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Scheduling in the Middle School: The Effects of Transition from a Junior High School to Middle School on Scheduling

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SCHEDULING IN THE MIDDLE SCHOOL:

THE EFFECTS OF TRANSITION FROM A

JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL TO

MIDDLE SCHOOL ON SCHEDULING

Presented to the

Departament of Educational Administration

and the

Graduate Faculty

University of Nebraska

at Omaha

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Specialist in Education

University of Nebraska at Omaha

by

Larry Cusic

May, 1991

UMI Number: EP74022

UMI

Dissertation Publishing

UMI EP74022

ProQuest®

PROPOSED FIELD PROJECT ACCEPTANCE

Accepted for the Graduate faculty, University of Nebraska, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree Specialist in Education, University of Nebraska at Omaha.

Supervisory Committee

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April 17, 1991
Date

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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

Middle level education bridge's the gap between elementary school and high school. The term is used to describe all programs that deal with combinations of grades 5-9 and youngsters from 10 to 14 years of age. The effectiveness of middle level education depends upon the degree to which the schools respond to the developmental needs and characteristics of students at that age. These are the "prime" years, the years during which one's value system, one's behavior, and one's self esteem are consolidated. When the adolescent leaves the middle level school, his or her personality and personal values are largely set for life.

In the middle school world, an adolescent life is full of physical and mental growth spurts, social and psychological uncertainties, and all the inconsistency and awkwardness that make this age the worst of times and occasionally the best of times. They are becoming sexually mature, their mental development does not reach maturity

until the late teens and their social maturity lags behind that. Many live in unstable families, have easy access to alcohol and drugs, and lack a personal relationship that provide support.

A clear understanding of the unique needs of these adolescents is central to planning and developing middle level programs that respond more effectively to the developmental needs of this age group.

Today's junior high schools have outgrown their original purpose, to provide a bridge between childhood and adolescence. They have mimicked the high school program organization (interscholastic sports, departmentalization, and a highly active social system). This mimicking is a major factor in the development of the middle schools in the last 25 years.

With respect to middle school movement, literature reveals that middle school success has to incorporate scheduling criteria. Middle schools scheduling must take into account time, space, resources, people, and subject matter. The middle schools of today addresses scheduling

criteria in four major areas: team organization; serving the unique needs of the age group (from about 10 to 14 years of age); providing exploratory programs, with some options for students; solving various resources, facilities, and other time problems.

Currently the Omaha Public School District is in transition from traditional junior high education to middle level education. As part of this reorganization the scheduling process needs to incorporate a team organization approach.

Omaha Public School has developed a Middle Level Steering Committee made up of junior high school principals, teachers, counselors, central office staff, and a professor from the University of Nebraska at Lincoln.

Six essential features or components have been identified by the district-wide Middle Level Steering Committee as necessary for each junior high school to adopt during the three to five year transition period in the district. Regardless of the grade level configuration or whether or not a school is called a middle school or junior high

school the following features should be gradually implemented by each of the schools in the district.

1. Advisor/Advisee program (adult advocate)

2. Transition/Articulation (orientation/peer mentors)

3. Interdisciplinary Teams (four or five teachers working together)

4. Appropriate Teaching Strategies (student centered)

5. Exploratory Program (non-academic classes)

6. Appropriate Curriculum/Learning Skills (academic and personal development)

The six essential components are being implemented according to the needs identified by staff, parents, and students at each junior high school. Each junior high school has a building level middle school steering committee in place to oversee the implementation process. Time lines for the implementation of various middle level features are decided upon at each building level and are based upon resources available, staffing

allocations, readiness of staff and parent support.

Monroe Junior High has implemented the first middle level transition. The school has focused on advisor/advisee program and interdisciplinary teams. King Science Center at Mann is implementing middle level components of interdisciplinary teams, advisor/advisee, exploratory program, curriculum and articulation steps. Next fall, Lewis and Clark and Bryan Junior will have an advisor/advisee program. Marrs Junior High will have interdisciplinary teams in the fall and advisor/advisee in spring. Hale, Beveridge, and Bryan Junior will implement interdisciplinary teams at the beginning of 1991-92. Morton and McMillan will implement cooperative learning and teaching strategies. Norris Junior High has not stated when their transition plan will be incorporated.

Scheduling is a means for accomplishing middle school objectives. Effective middle school scheduling can be based on four criteria, first, team organization, second, grouping based on

students needs, third, advisor program, and fourth, exploration.

First, team organization is a way of organizing teachers and students into small communities for teaching and learning. Teams are generally comprised of from two to five teachers who represent varies subject areas, but also share a common planning period to prepare for the teaching of a common set of students. These teachers also share a common block schedule and adjacent classrooms (Erb, Doda, 1989).

Second, grouping of students are based on the needs of the student and not solely on the bases of his age. A student is placed in a certain group for a specific subject matter area or areas, based on his or her previous background in the area (Toepfer, 1990). This grouping allows students to be subgrouped in a variety of arrangements. They can be selfcontained, placed in small groups for remedial help, or meet together for large group instruction.

Third, an advisor is assigned to every student. Every teacher is assigned a small group

of students to meet on a daily basic to discuss topics important to students. Advisors handle all matters relating to their students' personal development, tutoring, discipline, and reports to parents (Fibkins, 1985). Advisors are there to help the students realize that someone is looking out for their interest and needs.

Fourth, exploratory programs address needs resulting from intellectual, emotional, social, biological or physiological changes. These programs provide opportunities for participation in activities that interest students, (Bloomer, 1986).

At a time when youth's horizons are expanding, their vision broadening, and their curiosity heightened, middle schools need to expand with these youth's horizons. A German philosopher Goethe, once stated, "Whatever you can do, or dream you can, begin it. Boldness has genius, power, and magic in it." (Lounsbury, 1990). Restructuring of middle schools using scheduling criteria, is one way of reaching those horizons.

Statement of the Problem

Is there a significant difference in the importance middle school administrators, teachers, and school counselors attach to the four criteria (team organization, grouping of students on their needs, advisor programs, and exploratory programs) of scheduling to middle schools.

Hypothesis

There is no significant difference in the importance middle school administrators, teachers, and school counselors attach to the four criteria (team organization, grouping of students on their needs, advisor programs, and exploratory programs) of scheduling to middle schools.

Methodology

A survey instrument was developed to measure the importance middle school administrators, teachers, and school counselors attach to the four criteria (team organization, grouping of students on their needs, advisor programs, and exploratory programs) of scheduling to middle schools.

Delimitations

The results of this study will be generalized to the administrators and staff in the Omaha metropolitan area.

Assumptions

Middle school administrators are aware of the scheduling criteria needed for middle school success, but do not incorporate all of these criteria. Criteria selection is based upon the needs of their schools, usually team organization and/or advisor/advisee programs.

Definition of Terms

Middle School. Any grade combination 5-9 and youngsters 10-14 years old.

Transecence. The stage of development which begins prior to the onset of puberty and extends through the early stages of adolescence.

Departmentalized. Subject matter orientation.

Interdisciplinary Teams. Two or more teachers representing two or more subject area disciplines responsible for all of the instruction of the same group of students.

Team Planning. Planning time for interdisciplinary team members, conducted on a daily basis to plan lessons and discuss students concerns and needs.

Advisor/Advisee. A teacher who is assigned a small group of students to meet on a daily basic to discuss topics important to students.

Exploratory Programs. Opportunities for participation in activities that will expand student interest.

Block Scheduling. Academic teachers meet together for a specific block of time with their student group.

Team organization. A way of organizing teachers and students into small communities for teaching and learning. Teams incorporate interdisciplinary teams, team planning, and block scheduling.

CHAPTER TWO

Review of Related Literature

Middle school can be best described as having all educational efforts, programs and grade organizations for students between elementary and high school. This level deals with all combinations of grades 5 through 9 for youngsters between 10 and 14 years of age. The organization and program in a middle school are arranged for students who are no longer children and not quite adolescents.

The years 10 to 14 are the ages in which young adolescents will experience the worst and the best of times in their development. These are the "prime" years in which adolescents develop a value system, a behavior code and some type of self esteem (Levy, 1988). These prime years can best be termed the "transition to adolescence" or transescence. Eichhorn as cited by Toepher in his "Editorial", described transescence as:

The stage of development which begins prior to the onset of puberty and extends through

the early stages of adolescence. Since puberty
does not occur for all precisely at the same
chronological age in human development, the
transescence designation is based upon the
many physical, social, emotional and intellectual
changes that appear prior to the puberty cycle to
the time when the body gains a practical degree of
stabilization over these complex pubescent
changes. (Toepfer, Lounsbury, Arth, & Johnston,
1986).

Data now supports the evidence that young
adolescence are reaching puberty as much as two
years earlier than students did when junior high
schools were developed early in this century. As
a result adolescents need to develop their
personal-social growth while addressing their
academic needs (Sklarz, 1984).

The junior high school was established eighty
years ago in an attempt to provide a transitional
school experience between the educational
environments of the elementary and high schools
(Bondi, 1977). Today most junior high schools are
a mirror image of the high schools,

interscholastic sports and a social system that is
highly "active". We should not assume that
introducing high school intellectual challenges at
the junior high school is better for these young
adolescence. Most adolescence at this age
function at a concrete operational level and
cannot master the ability for abstract thinking
(Toepfer, 1988).

The effectiveness of middle schools depends
upon their response to the developmental needs and
characteristics of students at this age. Todays
adolescence faces many serious problems that
affect their character development. Among these
are youth suicide, dissolution of personality and
a continued change in the support system in their
lives, outside of school. Hodgkinson's, as cited
by Toepfer in his article " What to Know About
Adolescents", states that in 1955, 60 percent of
American families consisted of a working father, a
mother staying at home with two or more
school-aged children, while in 1985, 5 percent of
American families consisted of a working father, a
mother staying at home with two or more

school-aged children. Middle schools need to be student centered, with features in team organizations, exploratory curriculum, activities programs, student advisors, and most importantly staffed with enthusiastic teachers (Toepfer, 1988). Middle schools provide these adolescent with the important characteristics of the A B C's - activity, belonging, and challenge.

One major challenge facing educators is how to provide young adolescents with the social and emotional support they need to succeed as students. As young adolescents strive for their independence, as they tangle with their own behavior and make important choices, what is needed is for close caring adult guidance and supervision.

This transition is ominous: students will have to adjust to a new school, moving from a self-contained classes to departmentalized classes; moving from one classroom to another with only five minutes between classes; making decisions to go to their lockers, rest rooms, and/or stop and visit their friends between

classes (Weldy, 1990) . Students will have to deal with new friends, decide to share, participate, and/or collaborate with their peers and with significant adults as well. Students will also have to decide what their relationship will be to their parents, friends, teachers, other adults and in general boys and girls (Epstein, 1990).

In comparing and contrasting the differences between middle school and junior high school, four areas of concern will be discussed: first, student centered verses curriculum centered; second, team organizations verses departmentalized; third, advancement of student based on developmental verses curriculum requirements; lastly, advisors verses subject matter instructors.

First, middle schools help to develop a more responsive support system for transescences. Middle schools provide an educational setting that is student centered (Alexander, 1988). The adults in the school are very student oriented. They are interested in the students personal lives, and often ask if they have ideas for how to do things.

They do not put students down and avoid giving homework on weekends when big social events are schedule. They realize that school is not the only aspect in the transecence life (Beane, 1986). The entire school is arranged to accommodate the range of student development. Competition is reduced and cooperation is encouraged, which in turn helps the transescence reach his or her maximum potential both socially and academically.

In contrast the junior high school has the major function of dealing first with the curriculum, making sure that each transescence has a good understanding of the course work. It does not take into account the transescence social and developmental needs, but is accentuate the understanding of the major components of the subject matter. These teachers do not have enough time to deal with any other issues.

Second, middle schools that have a team organization create an atmosphere of a more effective school because the teachers are on a team that can plan units which will enable students to make connections between ideas in

different curriculums. For example, four teachers might share responsibility for 150 students. Because they share this responsibility, teachers on a team may be able to better respond to their social and developmental needs (MacIver, 1990). The instruction can be more effective because of increased collaboration and coordination across subjects and courses (George, 1982). The benefits of team organizations is that teachers receive social support and understanding from team members, instruction can be more effective because of increased coordination across subjects and courses, students problems can be recognized and solved effectively, and students identify with the team, develop team spirit, and improve both their work and attitudes.

In contrast the junior high schools that are departmentalized are more likely to adopt a "subject matter orientation" that emphasizes knowledge expertise (Middle School Report, 1987). The subjects are the centerpiece in education, it is the best education for all students (Beane, 1990). Such an emphasis interferes with the

development of close, trusting relationships between students and teachers. Students change teachers every period (six or seven times a day), which limits their time in seeking help when problems arise. Schools that are departmentalized, limit teachers contact time with students because of the large number of students that they have to deal with each day. The junior high school is structured on a seven period day with one teacher plan period. The teacher will see on the average 25-30 students per period, dealing with over 180 students. Teachers who are departmentalized deal with curriculum planning as a task that requires orderly and careful thinking. They deal with specify objective, selected learning activities, organize learning activities and specify evaluation procedures (Johnston, Markle, 1986). Their contact time with students who need help with their social and developmental needs is very limited.

Third, middle schools advancement of students are based on the developmental needs of the student at his or her level, so that both the

least mature and most mature students are challenged (Bloomer, 1986). Middle school teachers share the same students and the responsibility for instruction those students and often discuss the needs of these students. The resulting discussion produces increase knowledge of students as both persons and learners and increases more responsive instructional management (Erb, Doda, 1989). Teachers understand the nature of the student at their level so as to assess students needs and provide experiences to meet those diverse needs (Maynard, 1986). On some days social or emotional needs may take priority over intellectual achievements. Middle schools have been effective because of their adaptability and flexibility (Jung, Guinn, 1990).

In contrast junior high schedules are organized in an almost totally departmentalized manner, allowing advancement of students based on mastery of concepts and skills. Students must meet the required classroom standards of each academic class before they are allowed to precede to the next grade level.

Lastly, middle schools have attempted to bridge the gap between the elementary and the high school by using small-groups. These programs have been labeled homebase, advisor-advisee, or small group guidance. Basically this program consist of assigning every teacher to a small non-academic group of students which would meet as a group for some scheduled part of the school day. In this group, the teacher serves as the advisor, school expert, and an effective social and developmental guide for each child in the group (George, Lawerence, 1982).

In contrast the junior high school teacher structures their classroom to deal with subject matter. Once students have been placed into this environment, teachers tend to "teach to the group" rather than to individuals (Johnston, Markle, 1986). Teachers at this level focus on goals, content, and activities. Teachers plan activities that will fill available instructional time. They select from conveniently available sources, such as teacher's editions of textbooks or curriculum

guides, those activities that they believe will engage student attention (Brown, 1988).

In junior high scheduling there are three areas of importance, first, teacher planning, second, departmentalization, and third, grouping of students by age and individual teacher planning.

First, teachers have on the average one plan period a day to be used to plan for their area of concentration. The teacher uses this plan period to deal with specify objectives, selected learning activities, organize learning activities and specify evaluation procedures to be used in the classroom (Johnston, Markle, 1986).

Second, most junior high schools are departmentalized, core (language arts/english, history), math, science, reading/literature, foreign language, special education, and non-academic classes (art, music, p.e., home ec., industrial art, and band) in which teachers see between 25-30 students over a seven/eight period day. Teachers are assigned students by what type of courses they teach and how many slots are

available for that course. The junior high schedule is limited in flexibility, for there are only so many periods in a day with X amount of teachers to serve X amount of students.

Third, students are assigned to the various teachers on the bases of their ability and age. The various factors that affect that assignment are the size and mix of student enrollment, the expertise of the staff, the available space and instructional materials, and the regulations affecting curriculum requirements and allocation of time (Braddock, 1990).

Middle school scheduling can be based on 4 areas, first, team organizations, second, grouping based on students needs, third, advisor program, and fourth, exploration.

First, team organization is a way of organizing teachers and students into small communities for teaching and learning. Teams are generally comprised of from two to five teachers who represent varies subject areas, but also share a common planning period to prepare for the teaching of a common set of students. These

teachers also share a common block schedule and adjacent classrooms (Erb, Doda, 1989).

Second, grouping of students is based on the needs of the student and not solely on the basic of his age. A student is placed in a certain group for a specific subject matter area or areas, based on his or her previous background in the area (Toepfer, 1990). This grouping allows students to be subgrouped in a variety of arrangements. They can be selfcontained, placed in small groups for remedial help, or meet together for large group instruction.

Third, an advisor is assigned to every student. Every teacher is assigned a small group of students to meet on a daily basic to discuss topics important to students. Advisors handle all matters relating to their students' personal development, tutoring, discipline, and reports to parents (Fibkins, 1985). Advisors are there to help the students realize that someone is looking out for their interest and needs.

Fourth, exploratory programs address needs resulting from intellectual, emotional, social,

biological or physiological changes. These programs provide opportunities for participation in activities that interest students (Bloomer, 1986).

In conclusion, when schools are converted from junior highs to middle schools, there are often noticeable effects. It has been found that discipline referrals were cut in half, and attendance and achievement improved slightly, attitudes toward school was better for all grades of the middle school. Adjustment to the middle school was accomplished more quickly than adjustment to the junior high.

Good junior highs and middle schools do share some common characteristics. First, schedules and teaching assignments are made to accommodate individual student needs to learn a subject or skill. Second, students need regular access to competent adult advice. Third, the entire school is arranged to accommodate the range of student development. Lastly, adults in the school are knowledgeable about and committed to the growth of the student who is in transition to adolescence.

With respect to a middle school scheduling the literature reveals that the following criteria are important: team organizations, grouping based on the needs of students, an advisor program, and an exploratory program.

CHAPTER THREE

Methodology

The purpose of this study is to identify the importance middle school administrators, teachers, and school counselors attach to the four criteria (team organization, grouping of students based on their needs, advisor programs, and exploratory programs) of scheduling in middle schools.

It was determined that this study could best be developed with the use of a questionnaire. The development of the questionnaire was derived from interviews from various administrators in the Omaha Public Schools and review of current literature.

The questionnaire consisted of 21 questions. Seven dealt with team organization, six dealt with grouping of students based on their needs, four dealt with advisory programs, and four dealt with exploratory questions (Appendix A). All 21 questions required a Likert-type response. Administrators, counselors, and teachers were asked to respond to those questions with 1 (Very Unimportant), 2 (Somewhat Unimportant), 3

Unimportant), 2 (Somewhat Unimportant), 3 (Somewhat Important), and 4 (Very Important). Statements that were made in contrast with the positions of the authors of reviewed literature were weighed in reverse manner 1-4/4-1.

The cover letter briefly explained the project and the purpose. Three cover letters were developed, the first cover letter was sent to selected administrator, counselors, and teachers from school districts outside the Omaha Public Schools and included a return self addressed stamped envelope. The participant's in the survey were asked to return the questionnaire via U.S. mail. (Appendix B). The second cover letter was sent to selected administrator, counselors, and teachers within the Omaha Public School district and they were asked to return questionnaire via school mail. (Appendix C). The third cover letter was sent to selected administrator, counselors, and teachers within Beveridge Jr High and they were asked to return questionnaire via the mailbox. (Appendix D).

The size of the group to be involved in this study was determined to be representative of the administrators, counselors, and teachers in the Omaha Metropolitian area. Names were selected from the 1990-1991 Nebraska Education Directory. Twenty schools within six school districts in the metropolitan area where selected to be involved. Two schools from Bellevue, one school from Elkhorn, four schools from Millard, two schools from Papillian/LaVista, one school from Ralston, and ten schools from Omaha Public School District (OPS). The questionnaire was administered to two administrators, two counselors, and four teachers from each building, for a total of 159 participates (Marrs from OPS only listed one counselor). To determine who was selected from each building the following procedure was incorporated:

1. All principals were automatically selected.

2. If more than one assistant principal was listed a random flip of a coin was used, heads, the first administrator listed was

selected, tails, the second administrator
was selected.

3. If more than two counselors were listed,
   a random flip of a dime, nickel, and penny
   were used. The first counselor was the
   dime, the second counselor was a nickel,
   and the third counselor was a penny.
   A flip of all three coins was done at the
   same time to determine heads or tails.
   The odd coin out was the counselor not
   selected.

4. Teachers were selected using a systematic
   random sampling process initiated with a
   pencil drop. The mark made on the book
   was the first teacher selected and
   counting down, every fifth teacher after
   that was also selected until there was a
   total of four teachers.

Eighty of the questionnaires were sent via
U.S. Mail which included a return self addressed
stamped envelope to five school districts outside
of Omaha Public Schools, seventy of the
questionnaires were sent by Omaha Public School

mail system, and eight questionnaires were placed in the mailboxes of selected staff at Beveridge Jr High. All questionnaires were sent out February 17, 1991. A return date of February 28, 1991, was chosen for a two-week completion and return date.

CHAPTER FOUR

Presentation and Analysis of Data

The purpose of this study was to determine is there a significant difference in the importance middle school administrators, teachers, and school counselors attach to the four criteria (team organization, grouping of students on their needs, advisor programs, and exploratory programs) of scheduling to middle schools.

In order to determine the importance middle school administrators, teachers, and school counselors attach to the four criteria of scheduling to middle schools, a questionnaire was used to provide the data which consisted of 21 questions. The questionnaire was sent to 159 middle school administrators, teachers, and school counselors. A total of 110 questionnaires were returned, of which 24/40 were from middle school administrators, 54/80 were from teachers, and 32/39 were from counselors.

The data which were derived from the questionnaire are listed in Table I.

Table I

Analysis of Data from Questionnaire

	Administrators	t-score	Counselors	t-score	Teachers	t-score	Administrators **
Team Organization	N = 24 M = 19.5 SD = 3.08	.43	N = 32 M = 19.83 SD = 2.43	1.95	N = 54 M = 21 SD = 3.02	2.00*	N = 24 M = 19.5 SD = 3.08
Advisory programs	N = 24 M = 12.08 SD = 2.06	.64	N = 32 M = 11.73 SD = 2.00	.64	N = 54 M = 11.41 SD = 2.57	1.77	N = 24 M = 12.08 SD = 2.06
Grouping of students on their needs	N = 24 M = 15.19 SD = 1.61	.92	N = 32 M = 14.78 SD = 1.83	.98	N = 54 M = 15.91 SD = 2.07	1.67	N = 24 M = 15.19 SD = 1.61
Exploratory programs	N = 24 M = 11.42 SD = 1.98	.19	N = 32 M = 11.52 SD = 2.06	1.49	N = 54 M = 11.06 SD = 1.88	.77	N = 24 M = 11.42 SD = 1.98

* $P < .05$

** Administrators ratings are shown twice for the purpose of clarification of t-test score comparisons.

The questionnaire was directly related to the
following four criteria of scheduling to middle
schools:

<u>Criteria One</u>: Team organization of scheduling
to middle schools.

Questions:

2. A teacher should be responsible for a
single subject.

5. Team teachers should have a shared
planning time during the school day.

10. Teachers should have an active role in
the planning of the school schedule.

13. Teachers should be involved on the
assignment of students to teams.

16. Team teachers should have a shared
planning time at the end of the school
day.

18. Teachers should assist administrators in
creating a schools schedule.

21. Team teachers should have a shared
planning time at the beginning of the
school day.

Measurement from a t-test score, a score of
.43 indicate there is no significant difference in
the importance middle school administrators and
school counselors attach to team organization of
scheduling to middle schools. Measurement from a
t-test score, a score of 1.95 indicate there is no
significant difference in the importance school
counselors and teachers attach to team
organization of scheduling to middle schools.
Measurement from a t-test score, a score of 2.0,
which is P < .05 indicate there is a significant
difference in the importance middle school
administrators and teachers attach to team
organization of scheduling to middle schools.

Criteria Two: Grouping of students on their
needs of scheduling to middle
schools.

Questions:

3. Homogeneous grouping based on achievement
levels should be the primary consideration
in the placement of students.

7. Students should be scheduled with the same
student group throughout the school day.

9. Heterogeneous grouping based on ability
   levels should be the primary consideration
   in the placement of students.

11. Homogeneous grouping based on ability
    level should be the primary consideration
    in the placement of students.

15. Heterogeneous grouping based on the
    achievement levels should be the primary
    consideration in the placement of
    students.

17. Students should be scheduled with
    different student groups throughout
    the school day.

Measurement from a t-test score, a score of
.64 indicate there is no significant difference in
the importance middle school administrators and
school counselors attach to grouping of students
on their needs of scheduling to middle schools.
Measurement from a t-test score, a score of .64
indicate there is no significant difference in the
importance school counselors and teachers attach
to grouping of students on their needs of
scheduling to middle schools. Measurement from a

t-test score, a score of 1.77 indicate there is no significant difference in the importance middle school administrators and teachers attach to grouping of students on their needs of scheduling to middle schools.

Criteria Three: Advisor program of scheduling
                to middle schools.
Questions:

1. Students should have quarterly contact with an advisor.

4. Students should have daily contact with an advisor.

8. Teachers should advise the same students throughout their Middle School years.

20. Students should have weekly contact with an advisor.

Measurement from a t-test score, a score of .92 indicate there is no significant difference in the importance middle school administrators and school counselors attach to advisor program of scheduling to middle schools. Measurement from a t-test score, a score of .98 indicate there is no significant difference in the importance school

counselors and teachers attach to advisor program
of scheduling to middle schools. Measurement from
a t-test score, a score of 1.67 indicate there is
no significant difference in the importance middle
school administrators and teachers attach to
advisor program of scheduling to middle schools.

Criteria Four: Exploratory program of scheduling
                 to middle schools.
Questions:

    6. Exploratory curriculum experiences should
       be a student elective.

    12. Exploratory curriculum experiences should
        be mandated for all students.

    14. Exploratory curriculum should be
        scheduled quarterly.

    19. Exploratory curriculum should be
        scheduled weekly.

Measurement from a t-test score, a score of
.19 indicate there is no significant difference in
the importance middle school administrators and
school counselors attach to exploratory program of
scheduling to middle schools. Measurement from a
t-test score, a score of 1.49 indicate there is no

significant difference in the importance school
counselors and teachers attach to exploratory
program of scheduling to middle schools.
Measurement from a t-test score, a score of .77
indicate there is no significant difference in the
importance middle school administrators and
teachers attach to exploratory program of
scheduling to middle schools.

CHAPTER FIVE

Summary, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Summary

The purpose of this study was to evaluate if there was a significant difference in the importance middle school administrators, teachers, and school counselors attach to the four criteria (team organization, grouping of students on their needs, advisor programs, and exploratory programs) regarding scheduling in middle schools.

As a procedural method a questionnaire was sent to middle school administrators (24/40), teachers (54/80), and school counselors (32/39) within the metropolitan area. This questionnaire consisted of 21 questions. These questions were directly related to the four criteria.

Conclusions

There was a strong agreement among middle school administrators, teachers, and school counselors that the following criteria are important: team organization, grouping based on needs of students, an advisor program, and an exploratory program of middle school scheduling.

There was only one criteria in which there was a significant difference at the P < .05 level. Middle school teachers rated team organization significantly more important than administrators rated it. This difference might imply that administrators are reluctant to decentralize the area of team organization and teachers tend to want more involvement in the team organization process.

While the differences were not significant at the P < .05 level in the following areas. Teachers also attached greater importance to the team organizations and grouping of students on their needs than school counselors. Middle school administrators have a greater interest in the area of advisory programs than teachers and/or school counselors. School counselors have a greater interest in the area of exploratory programs than middle school administrators and/or teachers.

Recommendations

In order for any organization to be successful it takes good team work. For middle level education to succeed, it needs middle school administrators, school counselors, and teachers who openly discuss the mission and goals of their building. In education many times the decisions regarding the running of programs are made from the top down. This type of decision making process needs to change so that decisions are made by all the participates involved. A decentralization process is needed so that the participates all have a shared responsibility in the development of a positive school climate.

More workshops are needed on middle level education at the district level to help better educate all persons who are affected by middle level education.

One aspect of scheduling which is crucial if a middle school is going to be successful is team planning time. There is a direct correlation between the utilization of team planning time and the success of the instructional program. Almost

all that happens in a team teaching situation results from plans developed during this team planning period. More emphasis needs to be placed on team planning time.

Heterogenous grouping by ability levels should be a major focus of scheduling. Tracking needs to be kept to a minimum.

Exploratory programs need to go beyond just Art, Music, P.E., etc. . Some high interest areas for students need to be added.

Advisory programs are usually facilitated by untrained personnel. More emphasis needs to be placed on training of teachers and administrators as advisors.

Further research in the area of middle school organization is needed, particularly with respect to staffing, appropriate curriculum selection, and scheduling.

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Survey on Middle School Scheduling

School Name_____

Level: elementary_____ middle_____ junior high_____

senior high_____ other_____

Grade level: 5-6-7_____ 6-7-8_____ 7-8-9_____ 5-6_____ 6-7_____ 7-8_____

Student population_____

Staff size_____

Staff assignment: administrator_____ counselor_____ teacher_____

Instructions: In order to secure a better understanding of the relevance of scheduling to the effective operation of middle schools, will you please answer the following questions and check the extent that the questions are important or unimportant to your program.

	Very Unimportant 1	Somewhat Unimportant 2	Somewhat Important 3	Very Important 4
1. Students should have quarterly contact with an advisor.				
2. A teacher should be responsible for a single subject.				
3. Homogeneous grouping based on achievement levels should be the primary consideration in the placement of students.				
4. Students should have daily contact with an advisor.				
5. Team teachers should have a shared planning time during the school day.				
6. Exploratory curriculum experiences should be a student elective.				
7. Students should be scheduled with the same student group throughout the school day.				

(CONTINUE ON THE OTHER SIDE)

	Very Unimportant 1	Somewhat Unimportant 2	Somewhat Important 3	Very Important 4
8. Teachers should advise the same students throughout their Middle School years.				
9. Heterogeneous grouping based on ability levels should be the primary consideration in the placement of students.				
10. Teachers should have an active role in the planning of the school schedule.				
11. Homogeneous grouping based on ability level should be the primary consideration in the placement of students.				
12. Exploratory curriculum experiences should be mandated for all students.				
13. Teachers should be involved on the assignment of students to teams.				
14. Exploratory curriculum should be scheduled quarterly.				
15. Heterogeneous grouping based on the achievement levels should be the primary considerations in the placement of students.				
16. Team teachers should have a shared planning time at the end of the school day.				
17. Students should be scheduled with different student groups throughout the school day.				
18. Teachers should assist administrators in creating a schools schedule.				
19. Exploratory curriculum should be scheduled weekly.				
20. Students should have weekly contact with an advisor.				
21. Team teachers should have a shared planning time at the beginning of the school day.				

APPENDIX B

Dear Colleague:

Enclosed find a questionnaire which is being randomly sent to administrators, counselors, and teachers within the metropolitan area. The questionnaire addresses staffs perceptions of scheduling for middle schools.

I am using this project as the culminating activity for completion of a specialist degree in educational administration at the University of Nebraska at Omaha. I would like to thank you in advance for taking the ten or fifteen minutes to complete this form. Please use the self-addressed stamped envelope enclosed to return the questionnaire to me by February 28, 1991.

Please be assured that individual responses will be kept confidential and that only group statistics will be used in this study. Each questionnaire has been assigned a code number for the sole purpose of keeping track of which quesionnaire have or have not been returned. This will also make it possible to replace questionnaires that may be misplaced or lost.

Thanks for your help and cooperation.

                    Sincerely,

                    Larry Cusic
                    Beveridge Jr. High School
                    Teacher
                    Omaha Public School
                    District

APPENDIX C

Dear Colleague:

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I am using this project as the culminating activity for completion of a specialist degree in educational administration at the University of Nebraska at Omaha. I would like to thank you in advance for taking the ten or fifteen minutes to complete this form. Please return the questionnaire via school mail to Larry Cusic, Beveridge Jr High by February 28, 1991.

Please be assured that individual responses will be kept confidential and that only group statistics will be used in this study. Each questionnaire has been assigned a code number for the sole purpose of keeping track of which quesionnaire have or have not been returned. This will also make it possible to replace questionnaires that may be misplaced or lost.

Thanks for your help and cooperation.

Sincerely,

Larry Cusic
Beveridge Jr. High School
Teacher
Omaha Public School
District

APPENDIX D

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Thanks for your help and cooperation.

Sincerely,

Larry Cusic
Beveridge Jr. High School
Teacher
Omaha Public School
District