



WFB Middle School Elective/Exploratory Wheel Update

Board of Education
November 29, 2017



Additional Investigation to Date

- Current Student, Family and Alumni Survey Complete
- MS Families Notification of Survey and Board Listening Session Date and Time
- Began Brainstorming Structural Changes

MS Student Data Review

General Themes Noted:

- Most kids are taking World Language and Performing Arts, and they are listed as most interesting to them
- The three strands that we are not offering of high interest: Business, Family and Consumer Science Education (FACE) and Informational Technology
- Health is saturated and is shown in the comments; especially our eighth graders
- Study Hall
 - Time of day matters
 - 190 kids said it was helpful, only 13 kids were around the NOs
 - If I had the opportunity, it would help me
 - Some stated they need it to reduce stress
- What to add:
 - A cooking class was mentioned often- 10% (60 of 539 comments) of the comments added here
 - Lots of comments on theatre, gaming/coding and business

MS Student Data Review

Reasons students stated that they liked a class or wanted to add a class:

- Their reasons are personal
- Hands-on (cooking)
- Choice
- Got them away from stress and anxiety
- Active
- Movement
- Participation
- Creativity
- Learning something new
- Break from academics
- Time to socialize or connect- Relationships
- Fun
- Outside
- Freedom
- It seems like the reason was evenly distributed
- They like it...they pursue what they are interested

MS Student Data Review

Reasons students stated that they didn't liked a class:

- Not active enough
- I am not good at it
- No choice/lack of choice
- Not interested
- Boring
- Class size (too large)
- Hard
- Not valued (not relevant)
- Repetitive learning
- Does it "feel" like a core course
- Not engaging
- Too much stress and anxiety

MS Student Data Review

Other General Observations:

- The student's "reasons" align exactly to what we learned about the adolescent learner and person
- They appreciated being asked...some stated and most did not skip questions (except study hall...which many did not take as a class to answer)
- Can we integrate some of the course selections (like cooking...) in like a health or wellness class/business course?
- Alternatives to traditional physical education

Defining the Qualities of a Middle School Person

Need 9 hours of sleep

Social

Puberty- body changes, brain growing

Impulsive

Identity- who am I?

Honesty

Positive Role Models

Role in decision making (Gradual release of responsibility)

Need to feel a sense of belonging

Be heard

Self-expression without rejection

Autonomy- develop their own individual voices

“Right of passage”

Sense of invincibility and/or invisibility

Present moment thinking

Defining the Qualities of a Middle School Learner

Scaffolding/ Modeling

Engage emotions (emotional content; link to feelings, memories or personal association) and social structures

Think about their thinking....

Relevance- Real life pursuits

Make mistakes in a safe space

Active

Positive Social Relationship

Small group

Initiate their own learning: if given a significant role in determining the learning, it will fuel the motivation to learn

Opportunities of self-expression

Metacognition: Shift in their ability to think- Into the formal operational stage of cognitive development: They can think about thinking themselves.

Integrated curriculum

Health and wellness: How to stay healthy rather than how to avoid disease?

Setting goals- Connecting your present-self to a future-self

Structural Brainstorming

- Maximize more opportunities through an A/B day structure
- Look to offer a “block” elective slot for art and PLTW (it is tough getting through labs at 41 minutes)
- MS should have a more robust exploratory wheel at 6th grade, transitioning to a more robust elective selections in grades 7-8
- Reduce the amount of health, and embed in physical education and/or a reduced course offered 1 time in grades 7 and 8
- Gain more choice when possible (add a world cultures class to WL area, different types of physical education classes, music by composition for some, etc...)

Themes Identified in Prioritization Activity

Sixth Grade

- Allow students to choose their music option (band, orchestra, choir or general music) to meet DPI requirement.
- Integrate health into physical education
- World language requirement

Themes Identified in Prioritization Activity

Seventh and Eighth Grade

- Do something different than our existing health courses at this level; maybe integrated in physical education
- Informational technology course is of high interest
- “Other electives” mirror our student survey; all over the place for interest based on the person
- A/B cycle of days
- Potential change in world language instruction

Next Steps

- Continued learning of the committee around the learner
- Data review of the survey results- Family and Alumni
- Committee Meetings on December 7, 2017 and January 18, 2018
- Board Listening Session on December 13, 2017
- Board Report on December 13, 2017 Instruction Committee