

BVPAGE Meeting 1/11/18 PM

Board members: Jeannie, Heidi, Amy, Christy

District attendees: Kristin Asquith, Shelly Nielson

Attendance including board members: 29

## Announcements

### I. Upcoming Meetings and Events

- a. Next Meeting on February 1st - MEETING CHANGE - **Suicide Prevention in Blue Valley Schools**, presented by: Emily Demo and Jacquelyn Johnson (Blue Valley Psychologists) and Kristi Dixon, Allyson DiNitto, and Tara Walrod (Blue Valley Counselors)
  - i. Students today face complex life situations that can be challenging to manage, so it is important for parents to know the signs to watch for when a student is in distress. School psychologists and counselors from Blue Valley schools will share information about the signs of suicide ideation and what to do when you are worried about your child. They will also review the suicide prevention practices and activities that occur in schools.
- b. Summer Opportunity Fair, February 28<sup>th</sup> at Hilltop from 7pm to 8:30pm
  - i. **BVPAGE connects vendors offering gifted and high ability summer camps and programs with students and families in a single location.** Drop in to visit with vendors and get information about offerings. To find out more about volunteering, visit the Volunteer section of BVPAGE.org. To suggest a vendor, contact the Summer Opportunities Chair.
- c. Brain Blizzard - Trivia event for 7th and 8th Grade students - on March 3<sup>rd</sup> at Scheels. Flyer will be sent home from Gifted Teachers
  - i. **Brain Blizzard is BVPAGE's Knowledge and Trivia Contest for Blue Valley 7th & 8th grade gifted students.** Kids get to know each other before high school and bragging rights are awarded to the winners. Teams and individuals welcome. To find out more about volunteering, visit our Volunteer page.
- d. Robotics Share Fair for 5th grade gifted classes - April 12th. Volunteers needed - easy volunteer day! Email Catherine Linney from the [BVPAGE contact page](#).
  - i. Blue Valley 5th grade gifted classes meet in one large group to run their robots through a variety of challenges. Kids get to know each other before middle school and have the chance to pit their robots against one another. They LOVE it! To find out more about volunteering, visit the Volunteer section of BVPAGE.org.

### II. Volunteers always welcome

- a. BVPAGE is managed and run completely by volunteers. We are always looking for people who are interested to join us. Our committees have opportunities ranging from very minimal to moderate time commitments. Take a look at our volunteer opportunities detailed on the [Get Involved page](#) at BVPAGE.org and see what sounds interesting to you!

### Meeting Topic: The Middle School Experience

- I. The Middle School Experience- Shelly Nielson Exec. Director of School Administration K-8.
  - a. There are 9 middle schools in BV. We used to be on a very traditional schedule until this year when the district rolled out changes encompassing curriculum, academics, mindset, integration, critical thinking.
    - i. Showed video- link in presentation attached
  - b. More specific changes:
    - i. Longer core time and teachers can connect lessons- used to be about 42-44 min, now it's 54-55 minutes which teachers and students have really liked. They can dig deeper.
    - ii. Flex time- 25 minutes to focus on counselor lessons, social emotional learning, intervention – during that time the kids core teachers are available for help. Guided study didn't have that availability. Still trying to have a predictable pattern to it as well.
    - iii. Now 3 elective slots instead of 2. PE is required.
      - i. In 6<sup>th</sup> grade they are either quarter or semester long (except music and world language) – so they have 12 spots to fill total for the year.
      - ii. 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> the electives are all at least a semester.
    - iv. Integration of ELA and Reading together into one class which has increased flexibility and helped stabilize class size.
    - v. Reading strategy and intervention time – applies to kids outside of special ed
    - vi. Special Ed can now be every day instead of every other
    - vii. Student Instructional Time (SIT) – can include co-teaching, more differentiated learning
  - c. Guaranteed and Viable Curriculum
  - d. Courses
    - i. 5<sup>th</sup> grade teachers will make recommendation for advanced math placement
    - ii. Some electives go across all grade levels, some don't
    - iii. If your child wants to do a language, they must enroll in 6<sup>th</sup> grade otherwise they cannot do it. They have to take the full program all three years to equal the first year of language at high school.
    - iv. Taking art all 3 years also helps you skip a level in high school. No other electives do that.
    - v. Online PE – only available in 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade – for students who have a full schedule or looking for more flexibility. It's a first semester option.

- i. They have to wear a heartrate monitor. If your kid is very physically fit and has a low heart rate, it may be hard for them to hit the weekly goals.
  - vi. Flex time
    - i. Students are assigned to a grade-level teacher, but they can access other teachers. They are still tweaking this at each school to find the best structure.
- e. IEP Services
  - i. This can happen during flex, during electives, or others. It's up to teams to decide what may be the best fit for a student.
  - ii. It may be helpful for a child to take gifted as an elective for the first semester of 6<sup>th</sup> grade to get to know the teacher and kids better before branching out. That way the teacher gets to know them much better and quicker.
- f. Interventions
- g. Student Instructional Time
- h. Intramurals
  - i. Most organized sports don't start until 7<sup>th</sup> grade so this gives kids 4-8 week chunks of sports that are more informal. How many times a week is up to the sponsor.
  - ii. Different schools offer different activities.
- i. Blended Learning and Canvas- blending face-to-face learning with technology
  - i. Starting next year 6<sup>th</sup> graders will get a Chromebook- it has filters. It is to be used as a tool, not a toy. It has insurance. 6<sup>th</sup> graders will get some training first before getting the computer.
  - ii. Canvas is used as daily gradebook, assignment calendar, and instruction as well. Parents can access. Some teachers are still learning how to use it and others are very familiar so there may not be consistency yet. There is parent training for it.
  - iii. The parent version and the student version are different, so try to get access to both.
  - iv. If families don't have internet/wifi, the district can help. They also have plans if you think you child is not capable yet of handling their own computer.
  - v. The district has ways to monitor activity that may be a red flag for issues that need to be addresses.
- j. Questions:
  - i. Can we monitor the kids' activity on the chromebook? Not right not unless it's of a serious nature.
  - ii. No phones or apple watches during school hours – only before and after school
  - iii. What is happening with executive function in schools? It's up to each school, but it's a possible focus during intervention/flex time either in a group setting or individually.