

# MIDDLE SCHOOL EXPLORATORY PROGRAM CHANGES



## CURRENT EXPLORATORY PROGRAM:

The current middle school model provides students with opportunities to try or "explore" courses that allow them access to new experiences and acquiring new skills. It is not an elective program because students are not given choices until their 8<sup>th</sup> grade year. With the exception of foreign languages in 8<sup>th</sup> grade, all courses are one semester.

- 6<sup>th</sup> Grade: All students take Art and General Music.
- 7<sup>th</sup> Grade: All students take Family and Consumer Science (FACS) and Technology Education (Tech Ed) with a focus on Project Lead the Way (PLTW).
- 8<sup>th</sup> Grade: Students have a choice of taking a full year of foreign language (Spanish, French or German) or two of the following three semester options: Art, FACS, Tech Ed (PLTW).

## CURRENT STAFFING PLAN:

To staff the exploratory program, the North and South middle schools work together to share staff, in addition to sharing staff with the high school for the French and German program. The typical staffing levels on campus are:

- 2.0 General Music teachers
- 2.4 Art teachers
- 2.4 FACS teachers
- 2.4 Tech Ed. teachers
- 2.8 Foreign Language teachers

# CHALLENGES OF THE CURRENT PROGRAM

- Staffing the part time Tech Ed position is the greatest challenge. For the 2017-2018 school year this position is not filled. The full time Tech Ed teachers will each teach an overload.
- Part time Art and FACS positions can typically be filled, but those staff members are transient and are going to end up being replaced every year. This affects program consistency.
- At the 8<sup>th</sup> grade level, class sizes can sometimes be a challenge due to the limited number of courses offered. Students who are not interested in taking a foreign language are placed in classes where they may have little interest.

## PROPOSED SOLUTIONS

To resolve the staffing issue, the Exploratory Committee proposed moving to a trimester model to eliminate the part time FACS and Tech Ed positions. As a result, a new class needs to be created in both 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> grade.

- 6<sup>th</sup> grade: Students will take General Music, Art 1 (2D focus) and Art 2 (3D focus).
- 7<sup>th</sup> grade: Students will take FACS, Tech Ed (PLTW) and Entrepreneurship.

8th grade students will also have additional course options. Students who do not take foreign language can select three of the following 8th grade specific courses:

- FACS 1
  - FACS 2
  - Robotics (PLTW)
  - Computer Science
  - Art 1
  - Art 2
  - General Music
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## Impact on staffing:

- These changes eliminate the part time positions in Art, FACS and Tech Ed and combine them into a full time Art and Entrepreneurship position.
- Any additional needs beyond this new full time position can be met by having other part time staff teach a section of Entrepreneurship.

## What is Entrepreneurship?

- This course will involve further developing communication skills, problem solving skills, and technology skills.
- The specific course will be developed during the 2017-2018 school year, however, a focus on research, product development and marketing is a possibility.
- Due to the nature of the class, it will be a class that can be taught by any certified staff member who has knowledge of the content.

## Next steps:

- By January, 2018, the new curriculum will be outlined for each class to allow students to register for their 8<sup>th</sup> grade electives in the spring of 2018.
- The middle school campus will shift to trimesters for the 2018-2019 school year when the new trimester courses are offered.
- In the spring of 2019, there will be an opportunity for a presentation to the Board after implementing the new courses.