Middle School Study Update

Presented to the EISD Program Committee

December 12, 2003

Campus or Department: Middle School Study 2002-2004
2003/04 School Year

Goal Statement: The goal of the EISD Middle School Study for the current year is to develop recommendations for the EISD Board of Trustees that will examine current best practices and lead to the development of a middle school program that can be endorsed for the future.

Objective 1: Data collection and analysis

Action Steps	Persons Responsible	Resources Needed	Source	Timeline	Formative Evaluation
1. Conduct a comparative analysis study of several Texas middle schools A. Select schools to be included in comparison group B. Develop a matrix of comparison criteria C. Apply matrix and perform analysis of data D. Develop a written report	Study Team (MS Principals, Asst. Supt. for C&I)	Data collected from comparison group used during 02/03 phase of study.	No funding is required	November 03	List of schools, comparison matrix, completed report
2. Present comparison report to HC and WR faculties.	M. S. Principals	Completed report	No funding is required	December 03	Agendas showing when report was presented, feedback from faculty members
3. School visits – one member of the Study Team will conduct school visits to five schools.	Terri Rodgers	Travel time	No funding has been requested.	December 03	Terri Rodgers will develop a report that will be shared

A. Two schools in North East ISD B. Two schools in Plano ISD C. One school in Fort Bend ISD			However, if funding is needed it will come from the C&I Budget FY 04		with members of the Study Team
4. Perform analysis of data collected in steps 1 and 3.	Study Team	Reports: Comparison data report, Rodgers report	No funding is required	December 03	Completed report

Objective 2: Develop information for the Superintendent and EISD Board of Trustees.

Action Steps	Persons Responsible	Resources Needed	Source	Timeline	Formative Evaluation
1. Develop list of recommendations based on analysis performed in objective one.	Study Team	Analysis report from Obj. 1 Step 4.	No funding is required	December 03	List of recommendations
2. Develop a communication plan for information	Study Team	A meeting to develop communication plan	No funding is required	December 03	Communication plan
3. Present information to the EISD Board of Trustees	Study Team	Data analysis	No funding is required	December 03	Board presentation materials

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Objective 3: Prepare to implement selected recommendations

Action Steps	Persons Responsible	Resources Needed	Source	Timeline	Formative Evaluation
1. Develop implementation scope and sequence plan	Study Team	List of selected and approved recommendations	No funding is required	January 04	Board presentation materials

Summary of preliminary suggestions December 2002

•Teaming is a key element to success at Middle School.
•Develop a position for a reading/writing specialist on each campus
•Develop joint subcommittees to study specific topics
•Move Health and Speech for high school credit back to WHS in 2004
•Require a semester of PE/Health for all students in grades 6-8 that are not in athletics and incorporate health instruction into off-season athletics.

Exemplary Middle School Practices

	Schedule	Teaming	Levels	GT	Advisory	6th	7th	8th	Admin	Counselors
Bush NEISD 1300	7 period	Yes	2 LA Math	Core PreAP	No	LA, Read, Sci, SS, PE, Elective	LA*, Math, Sci, SS, 3 Electives	LA, Math, Sci, SS, Read*	3 Asst. 1 Acad. Dean	3
Ft. Settlement Ft. Bend ISD 1094	7 period	Yes	2 LA Math	Core	2 days	ELAI ELAII Math, Sci, SS, PE, Elective	ELAI ELAII Math Sci, SS, 2 Electives	ELAI* Math Science SS 2/3 Electives	2 Asst. Helping Teachers	3
Haggard Plano ISD 806	7 period	Yes	2 LA Math	Core Honors	No	LA, Read, Math, Sci, SS, PE, Elective	English* Math, Sci, SS, 3 Electives**	English* Math, Sci, SS, 3 Electives	2 Asst. (1 called Admin Intern)	3
Renner Plano ISD 1200	7 period	Yes	2 LA Math	Core Honors	Yes	LA, Read, Math, Sci, SS, PE, Elective	English* Math, Sci, SS. 3 Electives**	English* Math, Sci, SS, 3 Electives	2 Asst. (1 called Admin Intern)	3
Tejeda NEISD 960	7 period	6th/7th Yes 8th No	2 LA Math	Core PreAP	No	LA, Read, Sci, SS, PE, Elective	LA*, Math, Sci, SS 3 Electives	LA, Math, Sci, SS, Read*	2 Asst. 1 Acad. Dean	3

*Semester or full year of reading – can be waived
**Semester of PE required if no athletics

Middle School Planning Assumptions 2004/04

Point of Departure:
A question arose at the EISD Program Committee on November 11, 2003 about the effect of changing the number of teaching sections each teacher has with instructional responsibilities if we move to seven period school day with equal time for each class period. This document attempts to respond to the question by explaining the current model and the legal requirements for planning time, then examines the potential effects of modifying the current schedule in relation to the number of assigned instructional periods for teachers at the middle schools.

Currently middle school teachers provide direct instruction to students in six out of eight periods each day. The remaining periods are set-aside for team time and personal planning. Section 21.404.of the Texas Education Code (TEC) mandates a minimum of 450 minutes in a two-week period be set aside for instructional preparation, and the planning period may not be less than 45 minutes per day. Our current model exceeds this minimal requirement by 53%.

The question on the table relates to the number of sections a middle school teacher should teach if we go to an equal time schedule with a seven (7) period day. Table 1 shows a comparison and potential effect if teachers teach five of seven periods as opposed to six of seven periods per day.

Table 1: Comparison of 5/7 or 6/7 sections

PLANNING - MIDDLE SCHOOL SCHEDULES				
# of Students	S:T Planning ratio	# of sections needed	# of sections per teacher	# of FTEs
300	25/1	12.00	6	2.00
300	25/1	12.00	5	2.40
300	30/1	10.00	6	1.67
300	30/1	10.00	5	2.00
270	25/1	10.80	6	1.80
270	30/1	9.00	5	1.80
250	25/1	10.00	6	1.67
250	30/1	8.33	5	1.67

We currently use a 25 to 1 student/teacher ratio for planning, and the student population per grade level may vary from 250 to 300 or more per year. If we continue with the 25:1 ratio and have 300 students in a grade level, then we need 12 teaching sections in each core subject (Language Arts, Math, Science, and Social Studies), which yields 2.0 FTEs for each subject. When the number of teaching sections drops to 5 and we maintain the 25:1 ratio the number of required FTEs jumps to 2.4 per grade level. However, if the planning ratio moves to 30:1 in a schedule with 5 teaching subjects the number of required FTEs returns to 2.0 for each subject.

If the question is to be examined from an economic dimension and we are seeking the greatest efficiency, a 6 out of 7 day is more efficient, but may not be more effective for a number of reasons. First, teachers at Westlake High School currently have a 5 period instructional assignment. There is no doubt that middle school teachers will compare their assignments with their colleagues at the high school. Second, other problems emerge if we decide to implement a 5 out of 7 day at the middle schools and hold the number of FTEs constant. The most obvious problem is the class size that will result from using a 30:1 planning ratio. Constructing a middle school schedule is a fairly complicated process. While a planning figure is a driving factor, there are other factors that influence the eventual outcome. There are anomalies in a schedule that can cause a wide variance in the actual class size, which contribute to a scenario where some classes are as small as 17 and some as large as 30 in the core academic subjects using the current 25:1 ratio. If a 30:1 planning figure is implemented the result could be class sizes as large as 35 students in a core academic subject. Class size has been examined in a number of studies and while the findings are currently inconclusive (Iacovou, 2002; Blatchford, Edmonds, & Martin, 2003) the general belief seems to be smaller is better. Gilmer & Kiger (2003) reviewed a number of class size studies and suggest, "...a growing body of anecdotal and qualitative evidence supports reducing class size. Teachers report experiencing lower levels of stress and job dissatisfaction with smaller classes, primarily because they are better able to attend to each student individually and, as a consequence, student motivation increases and discipline problems decrease." Other class size studies have produced similar findings. Therefore, the research suggests a larger class size is not advisable.

Thus, it seems we are left with the dilemma of either larger class sizes or a sense of inequity among secondary teachers. Not an envious place.

Proposed Middle School Schedule
2004-2005

Based on a 7 period day—52-55 minute periods
1 FTE=125 -135 students*
*Based on the assumption that fifth grade teachers serve 25-75 based on scheduling/high school teachers serve 130-150.

6th Grade

English
Reading
Math
Science
Social Studies
Fine Arts Elective (Band/Orchestra/Choir)
P.E./Exploratory Wheel A/B
(Art/Drama/Computer) HCMS
P.E./Computer A/B WRMS

7th Grade/8th Grade

English
Math
Science
Social Studies
Elective
Elective
Elective*
*Required Reading
(students who lack proficiency)
*Semester of P.E. required each year
(if not taking Athletics)
This represents a change from two periods to one period of language arts resulting in FTE reductions 2- 4 at each campus.

Gifted/Talented Services:

6th Grade
The Gifted and Talented (GT) Program for identified students in sixth grade is a pullout program that serves the needs of students with exceptional intellectual ability and high creativity. Students will be pulled from their reading classes once a week to participate in the GT Program.

7th and 8th Grade (HCMS)
Special classes offer identified students instruction in the disciplines of language arts, science, social studies, and/or math. These classes offer appropriately differentiated learning experiences and an advanced, enriched curriculum. For those students who wish to pursue further development of their creative talent, an elective course that utilizes differentiated curriculum will be available.

7th and 8th Grade (WRMS)
Students will be served by a GT specialist who will compact a core subject (language arts or social studies), allowing the equivalent of one day a week or more for direct GT services. Additionally, identified students will receive differentiated instruction in the disciplines of language arts, science, social studies, and/or math. For those students who wish to pursue further development of their creative talent, an elective course that utilizes differentiated curriculum will be available.

Electives-Full Year:

Foreign Language:
Latin (LE/AEP) Spanish (AEP)

Music/Fine Arts:
Concert II Band (LE/AEP) Concert I Band (AEP) Symphonic Band (AEP)
(instrumentation at 6th grade limits teacher ability to meet the 125-135 criteria)

Advanced Orchestra (AEP) Honors Orchestra (AEP)
(instrumentation at 6th grade can limit teacher ability to meet the 125-135 criteria)

Concert Choir (AEP) Treble Chorale (AEP) Tenor/Bass Chorale (AEP)

Journalism:
Yearbook (AEP)

One Semester Electives:

Fine Arts:
Art 2D (AEP)
Art 3D (AEP)
Theatre Arts (EP)
Play Production (Semester or Full Year) (AEP)

Athletics:
(Fall/spring) (AEP) Boys Girls

High School Credit Courses:
Communication Applications (Speech) (AEP) *(High School Credit 8th only)*
Health (AEP) (*High School Credit 8th only*)

Computer Courses:
Computer II (WRMS) (EP)
Internet/Multimedia (HCMS) (EP)
Web Design (EP)
Photo Journalism (Newspaper-HCMS)(AEP)

Career Exploration Courses:
Construction Technology (HCMS) (LE/EP)
Tech Systems (Industrial Technology) (EP/LE at WRMS)
Teen Skills/Cougar Helpers (HCMS) (EP)

Electives designed to improve academic performance:
Reading Improvement (HCMS)
Power Reading (WRMS)
Novel Ideas (HCMS)
Wilson
TAKS Math
(All of the preceding courses are required by NCLB)

New Courses:
G/T Elective (AEP) (One semester or full year) – new course

Low enrollment=LE
Academic/Extracurricular Prep=AEP
(Links to high school course offerings/extra curricular activities)
Exploratory Prep=EP