

Sedgefield Middle School Transition Planning Update - March 2018



Upcoming Events

May 3– 6 PM

Community Session for Families
that will be attending SMS in
2019-2020

The Sedgefield Middle School Transition Team, composed of parents from the Sedgefield neighborhood, Myers Park Traditional walk zone, Sedgefield Middle School and Sedgefield, Dilworth, and Eastover elementary schools, has been working with school and district leaders throughout the 2017-2018 school year to plan and give feedback into the student assignment changes for the 2019-2020 school year. The Transition Team met with community members, collected questions and feedback related to the 2019-2020 Sedgefield Middle School assignment changes and summarized them in a document entitled the “Target State Document.”

CMS’ responses are given below. Each bullet represents a question or request raised by the community in the “Target State Document,” and each sub-bullet represents progress made to date and/or the district’s current best thinking.

Planning for the 2019-2020 school year continues.

Curriculum Offerings and Course Levels

- Provide math and literacy courses placing students according to a published rubric into four course levels: Honors, Advanced (Honors curriculum taught at a comparatively slower pace with additional support in a smaller classroom setting), Standard, Foundations (the “Core Course Levels”).
 - Currently, SMS offers four levels of the core courses. A handbook outlining the core and elective classes is being developed. This will be available online by May 1st and distributed at the next community session. It will provide an overview of the curriculum and expectations for levels of the core courses.
- Provide a minimum of four Core Course Levels per grade, including Math 1 for qualified seventh graders, exceeding the weighted student staffing allocation during the Transition Years when necessary.
 - In addition to the information above, Math 1 for seventh-graders and Math 2 for eighth-graders will be available for those students who need and qualify for that level of classwork. All courses at SMS will be staffed to meet the number and needs of the students. Additionally, the level of rigor of the courses will be aligned with the rigor of the same courses at other CMS middle schools, including AGMS, Randolph, Piedmont, McClintock, etc. Students will have the opportunity to participate in a core course that they would have had the opportunity to take at their previously assigned school.
- Provide a full range of non-leveled electives geared toward student interest and cultivation of multiple intelligences, exceeding the weighted student-staffing allocation during the Transition Years when necessary.
 - The curriculum handbook outlines the current course offerings (art, dance, foreign language, band, orchestra, Project Lead the Way are examples). These offerings are reviewed and adjusted each year based on student interest. School leaders begin the process of curriculum review at the beginning of the second semester of the 2018-19 school year for the start of the 2019-20 school year.

- Determine and implement actions required to expand the School Leadership Team beginning in the 2018-2019 school year to include parent representation from new feeder pattern in order to benefit from collective input on the School Improvement Plan for the 2019-2020 school year.
 - Currently, the SMS Transition Team is collaborating with the SMS PTO. State regulations regarding School Leadership Teams indicate that members must be current parents within the school. We will continue to work with the SMS Transition Team to include parent representatives from the new feeder elementary schools, and ensure opportunities for this team to collaborate and coordinate with the current PTO and SLT.

Teaching, Administrative, and Professional Staff

- Assess data from current fourth-grade students across all 2019-2020 feeder schools to predict staffing needs based on expected achievement levels of incoming student population.
 - The 2016-2017 end-of-year data for the current fourth grade students has been analyzed (third grade EOG and TRC). We will also analyze end of year data for the fourth grade class in June. This data, along with staffing allotments, will help plan and assess additional staffing needs.
- Maintain administrative staff and add where necessary to support both existing and incoming students beginning in 2018-2019, during the transition years and beyond (ELL support, grade-level guidance counselors, parent advocates, Communities in Schools site coordinators, Academic Facilitators).
 - Mr. Turner has been meeting with staff and discussing their intentions for 2018-2019 and beyond. We are working together to assess the needed supports for the years of transition based on student data. When staffing allocations are received in March, the information from the analysis of student needs will be used to determine appropriate staff assignments. The needs of the students will be utilized to determine the number as well as types of staffing supports. Staffing will match the level of cores courses to provide students with the opportunity to participate in classes that they would have had the opportunity to take at their previously assigned school. This process will continue each year between the school administrative team and district office.
- Ensure SMS staff has experience and certifications that are appropriate for teaching students in each of the four Core Course Levels and electives.
 - Teaching experience and expertise is continually evaluated. Mr. Turner has secured support to enable the entire sixth grade team to participate in the College of William & Mary training which provides strategies and techniques for teaching gifted students. The following link provides information about the Summer Institute for William & Mary Gifted Professional Development - [William & Mary Information](#). Additionally, Mr. Turner works with the Human Resources Department to identify highly qualified, licensed candidates to fill vacancies. He implemented a rigorous process for hiring that includes a demonstration of teaching students.
- Empower the SMS principal with freedom and flexibility in staffing decisions including the ability to deviate from standard policies and practices.
 - Principals work with human resource team leaders and learning community leaders to ensure staff assignments are appropriately assigned based on needs within the school.
- Provide funding for diversity training for incoming and current teachers and staff.
 - Funds have been secured for the staff to participate in cultural proficiency training. The plan is to have the school staff from SMS, Alexander Graham Middle School (AGMS) and Myers Park High School (MPHS) participate in this training together.

- Provide additional professional-development budget for individual and faculty-wide training, including new teachers as identified by principal in advance of the start of the 2019-2020 school year, in order to equip SMS teachers with preparation equal to that of their peers across all CMS middle schools.
 - Funds have been secured for SMS staff to participate in William & Mary Training. All sixth grade teachers and the administrative team will be trained during the summer of 2018. Additionally, SMS administration, facilitators, and teachers have worked with teams from the middle schools in the Central Learning Community (AGMS, Piedmont, Randolph, and McClintock) to conduct school visits, participate in Instructional Leadership Team Training (facilitated by Mr. Turner and the principal of Piedmont IB), and professional learning in the Central Learning Community Leadership Meetings.
- Provide funding for professional development in instructional scaffolding and other academic support techniques to facilitate student achievement and upward movement in the Core Course Levels.
 - SMS staff members have participated in AVID (Advancement Via Individual Determination) training, as well as Instructional Leadership Team development (ILT), Instructional Planning Approach (IPA) for planning lessons and assessments, and Reading Apprenticeship training supplied by the district. Additionally, William & Mary Training focused on strategies for the gifted learner will be provided during the summer of 2018 for all sixth grade staff and the administrative team. The Advanced Studies Department has been instrumental in supporting the AVID and William & Mary training for the school. This support will continue during the transition.
- Maintain Title 1 status to continue faculty support for the student population that will remain at SMS during the transition years.
 - The district annually evaluates its poverty data as required by law. After ranking all schools in order of poverty from the highest to lowest, the district, with Board approval, sets the served poverty threshold for the upcoming school year. If a school is currently in Title I status in the current school year and does not meet the district's served poverty threshold for the upcoming school year, the school is grandfathered for one year. All Title I schools, regardless of regular or grandfather status, receive a Title I allotment that is based on the number of identified students in poverty and a per-pupil allotment of funds derived from the annual planning allotment that the district receives. The caveat for a Title I school in grandfather status is its spending must be limited to non-inventoried items (e.g. tutorial services, professional development, contracted services, online subscriptions, consumable materials and supplies, positions, etc.). If schools qualify for Title I status in the subsequent year after grandfather status, they remain fully Title I for that year. If they do not meet the district's threshold the subsequent year, they are no longer a Title I school and will no longer receive an allocation of Title I funds.
- Continue to provide English Language Learners (ELL) services for the significant number of students who need them and will remain at SMS during the transition years.
 - ELL services are based on the number and needs of students within the school. The services are reviewed every year to ensure that the students receive the necessary supports.

Facilities and Technology

The response for the bullets below have been combined and provided after the last bullet.

- Evaluate building structure and resources (computer equipment, science labs, media center, dramatic and media art facilities, gym and athletic fields) and identify action items and funding needed to ensure they are comprehensive, up to date and reasonably equivalent to those at AG.

- Evaluate facility security measures (e.g., cameras, locks, etc.) and identify action items and funding needed to ensure they are comprehensive, up to date and in compliance with CMS policy.
- Request feedback from SMS staff and administration on needed maintenance, improvements and repairs, with such feedback being provided not later than December 1, 2017.
- Perform necessary maintenance and improvements, and prioritize repairs to be completed in a timely manner (e.g., SMS cafeteria roof is severely leaking, school gym needs repairs).
 - Walks and inventories of the facility by both the Operations and Technology teams were requested. The Operations Team walked the facility with Mr. Turner in October 2017. Work on the identified projects started immediately after the facility walk. Between October 1, 2017 and March 16, 2018, 341 of 357 work orders have been completed. The remaining 16 work orders are in process, and new requests are submitted as needed.
 - The Technology Team walk should be completed before spring break.

Bell Schedule and Transportation

The response for the bullets below have been combined and provided after the fourth bullet.

- Dialogue with incoming and existing families and facilitate discussions with CMS Transportation regarding change to bell schedule in school year 2018-2019 to a range between 8-8:30 am and 3-3:30 pm, instead of 9:15 am-4:15 pm, with a commitment by the May 3, 2108 community meeting.
- Bus: Utilize creative solutions to minimize the time students spend physically on the bus
- This change offers a variety of distinct benefits, primary among them teacher recruitment. In addition, an earlier bell schedule:
 - Increases compatibility with elementary feeder schools' bell schedules,
 - Allows for additional time and flexibility for afterschool activities, which gives opportunity for student/parent involvement, promotes positive school culture and increase school spirit/pride,
 - Attracts students and families who participate in a variety of extracurricular activities, and
 - Accommodates the complex schedules of families with students at both AG and SMS during the Transition Years.
- Bus: Utilize creative solutions to minimize the time students spend on the bus
 - Transportation schedules for the 2018-2019 school year have been established. Feedback from the SMS Transition Team regarding the bell schedule and transportation has been shared. Personnel changes within the Transportation Team will provide the district with an opportunity to review current routing strategies for the entire district. The bell schedule change request for the 2019-20 school year will be a priority to review when the new leader of Transportation is onboard. Bell schedule decisions for the following school year are made before the start of the first round of the school options lottery.
- Walkers: Evaluate and update walker zone to accommodate walkers from Dilworth.
- Carpool: Explore possible solutions with SMS and CMS leadership to address the anticipated increase in volume of carpool riders, evaluating facility limitations and neighborhood traffic patterns; increase accessibility for carpool riders coming from First Ward, Barringer, Dilworth and Eastover.
- Stakeholder Involvement:
 - Collaborate with CMS transportation to anticipate problems and implement realistic solutions.
 - Invite current and future SMS families to participate in the transportation evaluation and planning process.
 - Engage with CDOT to evaluate additional school crossings in walker zones from nearby neighborhoods (e.g., Charlotte Drive and Park Road in front of the Famous Toastery).

- The concerns regarding the walker zone as well as traffic pattern within the community and around the school have been shared with the Operations Team. The Operations Team is composed of members of the Facilities and School Safety Department. The School Safety Department assist with traffic patterns for carpool, walkers, and buses on school campuses.

Student Culture/Building Community

- Partner with CMS family and community engagement representatives and local thought leaders to facilitate a series of visioning and community building sessions to unite the community in positive support of the school.
 - CMS Community Engagement representatives have been involved with the PTO and Mr. Turner. This team will continue to provide support throughout this process. Existing school partners are committed to continuing their support of SMS.
- Offer cultural-competency workshops to interested families and students, especially those who actively volunteer at SMS or plan to in the future.
 - CMS staff is working to schedule opportunities for families and students in advance of the 2019-2020 school year. For example, SMS is planning to host a sixth grade orientation before the first day of school. Additionally, Mr. Turner and his team intentionally assign sixth-grade students to a separate section of the building away from seventh and eighth grade students.
- Elevate and publicize SMS school traditions and build upon them to establish a sense of pride and ownership with all children in SMS.
- Identify SMS alumni and additional local business partners to support school traditions and community building opportunities.
- Ensure minimum disruption for existing students who will continue at SMS.
 - Mr. Turner will work with the school team, PTO, SLT, and Transition Team to publicize events and points of pride, conduct tours, coffees and community sessions, as well as work to unite those who will remain at SMS with those who will be new.
- Continue to separate the sixth grade class from the older classes, as with AG and other CMS middle schools, for a self-contained experience that will ease the transition into middle school.
 - This is already a practice in place within the school. The sixth grade classes have their own wing and there is a separate bell schedule to ensure transitions are at different times from the older grades.
- Provide administrative and faculty support of community building activities, such as dances, tailgates, school “picnics,” and opportunities for offsite field trips.
 - Administration and faculty are present at activities, events, field trips, etc.

Athletics and Extracurricular Activity

The response for the bullets below have been combined and after the last bullet.

- Move SMS to same sports conference as AG to accommodate new bell schedule, to foster familiarity and community with other middle schools that will be feeding to Myers Park High School, and to accommodate families that will have children at both AG and SMS.
 - There are currently four middle school leagues. These are developed based on enrollment in an attempt to promote competitiveness of contests, and on location in order to minimize travel times. All middle school contests begin after 5:00 pm regardless of bell

schedule. Middle School conference alignments will be examined moving into the 2018-2019 school year. This request has been submitted to the CMS Athletics Department and a decision will be made by the end of the current school year.

- Ensure that SMS athletic program is reasonably equivalent to that at AG with regards to sports offered and athletic facilities.
 - The Middle School athletics offered at SMS are the same as AGMS. The following link provides information about CMS as well as SMS athletics - [SMS Athletic Page](#).
- Offer club sports similar to those available at AG (lacrosse), including offerings for sixth graders.
 - Soccer and tennis clubs are currently offered at SMS and additional offerings will be based on student interests (i.e., lacrosse). Schools are also expected to adhere to requirements established by CMS.
- Support formation of athletic booster club.
 - SMS would welcome the formation of a booster club to support its athletic program. Booster clubs are formed at the school under the leadership of the school principal. The district athletics department and the school athletics department should not have involvement with the development of, supervision of, operation of booster clubs, particularly the handling of monies of the school booster club. The school athletic director (AD) should have a working relationship with the club, but cannot be an officer of the club. The AD would work with the booster club board to communicate athletics needs/wants that the club might support and fund.
- Based on student interest, provide administrative and faculty support for the formation of and participation in additional extracurricular activities (Odyssey of the Mind, Robotics, Yearbook,) both during and after school.
 - Extracurricular activities are in place in the school and outlined in the handbook for parents. Any clubs not yet in existence but desired by students can be formed through collaboration with staff, administration, PTO, SLT, and Booster club.

Additional Information

The following documents can be found on the CMSListens.org site:

1. Project Planning Overview
2. Detailed Project Plan that includes timelines and updates with project completion