

December 2, 2008



Summary of HNH Recommendations

Hadley Mission Statement

The purpose of Hadley Junior High School is to prepare our students intellectually and emotionally for their high school years and the future by providing a safe and supportive learning environment that meets the unique needs of our adolescent learners, while developing respectful relationships among students, staff, families and community.

Submitted on behalf of
Steering Committee Members

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Hadley New Horizons (HNH) is an organizational improvement effort that began in summer of 2007 with the goal of improving the academic, social and emotional experience for all Hadley students. Some minor adjustments were made for the 2008-2009 school year. Opportunities for structured assistance with learning was incorporated into the day, Math was scheduled differently in order to better meet student learning needs, and the addition of six portable classrooms provided the necessary space so that language arts could be taught in a 90-minute block with the same teacher in the same classroom.

Hadley has sought feedback on changes under study for 2009-2010 and beyond using surveys, town meetings and email and continues to receive a range of perspectives. Recommendations will be brought to the Board of Education for discussion and action in January, 2009.

Please send questions and comments on HNH to horizons@d41.org.

EXPLORATORY

Exploratory recommendations are intended to provide courses that are aligned with learning standards and student interests, as well as provide some choice for students in their course selection. Exploratory is defined as any class outside the core curriculum. This includes the newly recommended Core Extensions as well as PE and Health, Academic Support, Foreign Language and Band and Orchestra.

Target date of implementation beginning school year 2009-2010

1. Students and parents have some focused choice in the Exploratory experiences at 6th grade, with greater choice in the 7th and 8th grades. Course selections will be presented to students in February.
2. Sixth graders have a required sequence of four quarter-year classes that include: Art, Applied Technology, Life Skills, and Health. All students take PE every day.
3. The State requires 18 weeks of Health—one quarter of Health will be at 6th grade, one quarter of Health will be at 7th grade.
4. In order to eliminate pull-outs for sectionals, Band and Orchestra become classes that are part of the school day. The group would also like to suggest that all pull-outs of students for non-academic reasons, such as extra-curricular activities, be reduced or eliminated in order to maximize valuable instructional time.
5. An A/B schedule is under consideration for all Exploratory courses except PE. This means that 9-week courses would be offered every other day over an 18-week period (2 days during week one, 3 days during week two, or vice versa). In addition, an Academic Support Plus class will be developed to provide identified students with special education resource time and/or additional support skills.

TIME AND ORGANIZATION

Time and Organization recommendations are intended to maximize learning time for students and provide greater flexibility in meeting student academic, social and emotional needs.

1. Schedule **Target date of implementation beginning school year 2009-2010**
 - The schedule will be built using 15-minute units (27 in total)
 - Lunch: 30 minutes (2 units); lunch may be staggered, every 15 minutes
 - Language Arts: A 90-minute block (6 units) with the same teacher and in the same room
 - Mathematics: 60 minutes (4 units). Math time will increase by 15 minutes per day to allow for a 60-minute math block and to better meet student learning needs.
 - Teams include Language Arts, Science and Social Studies. These teachers will have a common plan time to allow for team collaboration, as well as individual plan time.
 - Mathematics and Exploratory classes may be multi-grade when appropriate.
2. Starting and Ending Times **Under study by the Steering Committee**
 - Starting the school day 30 minutes earlier (at 8 a.m.) would minimize the need for students and teachers to leave early for extracurricular activities and provide the opportunity to expand participation in co-curricular activities. The committee recognizes that there are other implications both pro and con to an earlier start time. The Time and Organization Group recommends further study of issue by the Steering Committee.



RESPECTFUL RELATIONSHIPS

Respectful Relationship recommendations are meant to improve how Hadley promotes, supports and embeds positive relationships and connections between adults and students in a systemic way.

1. Establish an Encore (**Encouraging Relationships**) program: Encore would be an interest-based program to build connections between students and staff. The program would be:
 - organized around student interests
 - involve all teachers and school staff
 - provide for student choice
 - possibly consist of multi-grade groups

Program goals would mirror Illinois Learning Standards for Social Emotional Learning Goal 2: Use social-awareness and interpersonal skills to establish and maintain positive relationships. Encore would:

- Foster more meaningful adult/student relationships through shared interests
- Change perspectives of teachers (make teacher more of a person)
- Teachers would get to know students well
- Include lots of conversation while involved in the activity
- Promote greater student voice

Program Rationale: Building and maintaining positive relationships with others are central to success in school and life and require the ability to recognize the thoughts, feelings, and perspectives of others, including those different from one's own. In addition, establishing positive peer, family, and work relationships requires skills in cooperating, communicating respectfully, and constructively resolving conflicts with others. (From SEL Goal 2)

The program would meet weekly; on that day, other periods could be shortened to provide the time for this "bonus" period. ***Encore is under study by the Steering Committee.***

2. Houses: Organize Hadley into three multi-grade houses. We envision each house consisting of three teams—one 6th, one 7th, and one 8th. Students would typically remain in their house for all three years. ***Target date of implementation beginning school year 2009-2010***

3. Looping: The staff in each house would be strongly encouraged to adopt a looping model for 7th and 8th grade with implementation beginning in the Fall of 2010. Research shows that long-term relationships have a positive impact on both student learning and school climate.

Looping is under study for potential implementation in 2010-2011

4. Mentoring: Implement a mentoring program characterized by the following:
 - For identified students (counselor and teacher identified)
 - Throughout the year (variable start and end)
 - Start with teacher-to-student mentoring; evolve to include student-to-student mentoring
 - Volunteer teachers
 - Include an assessment or monitoring component
 - Inform all teachers of the mentors for identified students
 - Flexible schedule
 - Provide training for mentors

Mentoring is under study by the Steering Committee



TEAMING EFFECTIVENESS

Teaming Effectiveness recommendations focus on aspects of staff interaction like collaboration, team meetings, and all those things that can contribute to a strong staff united in meeting student needs in a middle-level environment

1. Team Leader: Each teaching team has a team leader to facilitate the work of the team and provide communication with the administration, with other teams and with parents. Team leaders would have a job description, receive training and receive a stipend to be determined.

Under study by the Steering Committee

2. Team planning: Every team is guided by a set of expectations about how they utilize team planning time. ***Under study by the Steering Committee***

- As recommended by the research, at least half of team planning time would be devoted to issues of curriculum, instruction and assessment
- The remainder of weekly team planning time should be used for student management issues, for team operational issues and for working with special services personnel (ELL, Special Education, school psychologist, math and literacy consultants, school counselors)

3. Each team has a set of beliefs and annual goals aligned with the school's mission and goals.

Potential implementation beginning school year 2009-2010

HOME-SCHOOL COMMUNICATIONS

Home School Communications: This study group is focused on all aspects of communications, particularly that between Hadley and its families, and how communication can support student learning and the Hadley Mission. This committee has met once. Recommendations will be forthcoming once they are fully developed.

DECODING HADLEY—SOME HELPFUL DEFINITIONS

Academic Support: A class that will be introduced in 2008-2009 in place of Large Group for those students who are performing below grade level in Math and/or Language Arts. A curriculum will be written for this class.

Closed Campus: Hadley is a closed campus, meaning all students remain at school for lunch.

Core Classes: Language Arts, Science, Social Science.

Core curriculum: Math, Language Arts, Science, and Social Science.

Core Extensions: Classes that HNH is proposing for 2009-2010 that would be based in the core curriculum and further develop aspects of it.

Exploratory: A rotation of courses at Hadley that provide exposure to the arts, life skills, foreign language, communication, technology, and health. HNH has expanded the definition to include Core Extensions, Band and Orchestra and PE.

Guided Study: An interim step to replace Large Group next year only for those students who are not in Academic Support or foreign language. In 2009-2010, Guided Study will be replaced by Core Extensions.

Block: A length of time greater than a normal class period. Language Arts is taught in a 90-minute block; next year it is proposed that math be taught in a 60-minute block.

Large Group: Large Group was replaced by Academic Support and Guided Study this year. In past years, it provided a semi-structured setting for activities and study.

Student Activity Nights: Regular grade-level nights for students to socialize and have fun in a safe and supervised setting.

Teams: Hadley students are organized into three teams at each grade. The teams have most of their classes together and strive for a sense of unity and identity. The teams help make Hadley a "smaller" environment by reducing the number of teachers and students the children interact with on a daily basis.

Third Thursday: Parent visitation day. Parents are free to spend the day at school, following all or part of their child's schedule.