chorus ensembles would meet during the six-day cycle for Quaker Time rotation.
- Additionally, Mr. Rasmus explained that both grades five and six would have Quaker Time at the same point in the schedule, likewise third, fourth, first, and second grades. This schedule overlap would allow supplemental instruction to take place in a strategic manner.
- Mr. Rasmus added that there would now be a three-minute transition time built into the schedule between every class. However, this did take away some of the initially proposed time from the ELA and Math blocks.
 - Mrs. Pell commented that this transition time was needed and when it is not there, it is like a domino effect.
- Then, Mr. Rasmus shared that Activity Period would now be abbreviated as there was only so many ways to split time.
- Finally, Mr. Rasmus explained some of the proposed lunch schedule changes. He would be meeting with Metz to go over the variables. Overall, he shared that two grades would be eating in the lunchroom at the same time. In the past, he explained, it has been a busy and chaotic schedule with grades going in and out the entire time. He believed that this would be more manageable for staffing.
 - Mr. Hemsarh asked if we had consulted the Cafeteria staff about how long it takes them to move students through the lunch line.
 - Mr. Rasmus answered that he had and that this new schedule should make it easier to manage with a second service line. He shared that next year the district should have free lunches and breakfasts and with the new POS system, they should be able to move students through the line quicker.
- Mr. Hemsarh then asked if anyone was concerned about the students having off six days of science or social studies.
 - Mr. Rasmus answered that when the Committee met previously, the teachers were not in favor of an every other day rotation and were concerned about students needing to recall information from two days ago, possibly more over a weekend. He shared that teachers felt it would be better to have the continuity of a full unit.
 - Mr. Hemsarh asked if there was consideration given to a five-day cycle.
 - Mr. Rasmus answered that it would be difficult to fit some operations on a six-day schedule and others on a five-day schedule.

Proposed 2024-2025 Secondary Schedule

- Mr. Rasmus then discussed the proposed changes to the Secondary Schedule for the 2024-2025 school year. He shared that at the last Curriculum Committee meeting, the committee had a good discussion with teachers who came to the meeting about the schedule. At that meeting, a teacher gave an example of a student who had a double period of ELA then Quaker Time supplemental instruction for ELA in the same day. The teachers communicated that the schedule being situated that way diminished the value of Quaker Time as well as co-curricular activities meeting during Quaker Time did as well. All of this led to students who seemed disengaged.

- Therefore, Mr. Rasmus shared that one proposed change would be to have double periods of ELA and Math every day for students in grades 7 and 8 and to remove Quaker Time. He explained that the teachers preferred this model and would put the supplemental instruction back into these double periods. He concluded this by saying that the testing scores show the benefit in providing more instructional time in these areas.
- Mr. Mills then shared a proposed change for Social Emotional wellness instruction as well as STEM and Careers. He explained that the 7th and 8th grade rotations for courses like this as well as related arts have now moved into one period so that double periods of core subjects could be placed back to back in the schedule. While there is the benefit of continuous instruction, Mr. Mills explained that it does lock the time for these rotations such as band, chorus, STEM, careers, Social Emotional Learning (SEL) in the master schedule.
 - Mr. Hemsarh asked if we could change the name from social emotional learning for the course.
 - Mrs. Pell suggested that it could be named wellness and those topics could be placed back in the health course.
 - Mr. Rasmus commented that this may be difficult with the 8th grade class as it is larger with three sections.
- Finally, Mr. Rasmus shared that the guidance from the Pennsylvania Department of Education given during cyclical monitoring was to have double periods for CTE programming and name them more generally as courses like Engineering I, Engineering II, etc. Doing so would allow students who were completers in the CTE program the optimal opportunity to earn the hours as prescribed by PDE.
 - Mr. Mills explained that if you look at Agriculture II, for example, the course has a variety of elective course topics included in the one course and that students desiring to take only one of the double periods as an elective would still be able to do so.
 - Mr. Hemsarh asked if this is what other schools do.
 - Mr. Rasmus answered that he was not sure but that was the recommendation from PDE.
 - Mr. Hemsarh answered that he was in favor of this but was not sure how other schools were handling this issue in comparison.

2024-2025 Early College Guidelines

- Mr. Rasmus shared that this was another concern of teachers broached at the last Committee meeting. He explained that students who wanted to take classes through the Early College program did not previously have any parameters and were taking them at any point through the day. Doing so created a great number of additional MVA courses needed instead of the ones already offered here in district. Mr. Rasmus commented that teachers felt the district was outsourcing labor by allowing students to take courses at the college that were offered here in the district, adding that he wanted to make sure our students are prepared for the world and have parameters set.
- In response to this, Mr. Rasmus said that he met with Mr. Jerome Manley of Commonwealth University to set up the parameters necessary. At that point, Mr. Manley explained that most other schools already had similar expectations in place. The parameters set were that students would need to return to the district by 11:00 am, as much as possible but that the school would work with students as necessary; credits earned via the Early College program would not count towards core graduation requirement, but rather as electives; and students would be encouraged to enroll in classes in both semesters and/or be enrolled in district classes for the alternating semesters with the goal being to take the classes at the same time in both semesters.

2024-2025 Guidelines for Work Release

- Then, Mr. Rasmus shared a concern the teachers had about the work release procedures.
- Mr. Mills shared that the seniors are the only ones who have this work release opening time and that they have to fulfill their graduation requirements in their schedule before being considered for work release. For the most part, he explained, the students should be doing this in the afternoon, but there may be some changes to this as necessary. He concluded by saying that the district would not be changing the academic schedule based on employer requests.
 - Mr. Hemsarh added that he had hoped the district would do this with the Early College guidelines.
 - Mr. Mills answered that it is hard to configure some of this because we are still building the schedule and that the employers and colleges need that information sooner for registration and scheduling. He explained that a goal would be to have this completed much sooner next year.
 - Mr. Rasmus commented that in the future, the district would be more rigid, but for now, they would work with students who have already scheduled things with outside organizations.

- Mr. Mills shared some of the requirements outlined: students must be passing all of their classes, must be regularly attending their district classes, would have to return for detention, must notify guidance if there is a change in employment, etc.
- Mr. Rasmus added that we need to be looking into a co-op coordinator, which requires a member of the professional staff to have a special certification that no one in the district currently has. He explained that we would be reaching out to CMAVTS to potentially have their coordinator supervise our students as well. This would be beneficial because if the district has a co-op coordinator, their work experience can count as credit for the student.
- Mr. Hemsarth commented that he has been a part of this program with Central Columbia School District and that the Agriculture teacher handles it there.
- Mr. Rasmus answered that since our Agriculture program is a four year program, our teacher does not have the ability in her schedule to accommodate this role as well.
- Mr. Hemsarth added that he would encourage whoever becomes the coordinator to work with Ms. Guise.
- Mr. Rasmus shared that he had spoken with Ms. Guise and that she would love to work with a co-op coordinator.

Health Textbook

- Mr. Rasmus explained that the current health textbook has been used for over 10 years and that the new textbooks have different priorities from where we were previously. He explained that the textbooks will have an online component which will hopefully help keep the physical textbooks in good shape. Additionally, there is a soft cover add-on textbook outlining the important points and safety around dating, relationships and identifying sexuality as well as the male and female reproductive systems.
 - Mrs. Pell shared that she reached out to McGraw Hill because the district was so in need of this update. She explained that this textbook could also be used for her Elementary push-in instruction, adding that the information in this additional text would be better coming from us rather than from online sources. Mrs. Pell's recommendation to the Committee was that the district purchase both the 9-12 Glencoe Health series as well as the soft cover Teen Health text.
- Mr. Rasmus asked Mrs. Pell to share about the classes undertaken in 5th and 6th grade for health.
 - Mrs. Pell explained that the students receive a 40-minute puberty talk, separating the classes by gender. She has found that some students need more information by the time they reach 7th grade about being safe.
 - Mrs. Myers commented that she felt the Teen Health Text approached the topics in a tactful way that is purely informative.
 - Mr. Rasmus asked if the Committee was comfortable moving forward with this textbook.
 - Mr. Hemsarth asked if they could share this text with the rest of the Board and allow them to view the textbook at the district office if desired.
 - Mr. Rasmus answered that this would be a good plan being that we could not order the materials until July. Therefore, this would allow the Board the chance to view it.
 - Mr. Hemsarth commented that he was all for the presentation of the information coming from the right place to students and that this text seemed to approach the topics in a healthy way.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 6:47 p.m.

Chelsea Rosenberger
Assistant Board Secretary