



Central Bucks Middle School Teacher Focus Group Feedback



1. What do you believe the philosophy of middle school is in Central Bucks?

- Focus on both the academics and the “whole child”
- Differentiated instruction to meet needs of all learners
- 21st century skills
- Integration between subjects
- Build a sense of community and collaboration through teaming

2. Is the current academic schedule supporting this philosophy?

What aspects promote the philosophy?

What aspects hinder the philosophy?

Promote

- 56 minute periods allow for more in-depth learning
- Advisory/Resource period supports academics
- Teaming exists in “theory” only
- Longer class periods support academic focus

Hinder

- Lack of team only planning time
- Team Meetings occur after school
- Lack of exposure to specials for students
- Travelling teachers are not part of community
- Lack of pure teams – teachers are cross-teamed & cross-grades
- 9th grade – athletics pull students toward high school
- Lack of specials’ options
- Music track students have limited exposure to other classes
- Lack of team meeting time in order to assist students during school day
- Lack of social/emotional health lessons

3. How has the additional instructional time from the previous schedule impacted your approach to instruction and assessment?

Pros

- More time for warmup and closure
- Not as rushed to deliver full lesson
- Focus on writing
- Deeper learning and instruction in class

Cons

- Too long for special education students
- Students lose focus
- Longer period = loss of team meeting time and co-teacher planning time

4. Does your current team planning time work where it is now?
If not, where do you see it fitting in?
What is an appropriate amount of time in a week for team planning?

Work now

- No

Fitting in:

- During day – 2-5 times per week
- Not after school
- Need “pure” teams
- Needed by team but not by grade

Appropriate Time

- Varied
- Every day/every other day for 45 minutes

5. Do students have enough exposure to technology instruction in the current schedule?
What specifically needs to be taught?
Is technology being utilized in a way that enhances instruction?

Exposure

- No

Specifics

- Lacking basic computer skills (Word, Excel, PowerPoint)
- Office 365
- Microsoft Suite
- Digital Citizenship
- Digital literacy

Utilized

- Teachers spending too much time teaching technology skills, not content
- Students not prepared or at different levels of technology proficiency
- Technology does not always work for teachers
- Teachers’ skill levels vary

6. Are students’ social/emotional needs being met in the current middle school schedule?
If not, how can we do this effectively?

Meeting Needs

- No

Effectively

- Team time would allow teachers to meet with students
- Resource/mentoring period
- Time for counselors to meet with students outside of academic classes
- Team meetings during day – all teachers could attend (conflicts with after school meetings)
- Counselors – run more groups and push instruction into other periods

7. Is Resource an effective use of time?

If no, how would you reallocate Resource time?

Do you feel Resource has had a positive impact on student achievement?

Can Resource be at a different time of the day—various item of the day?

Effective use & Positive Impact

- Yes

End of Day

- Answers varied
- Pro – End of day allows closure, completing assessments from earlier in day, allows Special Education teachers flexibility, athletes don't miss instruction
- Con – Challenge at end of day with athletes and students leaving early

Reallocate

- Possible if teams were "pure"
- Need to have all teachers on team with same resource

8. What is the appropriate class length for middle school?

Varied

- Teachers could work with 40 – 50 minute periods
- 9th grade could do longer blocks