

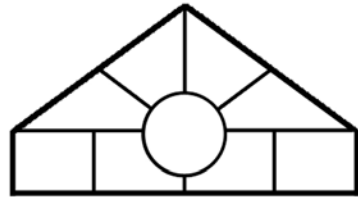


HADLEY NEW HORIZONS (HNH):

HNH is a comprehensive organizational improvement effort to enhance the Hadley experience for students, parents and staff. The work began in summer of 2007 and has involved many staff members as well as parents.

Those of us who have participated in this project are confident in the recommendations and optimistic about the future of Hadley New Horizons. We wish to thank the Board of Education and the Administration for providing the setting, support, time and resources that allowed us to delve deeply, dream productively, plan innovatively and collaborate resourcefully. We especially thank middle school expert and consultant Dr. Ron Williamson, who facilitated and supported our work with skill, constancy and wisdom.

January, 2009



HADLEY NEW HORIZONS

Working together to meet the needs of our middle level learners

“Change is the law of life. And those who look only to the past or present are certain to miss the future.”

– John F. Kennedy



HNH Recommendations

- Mission and Beliefs Statement
- The big picture
- Timeline of HNH work
- Recommendations: Exploratory, Time/Organization, Respectful Relationships, Teaming, School-Home Communication
- Next steps



This presentation is accompanied by several informational pieces:

- A summary pamphlet
- A timeline of HNH work
- A description of choice courses
- A bibliography of research used in crafting the recommendations.

Past issues of "HNHnews" are posted on d41.org.



Mission

The purpose of Hadley Junior High School is to prepare our students intellectually and emotionally for their high school years and the future by providing a safe and supportive learning environment that meets the unique needs of our adolescent learners, while developing respectful relationships among students, staff, families and community.

Adopted by the Hadley staff in October, 2007



Beliefs

- We believe and understand middle level learners display wide ranges of physical, cognitive, emotional, and social development, and as a middle level school, we respond by providing developmentally-appropriate learning opportunities, strategies, and activities.
- We believe and understand middle level learners need healthy relationships with peers, staff, family, and community as they strive for independence, and as a middle level school, we respond by creating a welcoming and encouraging learning environment, which enhances and broadens meaningful student/adult interactions.
- We believe and understand middle level learners need opportunities that are academically challenging and personally meaningful and relevant, and as a middle level school, we respond by providing a standards-based curriculum with flexibility in our instructional approaches and our organization of the school and the school day.
- We believe and understand middle level learners need to explore individual interests, and as a middle level school, we respond by encouraging and supporting students in embracing change, taking academic risks, pursuing new skills, assuming new roles, and expressing creativity.

Adopted by the Hadley staff in October, 2007



The Big Picture—ideas and priorities

As the Hadley Mission Statement says, we prepare our students intellectually and emotionally for high school

- Focus on learning—keep students in class
- Deliver the best instruction
- Offer combination of requirement and choice
- Help develop and sustain positive adult-student and peer connections
- Create a climate that fosters social and emotional health and success among students



Timeline of the HNH work

- **Spring 2007 through today:**
 - Mission and Beliefs adopted
 - Program evaluations conducted
 - Study Groups research best practices in middle-level education as they create recommendations
 - HNH communicates and gathers feedback along the way
 - Curriculum developed for new courses
 - Academic Support class implemented
- **January 2009:**
 - Recommendations go to Board for its consideration/action
- **Fall 2009 and forward:**
 - Begin implementation, evaluation and adjustments using a continuous improvement approach
 - Continue study on some concepts for possible future recommendations
 - Bring a continuous improvement approach to continued evaluation and adjustment of implementations



RECOMMENDATION HIGHLIGHTS

These research-based recommendations work together to elevate the Hadley experience. They provide more focus and rigor in the fundamentals, offer more courses designed to engage and delight the middle-level learner, and offer social-emotional programs and structures that support students and allow them to confidently navigate their environment. Finally, something as dry as a schedule turns out to be a key piece; by using a flexible schedule, we can create the framework needed to bring these improvements to our school.



RECOMMENDATION HIGHLIGHTS

Exploratory and Core Extensions for 2009-10

Courses were developed to align with learning standards, authentically meet student interests, and provide them with appropriate choice in some of what they study.

- Exploratory courses include topics currently offered, plus instrumental music, performing arts, fine arts, academic support and a range of subjects from investing to military history to Lego robotics
- Some courses are required, some are highly recommended to eligible students and some are purely choice
- Students and parents will have staff support in choosing their preferences and in the registration process



RECOMMENDATION HIGHLIGHTS

Time and organization (2009-10)

A more flexible schedule allows us to achieve HNH goals of meeting student academic, social and emotional needs

- Schedule created using 15-minute scheduling blocks
- Priorities are 90-minute uninterrupted Literacy block and 60-minute Math block—15 minutes longer than before
- Maximize learning time
- No change recommended to Hadley's start/end time



RECOMMENDATION HIGHLIGHTS

Respectful Relationships

These recommendations are intended to develop and sustain positive connections between adults and students through current and new school structures and processes. Hadley is a big school; these programs create identity, connections and a smaller home base from which students can branch out. We want to foster confident, happy students who are able to learn well.

Under study for the future

- ENCORE (**Encouraging Relationships)**
- Houses
- Some Looping from seventh to eighth grade
- Mentoring



RECOMMENDATION HIGHLIGHTS

Respectful Relationships cont'd

Some definitions:

- ENCORE is a semi-formal, interest-based program that fosters connections between staff and students around common interests. Not exactly classes, not exactly clubs, but flexible opportunities for students and staff to get to know each other and learn from each other.
- Houses are smaller organizational structures that will include one team each of 6th, 7th, and 8th graders learning in proximity. There will be structured programs that leverage these connections. Students connect with other ages outside of school—Houses will help them connect inside school in appropriate, respectful ways.



RECOMMENDATION HIGHLIGHTS

Respectful Relationships cont'd

Some definitions:

- 7-8 Looping: Teachers would be invited to loop, not required to loop. This means a 7th grade teacher will teach his or her students the next year in 8th grade before starting the cycle again. Advantages are that teachers and students know each other, understand each other's style and gain a deeper connection learning together over two years.
- Mentoring: Teachers would be trained to mentor students in a flexible way tailored to student needs. Eventually, peer mentoring could be implemented as well.



RECOMMENDATION HIGHLIGHTS

Effective Teaming

Staff interaction focused on meeting learner needs

- Importance of team expectations, common beliefs and goals (2009-2010)
- Role of Team Leader (under study)



RECOMMENDATION HIGHLIGHTS

School-Home Communication

Ensuring that communication between Hadley and its families, and involvement of Hadley parents supports the Hadley Mission and student learning

- Study Group is meeting in February to develop its recommendation.



Next Steps

- Continued communication to staff, parents and students
- Course selection, registration
- Scheduling, teacher assignment
- Continue study/planning for looping, houses, ENCORE, etc.
- Support the change process
- Post-implementation study, data-collection and adjustment consistent with our continuous improvement approach

You may email questions/comments to horizons@d41.org



Conclusion

Our goal is to provide the best education we can to our middle-level learners.

The HNH systemic improvement effort focuses on the students, the school climate and culture, our staff and our parent community.

We envision a unified school community that fosters academic, social and emotional achievement, that supports learning and teaching, and that is built on respect for each other and our goals.



*“We know what we are, but know not what we may be.”
–William Shakespeare*

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