



Mishawaka High School

1202 Lincoln Way E., Mishawaka, IN 46544-2798

574.254.7300 • 574.254.7481 (Fax)

George M. Marzotto, Jr.
Principal

Jerome Calderone
Associate Principal

Anita Nash
Assistant Principal

John Ross
Assistant Principal

MHS Plan submitted to the School Board to Improve the Graduation Rate

Process :

After addressing the attendance and graduation rate for three months through a process of collaboration with the entire faculty, staff, students, parents, and community members through the community input web site and numerous open agenda faculty cabinet meetings, faculty meetings, and PL221 meetings.

These strategies come after there have been months of open discussion and an important faculty/staff survey plus a student survey to address these two important issues. The administrative faculty along with the department chairpersons have met extensively not only together but also with all faculty members.

The School Business Survey was designed collaboratively by the faculty steering committee that consisted of teachers and administrators. The survey was designed to ask the hard questions about what direction MHS should take next year and the following year.

The ongoing discussions and the formulating of new changes made through the constant meetings have been taxing and many faculty, staff, students, parents, and community members deserve the credit for the formulation of the new policies and procedures. Students, parents, and community members' responses on the

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Director of Guidance

Bart Curtis
Attendance Coordinator

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Athletic Director

James Aldrich
Assistant Athletic Director

community input web site have directly influenced the revisions of the Mi-Hi Guide.

The following strategies are being proposed by the MHS administration:

According to the responses on the community web site, MHS needs to be a "student friendly" school that centers on fair and consistent enforcement of the rules and regulations in the student handbook. The parents and community members all agree that everyone at MHS should conduct themselves in a manner as to always keep the best interest of the student in mind everyday. The parents believe that students should follow all rules and regulations and be in school everyday. The community responses also pointed to the responsibility of the parents in making sure that their students did attend school on a day-to-day basis in the proper attire. The community also responded that the need for parental control of students in regards to graduation and setting goals was the most important issue.

The faculty and staff have given meaningful input into the new strategies below under the major categories of Scheduling, Instruction, Policies, Community and Parental Involvement. There were also suggestions given by the community, parents, students, and patrons under the community and parental involvement section.

Scheduling:

Class Schedule

MHS will keep block scheduling for the 2008 to 2009 school year. The faculty responses favored the block because of the need for remediation during the day schedule. The change in the schedule

to one day of meeting all classes is not practical for the 2008-2009 school year because of the time element.

The scheduling of alternative education classes during the school day will greatly assist those students that need additional time to master the basic concepts in all core subjects.

The scheduling of credit recovery classes during the regular seminar period will also assist those students that fall behind in credits during the normal school year.

Instructional:

Seminar

Introduction

MHS will restructure seminar blocks to accommodate various instructional, motivational, and other mentoring activities. There are 61 Seminars at MHS for the 2008-2009 school year. Out of these seminars, there will be 14 freshman seminars and 5 credit recovery open lab seminars. The following teachers will be involved in the credit recovery open lab classes:

- Nicole Tobey - English Lab
- John Huemmer - Business Lab
- Amy Foley - Science Lab
- Nathan Blair - History Lab
- Joe Szajko - Math Lab

The seminar teachers will be responsible for monitoring their students' attendance, academics, and discipline. Each teacher

will receive a seminar expectation handout that has been attached to this document at the start of the 2008-2009 school year.

Academics

If a student is falling behind academically, the seminar teacher will email and call the parents. If the student has missed three or more assignments then the student will be assigned by the seminar teacher to the credit recovery open lab seminar teacher to make up all class work.

There will be five credit recovery open lab seminar teachers that will be working with students that are currently failing their courses. These students will work with the lab seminar teacher and the classroom teacher to make up assignments and correct all deficiencies. The guidance department will take responsibility for coordinating and supporting teachers in utilizing the credit recovery open lab seminar period.

Seminar Supervision Schedule

Freshman Seminars:

Mr. Calderone and Dr. Marzotto will monitor the Freshman Seminars.

Mr. Bart Curtis will monitor the Sophomore Seminars

Ms. Anita Nash will monitor the Junior Seminars.

Junior Seminars:

Mr. John Ross Will monitor the Senior Seminars.

Senior Seminars:

Such supervision of seminar block will include but not be limited to:

- Assisting in the assurance that seminar time is being utilized for its intended purpose (academic assistance,

credit recovery, and conferencing with parents and teachers)

- Assisting in the student/adult mentoring programs
- Assisting in the development of motivational programs for students
- Assisting in the monitoring of the seminar teacher's classroom
- Assisting in the academic/discipline conferencing with teachers, parents, and students

Seminar Period will be an instructional period at MHS. There will be instructional, motivational, mentoring activities that will take place during seminar time.

Alternative Day School

Introduction

MHS will introduce a Day Alternative Education program utilizing the existing faculty during the regular school day. The student that needs the alternative approach will be given an equal chance to succeed and graduate like all other students. These students are those that are failing academically, experiencing attendance issues, or need an alternative method of instruction.

Criteria for Student Entry into the Program

Tenth grade at-risk students with chronic attendance (truancy), discipline problems, no credits and academic failure will be considered first.

The ninth, eleventh, and twelfth graders with chronic attendance (truancy), discipline problems, and academic failure will be considered next.

Referrals to the Alternative Day School will be made through counselors and approved by administrators.

Those students who are suspended for five or more days will be reviewed for possible inclusion in the Alternative Day School program. The day alternative school teacher will collect student assignments from regular day school teachers. Goals of the Alternative Day School program include but are not limited to:

- Direct contact with parents regarding attendance and discipline
- Parents will sign an agreement for the student to be admitted to the program
- Academic progress of such students will be monitored by the Alternative Day School teacher
- To enable students to be integrated back to their general high school program

Schedule for the Day Alternative Education Program

7:50 - 9:30	Prep
9:37 -11:07	1 st Block
11:14 -1:21	2 nd Block
1:28 - 3:00	3 rd Block
3:00 - 3:30	Coordination

Schedule for the Night Alternative Education Program

1:30 - 3:00	Prep
3:00 - 5:00	1 st Block
5:00 - 7:00	2 nd Block
7:00 - 9:00	3 rd Block

The night school program will continue under the direction of the teacher. The night school hours would remain the same and

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the students would be in the same program that is in place today.

*See the attached Flow Charts for Day and Night School as described in the District Alternative Education Plan.

Communications with faculty, staff, students, and parents indicate the need to deliver more hands-on based instruction. An example of this approach will be evident with the introduction of the new PLTW Project Lead the Way class entitled Principles of Engineering.

The introduction of extended Media Center hours to ensure that all students have the opportunity to use the Media Center and the computers that are housed there is being recommended by the MHS Administrative staff. The need for students to be able to conduct research, utilize materials, and complete assignments for their classes is imperative.

Freshman Academy 2008-2009

Introduction

The Freshman Academy will have a different structure beginning with the 2008-2009 school year. First, there will be four teams of teachers (each consisting of English, math, and science teachers) that will have approximately 100 plus students. Last year there were five teams of teachers. The Academy teachers will have a common preparation period and will share a common group of students (an exception may exist in that each team may have a few students that do not have all of the team's teachers due to individual student scheduling needs).

Freshman Teams

The four freshmen academy teams will meet prior to the end of the school year to discuss the importance of the process, team meetings, team parent conferences, and the use of instructional planning periods. The teams will also discuss the study skills program that will be available to each academy teacher to use with their students. There will be two student mentors that will be assigned to each Freshman Seminar block.

Freshmen Seminars

Freshmen classroom teachers will communicate with seminar teachers the assignments that students must make up during seminar time.

Adult mentors from central office will be assigned to freshmen student(s) at MHS contributing to academic success.

Two MHS administrators will be assigned to the Freshman Academy to monitor students regarding their academics, attendance, and discipline.

Guidance Department Proposal for Counselor Interventions

John Young has identified eighth grade students who are at risk of not graduating from Mishawaka High School. All of these students will require special attention from their counselor to graduate on time. We propose the following action:

- Maintain current division of students amongst counselors.
- Counselors will make face to face contact with the parents of at-risk students prior to the 08/09 school year to prepare a graduation plan, develop rapport and an open line of communication. (At JYMS, MHS or at a neutral location.)
- At-risk students will be placed in one of three seminar classes.

- One counselor and two mentors will be assigned to each of the at-risk freshman seminar classes in addition to the teacher. (The seminar class will be their home for seminar.)
- Seminar will be used to teach study skills, life skills, time management, college/career planning. (Seminar teacher, counselors and mentors responsible) Specific needs of students may be handled individually or in small groups. Classroom copies of A Teens' Game Plan for Life, by Lou Holtz will be purchased for the freshman class and will be used in seminar for sustained silent reading. Discussion will follow in all classrooms.
- Counselors will continue to monitor the progress of all freshmen by regular communication with teachers, students and parents.
- Counselors will fold Career Pathways education into freshman class programming, lending relevance to their coursework.
- Freshman faculty members and counselors will develop a Freshman Speaker Series. Community members with selected careers/interests/causes will address the freshman class throughout the school year to inspire and motivate our kids.
- Seminar may become a class for credit. Participation will be rewarded with a grade and credit that counts toward graduation. (Course title: Career Information and Exploration)

Parent Teacher Communication

The freshman class will be divided in half with an administrator assigned to each group; such administrators will be responsible for communication with parents of students experiencing difficulty with academics, attendance, and/or discipline. Parent conferences will be scheduled as needed. An organizational meeting will be held prior to the end of this school year.

New Policies:

Grade Scale

MHS will support a change to the grading scale:

A=100-90, B=89-80, C=79-70, D=69-60, F=59 and below.

Tardy Policy

MHS will appropriately discipline anyone that violates the school's tardy policy. Any student that violates the tardy policy will be allowed to recover academically from tardiness by being assigned to credit recovery during their seminar period.

Absences

MHS would ensure that students absent for any reason have an opportunity to make up work they have missed.

Make up work related to an Unexcused Absence

If a student violates the attendance policy or other rules of the school s/he will be disciplined appropriately for the misconduct, but his/her grades should be based upon what the student can demonstrate s/he has learned. MHS student grades in any course should be based on his/her performance in the instructional setting and the grade should not be reduced for any reason of conduct.

Acceptance of Late Work

MHS would ensure that students absent for any reason have an opportunity to make up work they have missed. Such work will be for reduce credit per individual teacher policy; however but under no circumstance less than 50% of the score on the assignment or assessment.

Graduation Credits

Students at MHS will have to earn 40 credits in the areas required by the state to graduate from MHS.

Expanded Course Offerings

In an effort to provide additional opportunities, MHS will pursue additional vocational courses, service learning opportunities, and internship programs.

Community and Parental Involvement:

MHS faculty and staff will strive to increase and strengthen community and parental involvement. Currently the school hosts an open house, parent academic assistance nights, and parent conferences as requested by parents and teachers. MHS will explore the possibility of school-wide parent/teacher conferences and developing community mentoring/tutoring programs.

Summary:

The school improvement process will be enhanced by the personalization of the classroom and the seminar block at MHS through the utilization of these new strategies. Building personal relationships between teacher and student is the key to academic success in the classroom. By making the above suggestions a reality, the faculty, administration and staff will provide the kind of atmosphere that is conducive to learning.

This plan represents the key components that have been discussed with faculty, staff, students, parents, and community over the course of many months. We believe that these strategies will increase the opportunity for student success at MHS. These

strategies also support the academic goals included in our AdvancEd school improvement plan.

We will continue to develop, monitor, and evaluate the effectiveness of these strategies throughout the course of the 2008-2009 school year.

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