



HNH Steering Committee members

Karen Carlson
Chris Dransoff
Diane Fanning
Heidi Fitch
Cheryl Hagerty
Heidi Hann
Kim Hefner
Michelle Kasper
Gia Kunkel
Deb Lunsford
Erin Moroni
Barb Oczkowicz
Julie Odom
Ann Riebock
Carol Van Gorp
Emmah Welsh
Ron Williamson
Julie Worthen

Many other teachers, staff members and parents are involved in Hadley New Horizons. The Steering Committee was established to help unify the work and guide communication around it.

Welcoming your questions about **HNH**

*As the Hadley New Horizons work continues to progress, I've been receiving a number of questions from parents of current Hadley students, and from those whose children will attend Hadley in the years to come. To make it easier and more convenient to get your questions answered, or just to offer your perspectives, we've set up a dedicated email account for HNH: horizons@d41.org. We will make every effort to ensure that you receive an answer within a day or two. This is Issue #3 of **HNHnews**, and our hope is that regular communications like this one, along with easy email access, will help everyone stay informed as the HNH work evolves.*

—Chris Dransoff, Principal of Hadley Junior High

HNH background

If you are just tuning in, HNH is an organizational improvement effort for Hadley that began over the summer. Faculty, support staff, administrators and parents are working in study groups facilitated by middle school expert Dr. Ron Williamson on the topics of: Mission, Exploratory Programs, Time and Organization, Respectful Relationships, Home-School Communication, and Team Functioning. The groups are working to create recommendations for consideration for the 2009-2010 school year, although there will be some moderate adjustments for the 2008-2009 school year.

Meeting the needs of middle level learners

The goal is to improve the Hadley experience—academic, social and emotional—for all our students. Guiding principles are that recommendations need to spring from an understanding of what the research tells us works with this age group, and that support a healthy school culture. Recommendations should respect the fundamental importance of instructional time and strive to support a cohesive, productive school day that provides the setting in which all students can succeed.

About Band and Orchestra

Hadley is justifiably proud of its Band and Orchestra, which has won many awards and honors. HNH is committed to maintaining this high quality in our Band and Orchestra programs. While the details of scheduling lessons and rehearsals are yet to be worked out, the proposal under review by the steering committee allows for:

- Ability-based instruction so that students progress at their own rate and perform at the appropriate level.
- A combination of whole-group practice and individual/small-group instruction.

Send your questions/comments to: horizons@d41.org

- Scheduling Band and Orchestra as classes that are part of the school day rather than pulling students from other classes to participate in these programs. This is a common approach used by many fine middle school programs. Students who elect Band or Orchestra would have that as an Exploratory choice for the whole year.

Changes for next year—2008-2009

- Schedule the Language Arts instructional block to minimize teachers sharing rooms so that students receive the whole 90-minute block in the same room with the same teacher.
- Treat math separately from the team; this allows more flexibility in scheduling to extend instructional time and better serve learning needs. Students from more than one team may be in the same math class.
- Restructure Large Group to provide Academic Support for students who are performing below grade level in Math and Language Arts.

Changes under review for 2009-2010

- **Adjust start/dismissal times.** Hadley has a later start and dismissal time than most middle schools in its conference, and students and coaches often must leave school early in order to participate in inter-scholastic competitions. Shifting the school day one-half hour earlier would allow students to participate in these competitions without losing instructional time. An earlier dismissal time may also allow expanded after-school opportunities for students. Survey feedback on this idea will be sought from parents and staff.
- **Exploratory and "Core Extensions."** The current Exploratory program would be adjusted to offer courses that better align with best practices in instruction and with student interests. Core Extension classes would be added that relate to the core curriculum and provide some degree of choice to students who are achieving at or above grade level and who have room in their class schedule. Survey feedback on possible course offerings will be sought from parents, students and staff.
- **New schedule at Hadley.** The HNH Time and Organization group believes that some streamlining can be done with the schedule/room assignments that will allow greater instructional time for Math and reduce the time spent in passing periods. The proposed schedule also allows for some potential blocking of time in other content areas. This is in addition to the greater consistency in implementing the Language Arts Block that will occur in 2008-2009.
- **Zero-hour option.** Seventh graders who elect both a year of foreign language and a year-long performing music course would have one quarter of health/physical education at zero hour, meaning before the start of the regular school day. The HNH group thought this was preferable to the alternative, which would be that these students would not have PE during the quarter in which they have their required Health class. The HNH group will explore additional zero hour opportunities down the road, feeling that this may be a way to provide more choice opportunities to those students who have elected Band or Orchestra as a year-long Exploratory class.

Next Steps

The 2009-2010 recommendations are under review by the HNH Steering Committee. By sharing them at this stage, we may be inviting questions that cannot yet be answered. Other fine middle schools have dealt with similar issues and we believe we will be able to fit all the pieces together. Our consulting partner, Ron Williamson, has emphasized to us that we will doubtless have to do some adjusting as we go, as it is unrealistic to think we can anticipate every impact of change. We hope that by sharing information and welcoming your input and questions, we can work together to make HNH a successful and systemic improvement effort.

HADLEY TERMS

Academic Support: A class that will be introduced in 2008-2009 in place of Large Group for those students who are performing below grade level in Math and/or Language Arts. A curriculum will be written for this class.

Core curriculum: Math, Language Arts, Science, and Social Science.

Core Extensions: Classes that HNH is proposing for 2009-2010 that would be based in the core curriculum and further develop aspects of it.

Exploratory: A rotation of courses at Hadley that provide exposure to the arts, life skills, foreign language, communication, technology, and health.

Guided Study: An interim step to replace Large Group next year only for those students who are not in Academic Support. In 2009-2010, Guided Study will be replaced by Core Extensions.

LA Block: Language Arts is taught in a 90-minute block, ideally meaning that students have LA instruction in this discipline in the same room with the same teacher. Part of the HNH work is to make sure this block is delivered as intended.

Large Group: Large Group provides a semi-structured setting for activities and study. All sixth-grade students have Large Group. Seventh and eighth grade students who have not elected to take Foreign Language also have Large Group. Large Group will be replaced by Academic Support and Guided Study in 2008-2009.

Teams: Hadley students are organized into teams. The teams have their core classes together and strive for a sense of unity and identity. The teams have the effect of making Hadley a "smaller" environment by reducing the number of teachers and students the children interact with on a daily basis.