

Hawthorn's Program Update



January 2010

Middle School - New and Improved Schedule

At the January 27, 2010 Joint Faculty meeting, the proposed 2010-11 schedule was presented and reviewed.

Is there any such thing as a perfect middle school master schedule? Not exactly without limitless resources, money, and staffing.



Considering our limitations, is there a schedule that can at least come close to perfect and meet the needs of ALL

middle school students? Absolutely!

Since our reconfiguration to two 6-8 middle schools five years ago we have investigated and made many different changes to our middle school schedule to accommodate the needs of our students and maintain the integrity of the middle school philosophy.

In the spirit of continuous improvement, we have made many changes in curriculum and programs at the elementary level over the last five years which have had an impact on and require changes to scheduling and programs when students enter the middle schools.

Additionally, the State mandated Response to Intervention (RtI) plan has also prompted the need to

adjust and be more flexible with our middle school schedule. As part of RtI, we are required to provide appropriate interventions in reading, math, and behavior.

While no single schedule can ever allow for every student to do it all, a schedule was drafted to address many of the needs of ALL middle school students.

At the January 27, 2010 Joint Faculty meeting, the proposed 2010-11 flexible block schedule was presented and reviewed.

This schedule addresses many of the concerns and weaknesses about the current schedule that teachers identified during a joint faculty meeting in October 2009.



It also is a good schedule for middle school students. While some students who have multiple interests will have to make some choices in their schedule/programming, all students will realize some important benefits. (See the next page for the details about the schedule.)

Middle School Flexible Block Schedule

Increased Core Academic Time



Next year, ALL students in grades 6-8 will have 60-minute core academic classes in language arts, math, social studies, and science. The 120 minute blocks of time in the morning and afternoon can be used flexibly by teachers to address the needs of a broad range of abilities, provide increased rigor, and allow teachers to track and monitor progress of students on their team.

Daily Physical Education

In next year's schedule students will continue to have daily physical education classes.

Arts and Technology/Exploratory

Students will have the opportunity to take five, 7-week arts and technology exploratory classes including: art, music, health, information literacy/industrial technology, and applied technology/consumer technology.

Band, Orchestra, Chorus (BOC) and Study Hall

These programs will be offered within the schedule each day in 40-minute class periods. All 6th grade students, not in band, orchestra, or chorus will have a daily study hall period or if needed literacy intervention and support. Students in 7th and 8th grade, not in band, orchestra or chorus will be scheduled for a literacy/writing class or Spanish class, if they qualify.

Literacy: Reading and Writing

Students in grades 7-8, not in band, orchestra, or chorus or qualifying for a Spanish class will have a daily literacy class to improve reading and writing skills.

Spanish - Advanced Spanish for students in grades 6-8 will be offered to those students recommended to continue their Spanish language studies after successful completion of the dual language program in grades K-5. The two year program of Spanish for students in grades 7-8 (leading to the second year advanced placement at the high school) will be offered on a daily 40-minute schedule for students who qualify by demonstrating strong language and math skills and achievement and with teacher recommendation.

What About Students Who Are in BOC and Spanish?

As mentioned earlier, there is no PERFECT schedule or one that will allow students with multiple interests to do it all; it will be necessary to make some choices. For students who find themselves in this situation, we will need to be flexible in scheduling.

For those students in the **Advanced Spanish classes (6-8)**, we propose that students be scheduled for a daily Spanish class, continue lessons and practice instruments for band or orchestra, and only attend rehearsal with the whole group for BOC on a flexible schedule as needed to prepare for concerts and performances. If preferable, parents and their child may opt out of some of the arts and technology rotations. (Continue on page 3)

What About Students Who Are in BOC and Spanish?

We recommend the same schedule and/or options for **7th and 8th graders in the two-year Spanish program**. As additional support, we will provide the Rosetta Stone online Spanish program to students who wish to continue BOC and their arts and technology rotations on a daily basis, yet are still interested in studying Spanish. Those students will meet on a flexible schedule with Spanish teachers for progress monitoring and supplementary instruction.

We will also provide Rosetta Stone licenses to all **6th grade students** who are interested in getting a jump start on their Spanish language studies or who wish to continue their Spanish exploratory that was started at Townline.

Once again, **7th and 8th grade students who are NOT in band, orchestra, or chorus, will NOT** be affected by the schedule change that was made to increase academic learning time in the core academics.

We will work with **families/students who are affected by this schedule change**, (namely 6th-8th students in Advanced Spanish or 7th/8th grade students in the two year Spanish program and who are also in band, orchestra, or chorus) to develop a flexible schedule option that will work best for each student.

What about Other Languages in the Future

Pending the results of the survey and the recommendation of the World Language Advisory Team, changes may be made to the middle school foreign language program in 2011-12.

ENRICHMENT

Enrichment programming at Hawthorn 2010-2011

We realize that all of our students at Hawthorn have different needs. While some of them need extra support, there are some who also need the opportunity to go beyond the grade level standards and deeper into their studies. Currently, this type of opportunity is offered in two different ways at the elementary level. Elementary South and North offer a traditional type of enrichment program (Advanced, Abilities and Achievement - AAA), where students who meet certain criteria are invited to replacement classes for math and/or reading every day in order to enrich their learning. At Townline and Aspen, students are more flexibly offered this opportunity, based on multiple academic measures and recommendations from their homeroom teachers. We have found that although both options are effective at offering high-quality enrichment opportunities, the more flexible program offered at Townline and Aspen has been able to include more students, allowing many more children the opportunity to enrich their studies.

We are currently meeting with enrichment teachers, as well as our middle school teachers who instruct advanced courses, in order to plan for next year and beyond. We are focused on developing an elementary enrichment program which will allow for some of our students to receive enrichment as needed, and some to receive enrichment every day, depending on the level of their academic performance, their learning characteristics and their creative potential.

We will continue to meet until we have developed such a solution and look forward to providing another update on this process, later in the year.

Update on Language Opportunities 2009-2010

Spanish Exploratory at Townline



Students in grades 1-5 have been meeting once a week for 40 minutes with a Spanish-speaking instructional assistant to explore the Spanish language using the “Li'l Language Scholars” curriculum. We have been working with our contact at Li'l Language Scholars to make sure the curriculum is meeting the needs of our students and the feedback we have received from parents and students has been positive on this program, so far. We are documenting what has worked and what has been a struggle with implementing this program, and feel confident that if a language exploratory is something that other parents in the district are interested in us providing for their students, this would be a very good option.

After-School Spanish Exploratory



The after school Spanish Exploratory class offered to all of our students in grades 1-8 began in October of 2009 and has been a success. The evaluations of the first session indicate that most parents are happy with the Rosetta Stone resource, as well as, the after school classroom component. Our second 10-week session began in January, and most of our students returned. We also had some additional students sign up, and plan on adding an additional class on the North Campus. Our instructors have been utilizing the curricular supports offered by Rosetta Stone, as well as, some of the materials purchased from Li'l Language Scholars.

Evening English Language Learning (ELL)



In January, our evening classes for non-native English speaking students and their families began at Elementary North and South. Following the same model as our after school Spanish program, these families utilize the Rosetta Stone software at home, and come to class with a Hawthorn instructor once a week. With primary funding through grants, we have provided access to older laptop computers and internet access for families who do not have this resource at home, in order to ensure their success with the online curriculum. Cook Memorial Library representatives also attended our first class session and signed our families up for library cards if they did not already have them. We are very pleased with the start we have to this program.