

**MINUTES FROM WMS SCHOOL COUNCIL MEETING
March 31, 2021**

A meeting of the Wayland Middle School School Council was held remotely at 5:00 p.m. on Tuesday, March 31, 2021.

Present and participating remotely were:

Betsy Gavron (School Principal)
Erin Gibbons (Parent Representative)
Lisa Goodman (Parent Representative)
Renee Henrich (Parent Representative)
Ruchi Saggar (Parent Representative)
Leila Topi (Student Representative)
Katelyn Chiryath (Student Representative)
Michael Kotin (Staff Representative)
Susan Chisholm (Staff Representative)

Absent were:

Amruta Mudambi (Community Representative)

1. Betsy Gavron called the meeting to order. Roll call was taken:

<u>ROLL CALL</u>	<u>YES</u>	<u>NO</u>
o Betsy Gavron	x	
o Michael Kotin	x	
o Susan Chisholm	x	
o Erin Gibbons	x	
o Lisa Goodman	x	
o Renee Henrich	x	
o Ruchi Saggar	x	
o Amruta Mudambi		x
o Kanmani Sekhar	x	
o Rose Jaquinet	x	

2. Public Comment

- Ruchi Saggar offered public comment based on parent feedback: Parents receive Google Classroom feedback on student's assignments - Only receive feedback if it is turned in or not - Parent are interested in greater access to google classroom, so they are not surprised about report card or placement. Lisa agreed.
- Betsy explained: The hope is parents can sit with their students and have conversations about what's in GC. I understand that's not always easy..... For years we have had philosophical debates about keeping HAC open. We don't

want kids, or parents, to hyper focus on grades. There is concern about kids at the HS who are constantly looking at their grades and are only focused on their grades. We have asked teachers to report to families 2 times a semester between RC based on units. What we have avoided is students cramming to get things done by a false deadline.

- Parent shared the challenge of when students are working on a device knowing if students are completing work or not. Hard to trust whether a child is being honest. It's not a grade thing - it's a skill thing. Is my kid doing what they need to be doing? Are they pushing themselves?
- Betsy: You can always email teachers and get the update you are looking for. Many parents do that. Teachers have worked hard to get rubrics into GC and getting GC to talk to HAC has been hard. It's good feedback for us. We do want parents to know how their kids are doing.

Council Agenda:

- ❖ Betsy Gavron facilitated Minutes approval
Motion to approve - Erin Kotin
Second - Lisa Goodman

Roll call vote was unanimous

Discussion of All In:

- Spent a lot of time thinking about who moves, kids or teachers, and we had to look at spaces to see who fits
- Schedule drivers
- Highlights of new schedule

Who Moves?

Going forward students will move - Surveyed teachers around this bc they have been intensely impacted by current model (students stay, teachers move..). We have learned more about COVID and transmission not happening in schools where students are moving from room to room (pie chart of teacher feedback). Always moved for Science and CA. Teachers have had to manage up to 12 rooms with different technology, which is a huge hardship on teachers. Because we can fit 24 students in each class, with new desks/furniture, we will allow students to move. (review of new desks and their positive features). If we were going to invest money in new furniture, we chose what will best serve us down the road. 3 ft bw chair edge to chair edge. Each room oriented in different ways.

What drives the schedule?

For hybrid we pulled out study halls because we wanted to maximize time with students and our interventions were moved to FLEX and Wednesdays. So for All-In we had to reinsert that block. We wanted to keep the schedule as similar as possible for the last 36 days. But because we can't have all students getting services during blue block each homeroom trade one block for blue. One class meets at a different color, to make room for study hall. This worked for almost every schedule, but there are a handful of 8th graders whose schedules need more adjusting.

Only 6 out of 250. Discussing with guidance counselors to see what makes most sense for those kids. We also needed to align WRAP schedules for teachers who work both programs. We needed to make schedule work for teachers who are only part time who have to get to other jobs at a certain time.

Schedule Highlights: Show sample schedule and review of how it compares to the old schedule).

- Wednesdays change week to week.
- We can't do it all in 3 lunches because 8th grade is so big. We need 4 lunches.
- The spacing for unmasked lunch is still 6 feet so we can't just put all kids in the same space. Still need to space them out.
- Blocks are going from 90 to 80 minutes with 60 minutes on Wednesday. Combined Arts will still switch half way through the block.
- We now have 4 lunches with new times (times covered)
- PLC will meet - end of Wednesday.
- Teachers will share FLEX coverage.
- Move to in-person chorus and band.

Q: Any feedback about keeping this schedule moving forward?

A: Not yet. Has advantages and disadvantages

Q (Student): This is only for WRAP students, there is only a 5 minute break bw classes? This is not enough for students who are always on the computer. Could we end or start early so we can keep the 15 minute break?

A: WRAP teachers will have to look at this and make for the break

There is a FLEX rotation - Kids can only sing or play instruments for 30 min, so breaking the FLEX into 2 halves. Youngest students have the most consistent time frames.

6th graders always meet first half.

7th graders will only meet second half.

8th graders will vary - they can handle the need for flexibility.

Big adjustment is the need to plan for HW each night. Teachers are looking to make Wed time to review/enrich...current event wednesdays....teachers will think about W time a little different. CL decided no assessments on W.

Q and A

Q: lunch outside?

A: Challenge

- lunch coverage - only me, Benzie and Ms. Fin.
- the spring is often wet and students can't sit on the ground.
- Talk about using the courtyards. We have been using them a lot/more. We could rotate kids out there.

- not all kids like to eat outside, and we don't have enough desks and tables to provide more comfortable space.

Q Can we use the courtyard. My child won't eat lunch at school because she won't take her mask off. That's a long day with no food. Always asks, "why can't I eat my lunch outside? "

A: Maybe we could have a rotation - where I can watch both spaces. May move pooled testing outside.

Q: What about parent volunteers? Legal?

BG: Tried to get parent volunteers in the fall. Some push back because introducing so many new adults. Now that we are getting more vaccinated - may work better. Also, need commitment. Lunch can be a tricky time to supervise. I know parents volunteered when we were short for coverage. Know parents are willing....but we don't have tables...good food for thought. Maybe poll students?

Comment: Even at the MS in my district, kids are all eating outside. They bring a yoga mat, or towel. We purchased stools.

Q- Students were asked if they would want to eat outside?

A: If the weather was ok, it would be fine.

BG: Space...keeping kids apart is always hard. We will consider an outside lunch option.

BG: Other questions or thoughts from parents or kids?1

Student: The 90 minute blocks are so long.

New schedule only 80 minutes - Teacher will be taking kids outside for part of those blocks. It is built into the schedule. We also talked about chunking flex in 20 minute blocks.

Q: Will there be a new traffic pattern with dismissal and drop off? Some can start taking the bus? Lottery?

A: Chief Gibbons came last week. We want to get more cars off the road while getting them through. There will be more of a snake-like circle in the DPW lot, to get more cars in. Neighborhood pickup was not an option. We talked about whether we could have something like where the cars come in and drive all the way through the building...no lefts. The more we can encourage carpool, walking, biking...better. AM better. Any time something new, it takes a few weeks to sort out.

Social Emotional Work:

SEL Committee has been meeting. When we closed schools we were just going to start this Panorama survey. But then we closed down. The group is advocating we do that right now before we go ALL IN. Meant to capture how individual students doing...grades....what's lacking so we can identify skills lacking.

Discussed Panorama Survey

Discussed including questions about COVID and ways we customized - ex: Non-binary option for gender

Noted: We can customize. Can take out a section, but removes all questions in that section. (share screen)

Discussed sections what to leave in what to leave out. Parents expressed concern about length- suggestion to give it over multiple days - discussed when to give it and suggestions for framing importance of data

Kids will be asked questions about how think and feel. Questions around goals and challenges.

Q: How many questions?

A: 90

BG: Committee is going to talk about that at next meeting. Maybe one subject area would be willing to allow this. This School Performance Section is less important in my mind. So I was thinking we would pull this. Next section is about Behavior.

Parent: Questioned validity - Do you expect middle schoolers to tell the truth? Very personal.
Student: I think I would try to bend the truth to make it more flattering....I wouldn't totally lie...but I if my answer was almost always, I may change to frequently bc not as high. Also depends on who is seeing this.

Maybe we tell students who is seeing this.

Parent offered support for using Panorama and their good work - she suggested flexibility for location to take it.

Student: Question about timing on question - Clarified it's "within the past 30 days"

Concerns about vocabulary being challenging - son knows all these words, but I don't think they are all in his vernacular.

BG: Unfortunately we can't change...we can take out questions or add, but it's a normed survey.

Discussion about the Effort section - There was a wish it were embedded by subject as students feel their effort varies by subject. Talked about complexity of questions and answers around effort (time put in, distractions while working, etc) - conclusion it is rich conversation to be having with middle schoolers

Betsy notes Second Step program SEL committee is looking at - has lessons around effort

Teacher noted World languages not represented in subject based questions

Suggestions to pull our teacher perspective questions
Debated which sections felt most important right now

Student: Whole survey is not built for special ed kids. The whole perspective piece is what kids struggle with. Some kids get modified work, so the effort questions may be tricky.

(back to going through survey)

Next section is about Emotions and Regulation. Feelings in general. This has a time frame - recently. Reminds folks they can skip questions. This is about the past week. Get into some open ended questions. This is about connection and where you can go for help. Trusted adults and peers.

Then there are the background questions. This is where we customized around Standards Based Grading. We also asked for feedback around TAG. We asked about what learning mode they are in.

Parent: For the TAG questions - may be too open ended. Some may not say much. Maybe provide some choices.

Betsy: Trouble is how different it is grade to grade. Maybe some possibilities to put some bullets.

Parent: Maybe even asking if you like a more open ended and less structured TAG. Or leave it, and see what you get. That's data, right? If not much, you know has to be more structured.

Betsy: So the end of it is about feedback? Life during the pandemic. Discussions around race, racism, social justice...

Seen it all - question is what you think? One is do we chunk it? Do it over time?

Parent: Also taking some selections out.

Student: If you are leaving the academic piece, then you need the effort section. Would be better if you could put those questions in the academic section. Like, yes I'm doing all my work, but I'm not putting the most effort in...

Student: Wish there would be a question about how much you feel supported by peers and teachers outside of classes. I know that makes a huge difference on how much I care about something

Betsy: Maybe not in survey bc schools don't have much control.

Parent: Could be open ended question.

Betsy: Leila, does that get at it....how well teachers know you, or do you have spaces you feel supported.

Parent: Are there teachers who are willing to get to know you....sometimes if someone brings up something not common - teacher moves on, but if someone brings up something more popular, it opens up a big conversation

Final Thoughts on Survey:

Parent: Kids will need to spend time on it to be true to their feelings. So I think it has to happen over a few sessions. Questions are so important. I know when I did the Panorama with my own school...had really great graphs to show that made its value seen....

DC Trip

Every year we go to DC talk to 3 companies and get 3 bids. Historically, we took the train. Agencies are moving away from train travel - can't secure seats, too much time. So there is a push to go by plane. We have never done that. Thoughts?

(Team reviewed chart of comparative agencies and prices and what they offer - one offering some outdoor learning opportunities)

Betsy: Price point? Flying?

Parent: What was fee in past?

Betsy: about 1100 - with train

Parent: These are covid prices, so anything would be raised with respect to covid. Seems pretty good!

Betsy: COmpanies are desperate for business. Question is - how many days and nights seem important? Is flying ok?

Studen: I used to live in Belmont and they did flying in 8th grade. So I went to MS for a year and I spoke to some 8th graders who went on trip who just recently switched from trains to flying. Didn't seem to be much difference in what kids thought. Just shorter trip - bc flying takes more time.

Parent: Does the long train trip allow for some bonding.

Betsy: Train ride there - sleep a little. Bond a little. Play games, but the ride back feels like 48 hours. Did speak to others in other schools and they have liked flying. Also, 3 nights vs 2 nights. If we did 2 nights we lose some events.

Parent: I feel the price doesn't jump too much to add an extra night. So if the night tour is special, it makes sense to add it.

Betsy: Not hearing huge thoughts about flying or price increase. Any thoughts about adding the outdoor component?

Parent: I do like the idea of adding the outdoors and that Grand Classroom is a family business.

Meeting Concluded