

Academics Committee Agenda
August 10, 2020
10:00 A.M.-11:00 A.M.

Zoom Link

<https://zoom.us/j/92208152590>

Members: Michelle Kurkoski, Maggie Burggraaff, Tom Johnston, Joell Pundsack, Emily Graveen, Cheri Howe, Hannah Kostichka, ~~Noah Langseth~~, Teresa Ward, Kirstin Knutson, Tara Richert, Noelle Haland, Kassie Larson, Wendell Sletten, John Gawarecki, Jennifer Heydt-Nelson, Angie Haverland, Rob Krueger, Jennifer Bartle

1. Orientation Update (Tom) 3 minutes

Tom is meeting with the 6th grade team this week. They have no connection with the school at this point. This will coincide with their material pickup. On Friday, August 28th hopefully something can be scheduled. Whatever they can do safely, they will come up with a plan. Hopefully we can utilize our outdoor space for some fun activities. We have access to neoprene gloves for outdoor games.

- Can we ask our MSA community to volunteer canopies, in case it is rainy?
- There was a car parade for the seniors. Something like this could be implemented for all grades. Even if not all teachers have these students, we can show that we are MSA strong and that we are here for all the students.
- Rob is hoping we are intentional about creating relationships that day. Parents need this. Ask for volunteers and would like to see as many 6th grade teachers there as possible.
- Joell reminded us we have new 7th, 8th, and 9th graders, too.

2. Open House update (Shannon)

This is being planned. Shannon shared an email with the staff regarding this meeting and the upcoming plans. There will be paper bags for every student. It is the teacher's responsibility to get any materials into these bags. Everything needs to be in bags by the 25th. Student computers are part of this pickup.

Pick up is spread out over a 3 day period (9-12 on Wednesday, August 26; 7-8 on Thursday, August 27th; 6 on Friday, August 28).

Teachers received a survey about what might need to go into the bags. Department heads should remind their departments this needs to be completed by Wednesday this week.

Jen is concerned about having enough room in a bag for some of her courses/students. This may require more than one bag for each student...could it be a large garbage bag? She could have large items for pickup.

After these dates, specialized pickups may be needed if some supplies are not ready at this time. Different teachers/courses may need pickups throughout the semester.

There will be school pictures on these days as well. Shannon and Carrie are planning this.

3. Enrollment update (Joell) 3 minutes

We are at capacity for each grade level except 12th.
For the 11th grade, we have had three juniors withdraw. For the current totals, we have four full time PSEO, fourteen part-time PSEO, and ten juniors are undecided about PSEO. That means we could have ½ of the junior class PSEO. This could impact funding
All other grades are currently at capacity.

4. Scheduling update (Joell) 5 minutes

Scheduling is almost finished. There have been a lot of changes, but Joell says we are ready for a hybrid scenario with the schedule.

5. Fall 2020 Update (John) 20 minutes

a. What about rigor for next year and how it balances with our mission and vision?

Grade level teams are recommended in order to build this year's curriculum regarding last spring's emergency distance learning.

We need committees for responsiveness to follow MDE requirements.

b. What is still needed? Where does AC fit in (part of the Committee required based on MDE document?)

The equity group met last Friday. They plan to learn what families need from MSA. These questions will be gauged over surveys and based on what occurs at the supply pickup days. We will collect information as we proceed. The social-emotional group may need to overlap with this group.

- Will the parent survey go out through the communications committee? Tom will touch base with Cheri about this.

- Will MSA survey the students?

- Yes. However, we do not want to ask too many things too many times. We need to figure out the most streamlined way. This should be coordinated with the Communications Committee.

- Teacher and parent surveys are required by MDE.

- We should let the MSA community know that these surveys will be implemented once a month. A process for this will need to be developed by the Communications Committee.

- Do we need to build a new committee for COVID and responsibility planning or do we keep that in the Academics Committee?

- There seems to be a lot of overlap between the two. This is mandated by MDE. As a team these need to be coordinated with data from our community. This should be assembled by the admin, but maybe we should be included because the Academics Committee incorporates WBWF.

- Noelle is interested in being the liaison between these groups.

c. Lunch times (Tom and Joell)

For our Distance Learning plan, everyone has the same lunch break: 12:15-12:50 (Block 1, Block 2, Lunch, Block 3, Block 4). For siblings, for parents, for teachers, and for planning purposes, this was thought to be the best idea.

Teachers can host lunches with students, other teachers, counselors, whoever. This allows for flexibility for adjusting on these days for a break time.

d. Fall survey questions

- i. EX: In distance learning, would you or your child go to MSA for a meeting, to pick up materials, or for any other reason, as long as social distancing measures are being followed?

In a survey to parents it should be asked:

- Provided MSA follows MDE/MDH guidelines, are you interested in scheduling on site IEP/504 meetings?
- Are you able to pick up materials at MSA for new materials?

We will survey to determine which families are uncomfortable with these things.

Another concern:

- If a teacher is recording a portion of the class and would like to post this content on their Google Classroom for other students to review or view, what considerations need to be made for students whose parents do not want images of them placed online?
- Is it possible to add phrasing to the media policy to make this allowable? Can there be something written about these being available only to the students in the course and not outside of MSA?

Teachers would like to keep recordings of a post. We need to address this and provide access. Without this ability to post, teachers cannot be equitable.

We need to assume there will be interruptions in service or any other number of reasons that students cannot always attend synchronous sessions. We need to be able to record lessons when necessary for equity.

e. Facilities plan questions:

- i. Are we considering having new students tour the school? Come in for a meet and greet with a small group of students? New sixth and ninth graders? Or are we strictly distance learning with no opportunities for in-person meetings?

There is a drone tour in the works. Right now there is not a plan to allow students to tour the school. The virtual tour is almost ready to be put on the website.

- Are there ways for students to be on campus in small groups to allow for other ways for students to see each other?

The BOD may need to make a motion for this.

6. What should we do about last year's goals? (Emily and John)

Last year's goals have been neutralized because we do not have the testing data to determine whether or not they were met. This is part of the updated SAM goals document that the BOD has received.

7. Any new legislation that this committee needs to be aware of? (John)

Not at this time

8. SAM Goals for 2020-2021 (John)

There is no legal aspect. The BOD needs to approve the new contract with SAM. We will not be evaluated on last year's goals because there wasn't testing.

The BOD will approve the new goals which will reset our goals moving forward.

9. WBWF Updates (Tom) 3 minutes

Tom will receive an email when these are updated by MDE. This usually arrives in September and goes to the BOD in December. Just like with SAM Goals, we do not have data to use for this report. We don't know what our plan will look like for this year yet.

10. Recruiting Diverse Staff Update (John) 2 minutes

- a. The rationale is that seeing themselves represented in our staff will make a positive impact on the academic performance of our students. I will check the curricular policies that form parts of this group's responsibilities to check further
It is important to keep everyone in the loop. We still have two positions we are hiring for (choir and special education). The language has been used based on the recommendations from this group. The job market is tight as far as applicants are concerned.

11. Merit Promotion Procedure and Electives (Tom) 10 minutes

- a. Review survey results

The majority of the MS staff felt that enrichment classes do not need to be repeated.

However, there is concern from enrichment teachers, their classes won't be taken seriously. There may be some students who will not try if they know these classes don't count. We want the effort to be there. Regardless of the courses you're in, academic probation will still be in effect.

Cheri thought the enrichment classes did not include music or art. She thought it was only for the courses MS students were put in.

There is a list of courses that MS students need to repeat if they fail. A concern for MS students needing to repeat a course is that scheduling for following years can become a nightmare. It is challenging to have students retake every-other-day classes. From a scheduling standpoint, this becomes difficult for the school. We need to think long term what scheduling could look like. Scheduling is only getting harder. Instead of having alternating days for MS classes, we have semester long courses. If we are going to repeat these classes, it is easier to schedule.

- Who's to say that we won't have a spike for next year's schedule with MS students who will need to repeat classes? Might we need more options for HS courses?
- Would it make sense to categorize an elective vs. enrichment?
- Could there be prerequisites for HS electives and courses?

We need to remember we are a school of choice.

- Whose choice is it to attend this school?
- Sometimes it is the parents who won't let those students leave. There is more to think about.

We should define what an enrichment and an elective course are.

On our Academic Agreement, the list is on there.

- Core, elective, enrichment, required, what are the terms we need to use?
- Are core and required synonymous?
- Which terms are we going to use moving forward and what category do these classes fall under?

Required, Enrichment (you are placed in these classes), Elective (you choose these classes)

- Can we just have Core and Enrichment classes?

This could make it simpler. There is some leeway in Core choices with Band, PE, and Art.

If you follow the academic agreement, it didn't make sense to repeat some of the courses listed.

- Can't we just remove Art 8 from the list?

In most middle schools, students need to take the year over for overall struggling, not just for one course. You don't need a certain amount of credits in MS. MS is about skills, not classes. Low performing peers are usually together in other MS schools.

We need to be equitable. We would end up treating transfer students differently from kids who have attended MSA. We wouldn't make a transfer student go back and retake something they failed in MS in another district. We need to be equitable. So we need to not have MS requirements.

- Why do we have repeating classes in MS? If other schools don't have to repeat classes to move on to HS, why are we? What does that do to our numbers?

Our students do take more advanced classes earlier. It doesn't have to be complicated. We can all agree the skills are important in MS for success in HS classes. We do need to have them repeat required courses.

The departments were looking at the curriculum when making the decisions about what MS classes should be repeated or not. Because we are a school of choice, we can do this. But it doesn't need to be for all MS classes.

The goal is to have wording that is clear, so we can be consistent with our answers to families. Everyone needs to hear "no" or "yes" consistently for the same issues. It should be clear, and there should be no exceptions on a case by case basis. We want kids committed to their learning.

We will take off PE 6-8, Health 7, Art 8 off of the agreements. Understanding they are still significant for skills building.

We will work on verbage and course descriptions at the next meetings.

The fall update/plan will be going out today. John will connect with Noelle to be included in the MDE required group.

Next Meeting: Will be September 14th, 8:00 A.M.