

# District 97 Middle School Master Schedule Redesign Update

Board of Education Meeting  
Feb. 11, 2025





# Middle School Schedule Redesign

February 2025

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**MS. RAHWA CASSELLE**  
MTSS MATH  
JULIAN MIDDLE SCHOOL

**ANNA KINNAMAN**  
SOCIAL SCIENCE TEACHER  
BROOKS MIDDLE SCHOOL



# 2024-25 District 97 Transformation Goals

## We Learn, Lead and Celebrate Together

Our District Culture  
ALL Employee Professional Learning

## We Design for ALL

Elementary Core Instruction Foundations  
Middle School Redesign

## We Align Resources

Master Facilities Plan  
Comprehensive Safety Plan

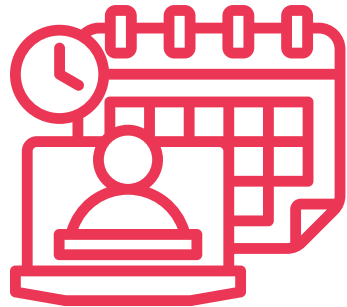
## We Learn Everywhere

Portrait of an Oak Park 8th Grade Graduate  
Early Childhood Education



# Middle School Schedule Redesign

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## Our Guiding Principles for Redesign

Guided by the Association for Middle Level Education (AMLE), D97's equity policy and Illinois State Board of Education standards, this project is based on creating a school experience that is:

- **Responsive:** Centered on students' unique needs, identities, and voices.
- **Challenging:** Setting high expectations to support each student's growth.
- **Empowering:** Providing opportunities for students to take ownership of their learning.
- **Equitable:** Ensuring inclusive, just learning opportunities for every student.
- **Engaging:** Fostering a relevant, interactive environment that motivates and inspires.



# Our Vision for Middle School Transformation

## Tier 1 Practices/Behavior Expectations

Create alignment and clarity in social, emotional, and behavioral support systems across both middle schools.

## Supportive Transitions

Ensure students are prepared for transitions to and from middle school (e.g., Middle School Connection).

## School Improvement Logic Models

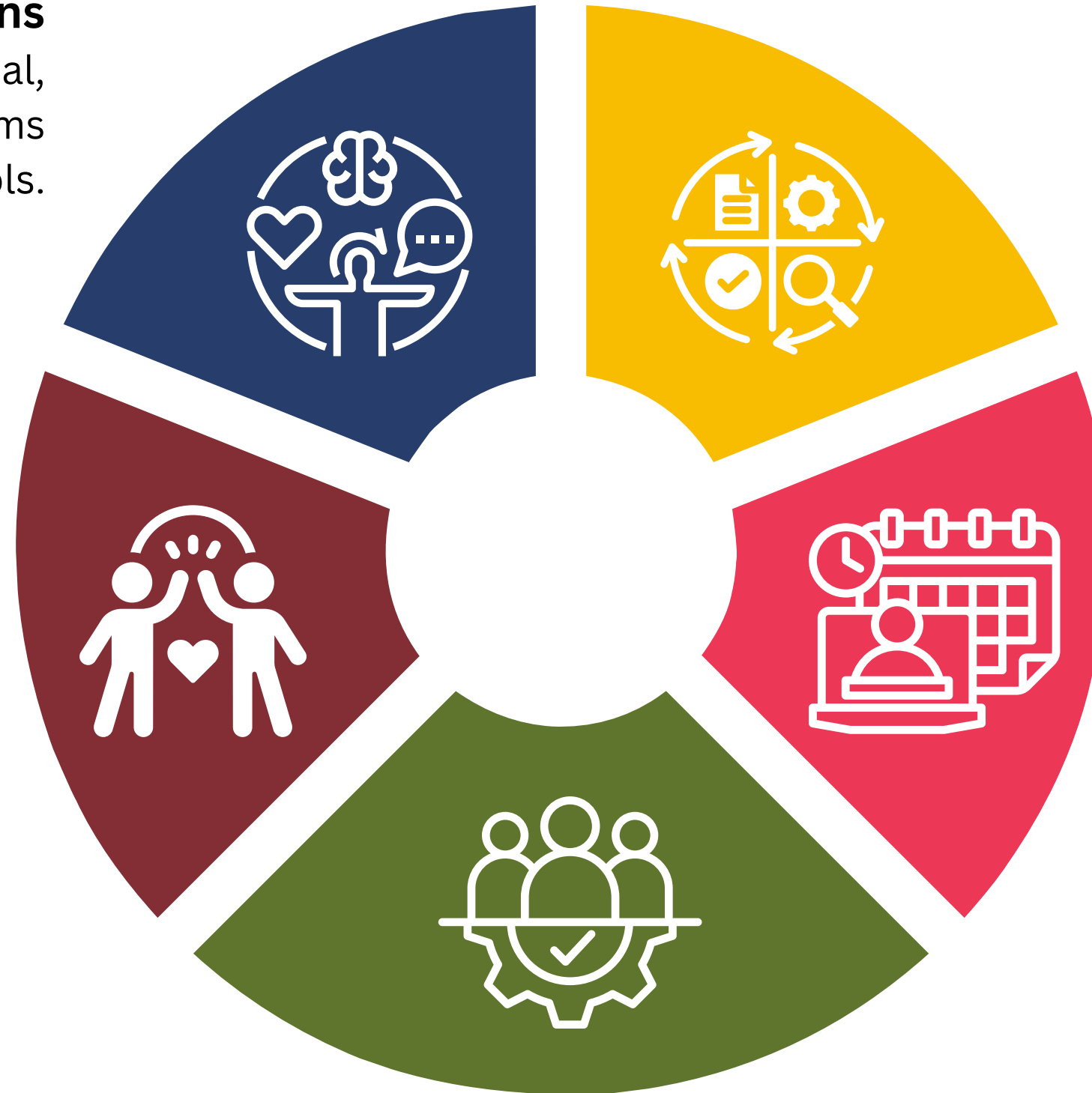
Engage school-level teams in identifying resources, adult practices, and professional learning opportunities that lead to high-quality core instructional practices.

## Schedule Redesign

Collaboratively design schedule that aligns with best practices, as well as student and staff needs.

## Staffing

Align resources to better support student success.





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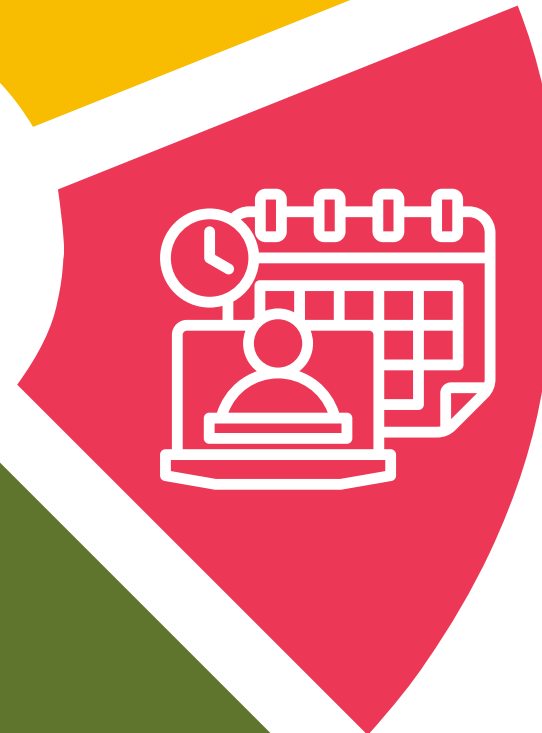
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## Staffing

Align resources to better support student success.

***Tonight's Update***





# Meet the MS Schedule Redesign Team

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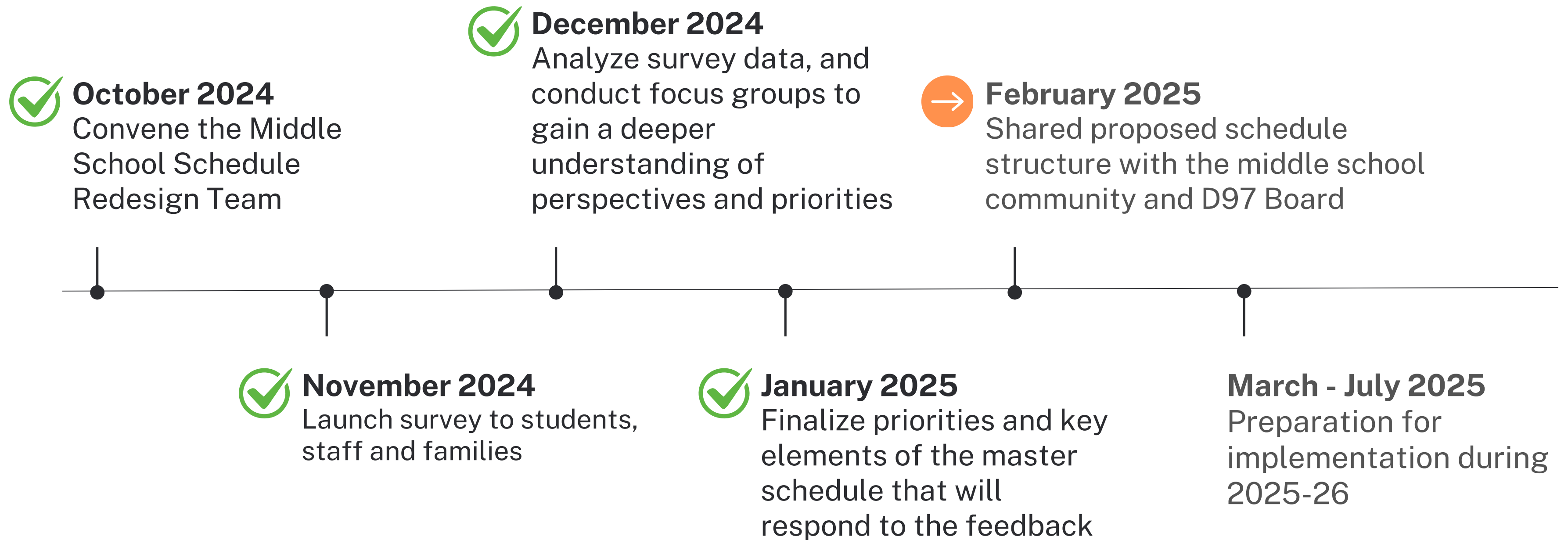
**Jen Baldassarre** - Julian ELA Teacher  
**Yael Berenson White** - MTSS Teacher  
**Abby Berman** - Social Worker  
**Cate Brinkman** - Julian PE/Health Teacher  
**Michele Capio** - Director of UDL  
**April Capuder** - Brooks Principal  
**Fernando Carrillo** - Julian/Brooks Orchestra Teacher  
**Rahwa Casselle** - Julian MTSS Teacher  
**Emilie Creehan** - Director of UDL  
**Adrienne Court** - Julian Associate Principal  
**Angelica Degante** - Brooks Multilingual Teacher  
**Dr. Luis Fernando De León** - Assistant Superintendent of Middle Schools  
**Quinn Ebert** - Brooks Math Teacher  
**Nick Filipowski** - Julian Principal  
**Dr. Dawanda Fountain** - Julian Associate Principal  
**Dr. Denise Gildon** - Brooks MS Associate Principal  
**Tracy Hamm** - Director of UDL  
**Liz Hill** - Brooks Special Education Teacher

**Katie Kelly** - Julian World Language Teacher  
**Anna Kinnaman** - Social Science Teacher  
**Dr. Tawanda Lawrence** - Senior Director of Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment  
**Casey Leiby** - K-8 Science, Social Science and Special Areas Curriculum Coordinator  
**Donna Middleton** - Senior Director of Student Services  
**Mallory Mowery** - English Language Arts Teacher  
**Jennifer Nelson** - Teacher Librarian  
**Veena Rajashekar** - 6-8 ELA/Math Curriculum Coordinator  
**Raul Reynoso** - Julian Social Science Teacher  
**Patrick Robinson** - Assistant Superintendent of Elementary Schools  
**Courtney Southward** - Julian Math Teacher  
**Laura Stamp** - Science Teacher  
**Nichelle Stigger** - Student Success Coach  
**Sergio Torres** - Julian Student Success Coach  
**Samantha Tracy** - Julian Special Education Teacher  
**Lawrence Vincenti** - Julian Science Teacher



# MS Schedule Redesign Timeline

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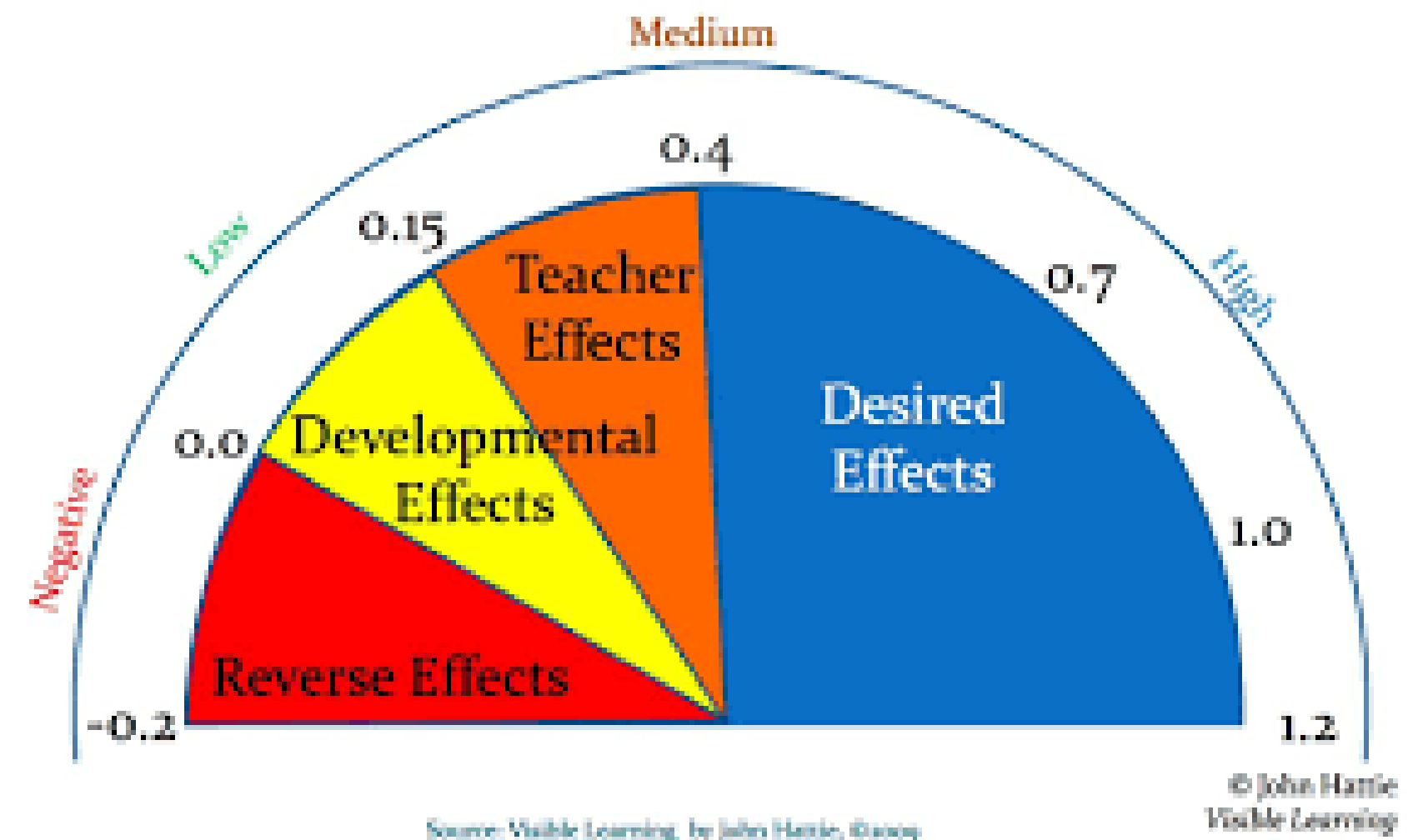
# Building a Schedule: Logistical Considerations and Community Priorities





# Effective Size Research

Effect Size	Mean Effect Size	What it can look like in our D97 MS Schedule
Teacher Collective Efficacy (2017)	1.57	Teaming and Professional Learning Communities
Response to Intervention	1.29	Intervention and enrichment periods
Teacher Relationships	.72	Advisory



Hattie, John. (2014). *Visible Learning +Visible Learning for Teachers*. Corwin Pr.  
McCarty Perez, Ann () *The Successful Middle School Schedule*. AMLE



# Logistical Complexity of Scheduling

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**Time:** Balancing instructional minutes, passing periods, and additional activities within the school day.



**Classes:** Organizing course offerings to align with curriculum priorities and student interests.



**Staffing:** Allocating sufficient personnel to meet student needs, ensuring appropriate class sizes and support staff coverage.



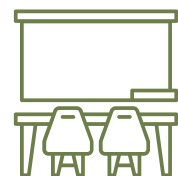
**Teacher Assignments:** Assigning teachers to courses that align with their expertise and maintaining equitable workloads. Ensuring 300 minutes weekly, including 30 consecutive minutes daily, with planning time aligned to elective schedules.



**Special Populations:** Supporting the unique needs of special education, English learners, and accelerated students through inclusive scheduling practices.



**Lunch:** Coordinating schedules to provide adequate lunch periods for all students while managing space and supervision needs.



**Space:** Maximizing classroom and common area usage to accommodate all students and programs effectively.



**Mandates:** Ensuring compliance with state and federal requirements, including physical education, health, and advisory programs.



# Community Priorities

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- **Adjusting the length and structure of class periods**, with an emphasis on daily schedules for core subjects.
- **Expanding elective opportunities to better meet diverse student needs**, including cross-team or mixed-grade level options and unique offerings.
- **Exploring options for a soft start to mornings**, including social-emotional learning.
- **Designing a lunch experience** that is more structured and supportive.
- **Consistency and alignment** across both middle schools.
- **Re-evaluating and clearly defining the purpose and goals of SOAR and Advisory** to maximize their impact.
- **Smoother transitions** between fifth to sixth grade and 8th to high school to ensure alignment and continuity.

# Refining the Vision: Developing Options and Finalizing Our Schedule







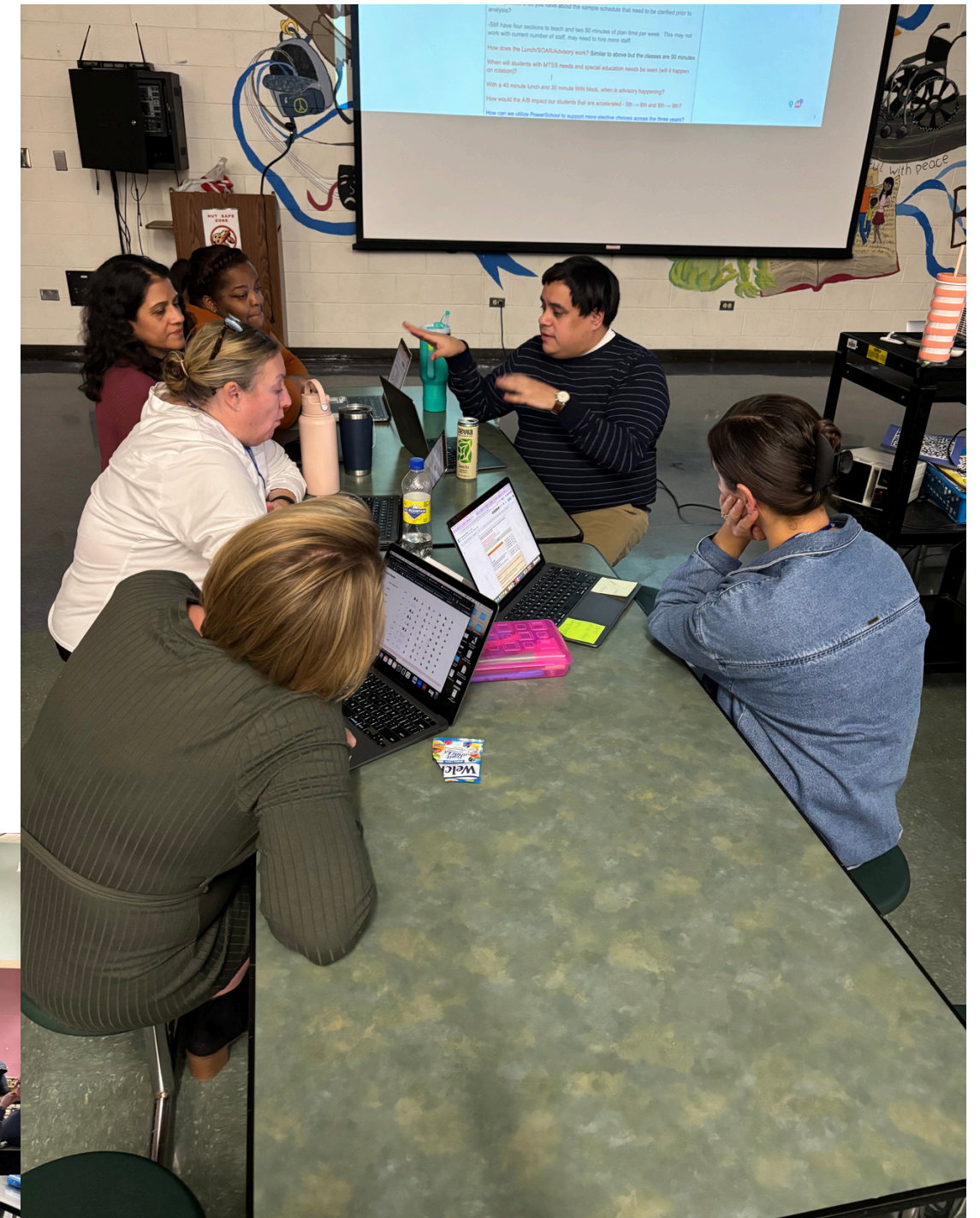
# Progress since January Board Meeting

## Community Feedback to Action

Following the last board meeting, we used community feedback and our D97 priorities to develop multiple sample schedules aligned with our shared goals.

## Team Review on February 6, 2025

Three viable sample schedules were presented to the Middle School Redesign Team, each reflecting aspects our identified priorities. A tentative preferred schedule has been identified by the team.





# Next Steps





# February - March: *Finalize the new schedule*

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- **Conduct instructional viability checks**

- We are currently checking our thinking on the tentative preferred schedule from different instructional perspectives. We aim to ensure that final schedule design is attentive to how we can best meet the needs of all of our students.

- **Finalize and Build the Schedule**

- We will then need to operationalize the new schedule within the PowerSchool platform. New technology transitions always come with adjustments so we will enter this process with a troubleshooting mindset.

- **March Updates to Board, Students, Staff, and Families**

- We will continue to provide updates to foster understanding and engagement.



# March - May: *Prepare to implement*

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- **Course Selection and Scheduling**
  - Collect and input course selections for rising middle school students.
- **Plan for Staff Time**
  - Reallocating staff time to align with the new time allocations
- **Prepare Student and Staff Schedules**
  - Generate student schedules and ensure courses and classes are balanced effectively.



# May - August: *Implement the new schedule*

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- **Student and Family Communication**

- Share confirmed schedules with students and families.
- Provide clear guidance and resources to help students prepare for the transition.

- **Support and Transition Programs**

- Support rising sixth-graders with changes during Middle School Connection August 12-14, 2025
- Host site-based “Welcome Back” events to build community and provide an overview of the new schedule.



# *SY26: Evaluate and Improve*

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- **Collect feedback**
  - Collect SY26 mid-year feedback from students, families and staff
  - Use insights to make adjustments and ensure continuous improvement.
- **Ensure consistent access to learning experiences between Brooks and Julian**
  - Equitable course offerings and access for all our students in both middle schools
  - Increase and improve instruction and curriculum alignment through teacher collaboration across both middle schools



**Thank you!**  
**Any Questions?**