

District 97 Middle School Redesign Update

Board of Education Meeting
October 28, 2025





Middle School Redesign Update

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Middle School Redesign Update Agenda

October 28, 2025

- **Introduction**
- **Lunch-Social time**
- **Intervention Block**
- **MS Connection**
- **Next Steps/Questions**

*Updates and Highlights in our
students' learning experiences
2025-26*





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

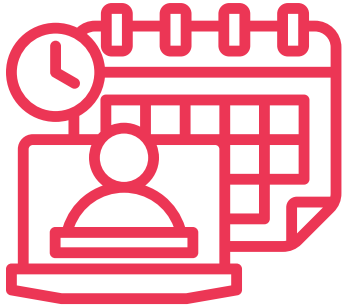
Master Facilities Plan
Comprehensive Safety Plan

We Learn Everywhere

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



Middle School Schedule Redesign



Our Guiding Principles for the 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.



Community Priorities Overview Presented today:

- ✓ **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.

*Designing a lunch experience
that is more structured and
supportive.*





SY 25-26 Master Schedule: *Improved Social Time*



**Consistency at both Schools -
expectations and use of the field for
social time**

- **increase in safety**
- **appropriate space**
- **better supervision**
- **Increase in physical activities**
 - **access to equipment**
 - **choices**
- **Staff available to support
students during this time**



Next

- **Collect Feedback from students
and staff**
 - **Surveys**
 - **Focus groups**

*Re-evaluating and clearly
defining the purpose and goals
of Advisory and SOAR/WIN to
maximize their impact.*





Priority Trend: *Redefining Advisory to Increase Connection*

Re-evaluating and clearly defining the purpose and goals of SOAR and Advisory to maximize their impact.

SY25 CURRENT SCHEDULE

- No soft start in the middle schools
- SOAR offerings are not consistent
- Inconsistencies in use of resources

SY26 NEW MASTER SCHEDULE

- Change SOAR to WIN
- Same course offerings at both middle schools
- Interventions and enrichment
- Development and advisory structure and resources revision/adoption process

SY27-28 FUTURE WORK

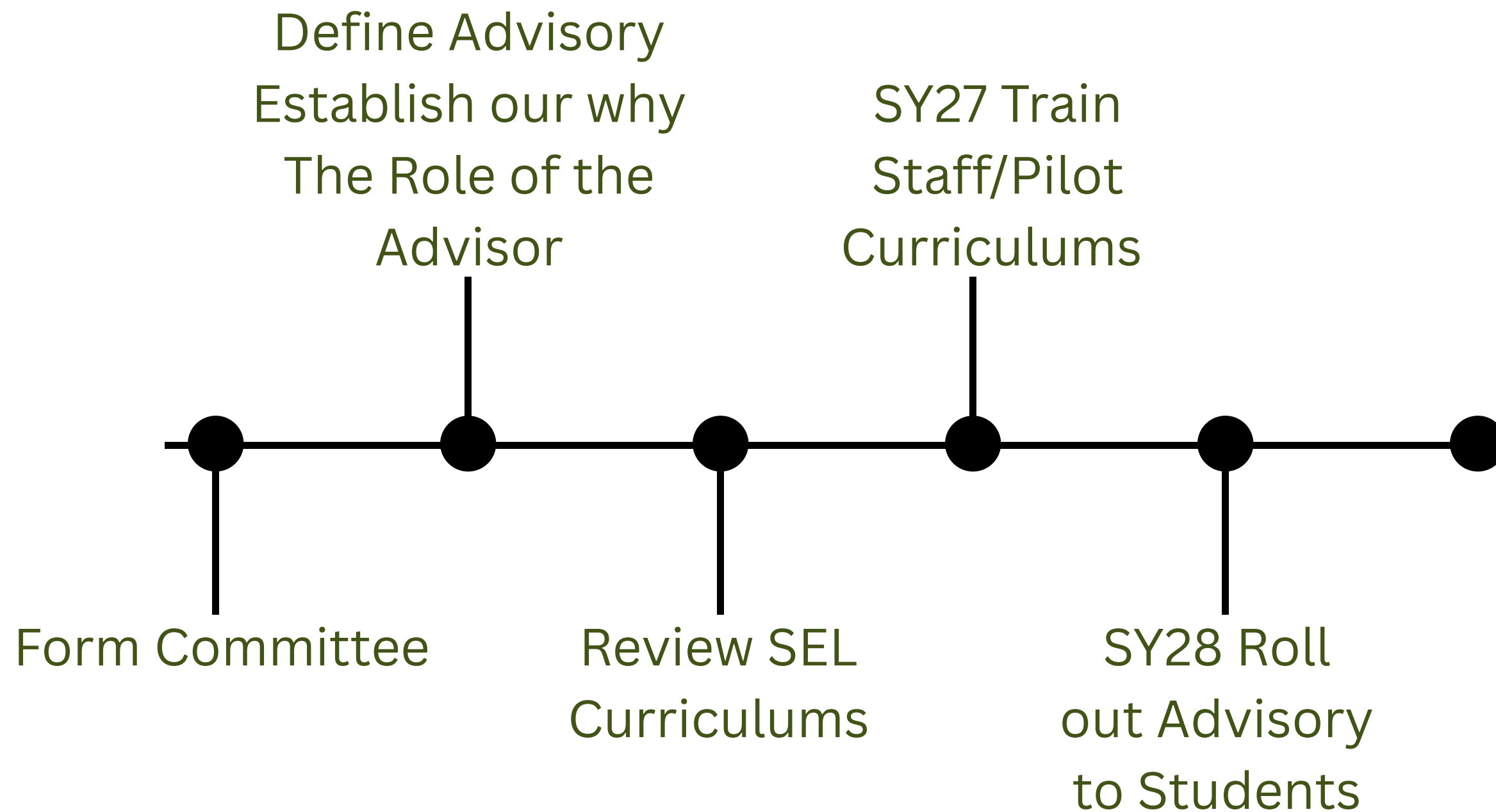
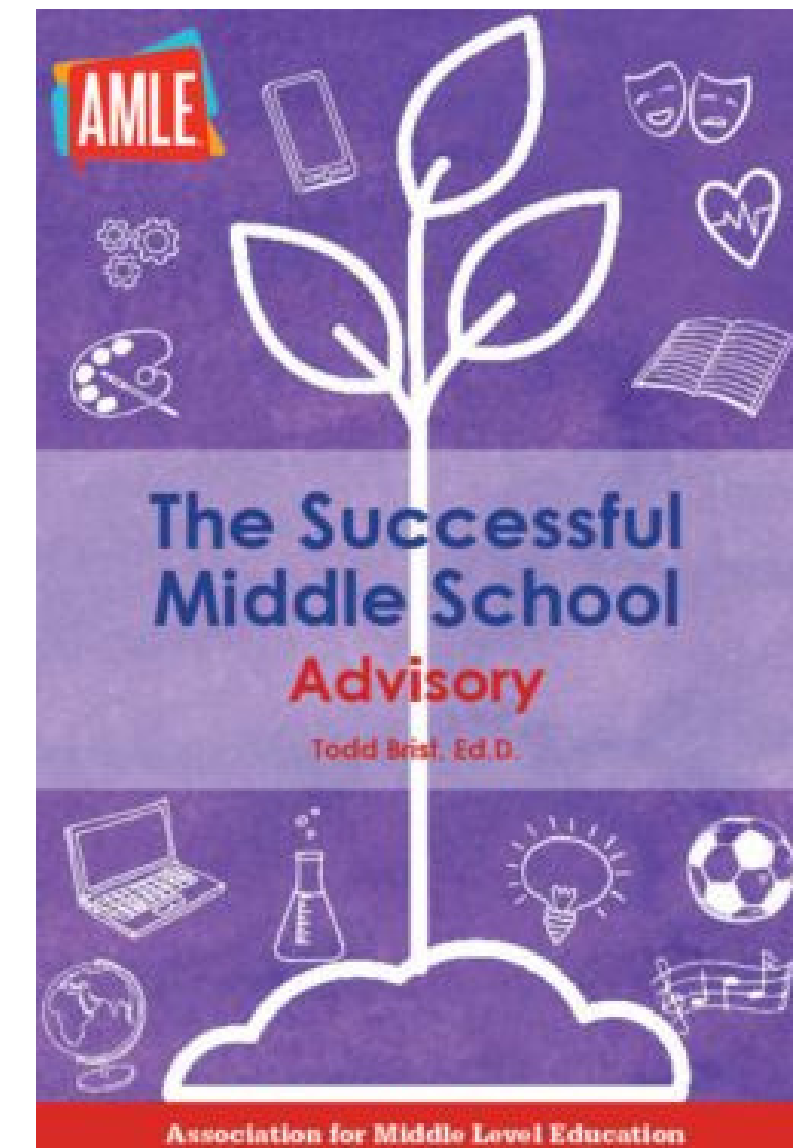
- Implementation of advisory structure
 - Structure
 - Resources
 - Professional development
- Collection of feedback to inform adjustments
 - Students
 - Families
 - Staff



Advisory - Highlights and next steps



The Successful Middle School Advisory (AMLE)





SMART Connect - Highlights and next steps



SMARTS EXECUTIVE FUNCTION CURRICULUM

helps students set goals, manage time, think flexibly, and take ownership of their learning.





SMART Connect Highlights and next steps

How is it being implemented?

- The MetaCog survey is taken by the students in EF WIN. Teachers utilize the information from the survey to help guide the lesson focus. The EF WIN teachers are working with students on lessons 2 days per week during WIN class. The other WIN days, students work on applying the skills learned as they work on their goals for the week, which includes working on assignments and connecting with CORE teachers for support.
-

Where are we on implementation?

- WIN teachers completed the onboarding and training for SMARTS Connect. Teachers have started working with their assigned students.
-

What is next?

- We will check on student progress every 6 weeks, which includes reviewing missing assignments, GPA, tardiness to class, as well as organizational habits.





Priority Trend: “What I Need” (WIN) - formerly known as SOAR

Re-evaluating and clearly defining the purpose and goals of SOAR and Advisory to maximize their impact.

SY25

PAST SCHEDULE

- Both schools provide SOAR
- Middle school course offerings are not aligned

SY26

CURRENT SCHEDULE

- Both schools provide WIN model
- Courses offered at both middle schools (trimester)
 - Special education services*
 - African American Studies - (Trimester 2/3)
 - Access to Algebra
 - MTSS Reading*
 - MTSS Math*
 - Executive Functioning (new)
 - SEL/Advisory (once per week)

**may require more than one trimester*

SY27
-28

FUTURE WORK

- Evaluation of WIN courses
- Design of WIN courses
 - Selection
 - Writing curriculum
 - Professional development
 - Implementation of new electives
- Explore making African American studies and elective module



WIN

Highlights and next steps



What you will already see happening in the WIN periods

- Targeted tier 2 interventions for ELA and math
 - Data driven instruction
 - Fluid groupings
-

How did we get here

- Benchmark meetings at each grade level
 - Tiering all students based on data
 - Professional Development on the new Renaissance suite and how to use all the features
 - Intense training for tier 2 and 3 teachers on Freckle and Nearpod
-

What's coming Next:

- Progressing monitoring for all tier 2 and tier 3 students
- Access to Algebra for trimester 2 and 3 (to ensure more access)
- Modern African American Studies
- Continued PD on Renaissance, MTSS structures, and use of the data wall to log interventions

*Smooother transitions between
fifth to sixth grade:*

Middle School Connection





MS Connection Highlights

	Overall 5th Grade Population		Registered Students - Continuing D97 Students		What % of this subset of the 5th grade population has registered?
	Number	% of total Population	Number	% of total Registrants	
TOTAL	614		567	92.35%	
Julian	316		295	52.03%	
Brooks	298		272	47.97%	
Beye	60	9.77%	58	10.23%	96.67%
Hatch	61	9.93%	57	10.05%	93.44%
Holmes	77	12.54%	68	11.99%	88.31%
Irving	96	15.64%	91	16.05%	94.79%
Lincoln	95	15.47%	90	15.87%	94.74%
Longfellow	90	14.66%	84	14.81%	93.33%
Mann	70	11.40%	62	10.93%	88.57%
Whittier	65	10.59%	57	10.05%	87.69%
Hispanic	81	13.19%	72	12.70%	88.89%
Black	77	12.54%	65	11.46%	84.42%
White	336	54.72%	315	55.56%	93.75%
Multiracial	90	14.66%	87	15.34%	96.67%
AI or Alaska Native	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	--%
Asian	30	4.89%	28	4.94%	93.33%
Native Hawaiian.Other PI	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	--%

Total Participating Students

Julian: 310

Brooks: 286

Total Participating Staff

Brooks: 34

Julian: 37

Total Participating Student Ambassadors

Brooks: 16

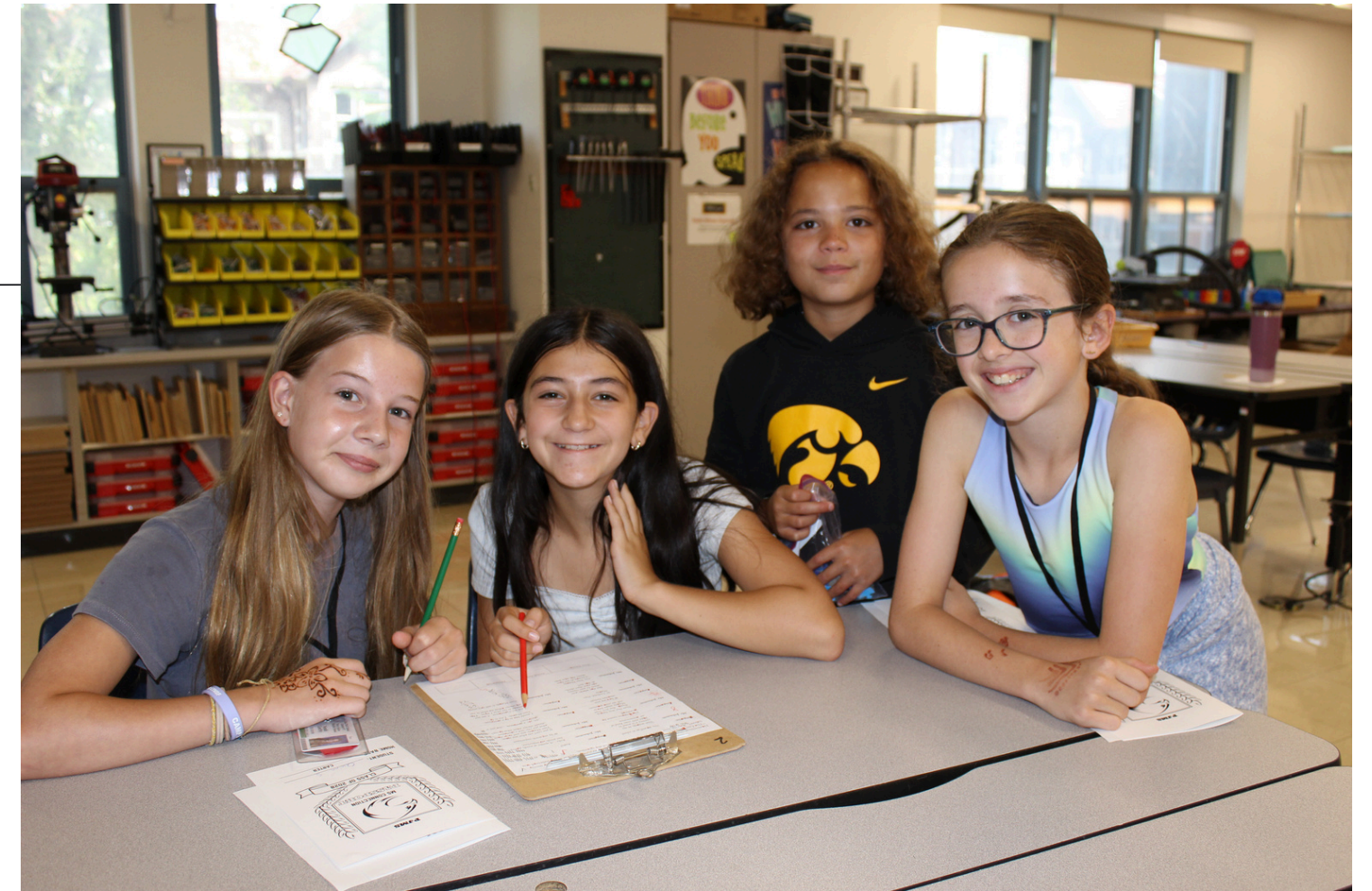
Julian: 16



Highlights

Student Highlights

- Students participated in 12 activities over the course of 3 days
- 97% of students reported that MSC helped prepare them for 6th grade
- 97% of students reported that a highlight of the program was meeting new friends and staff
- Top-rated activity: Tie-Dying





Highlights

Staff Highlights

- “MSC supports students to make the transition to Middle School and gain important skills while focusing on relationship building and helping them have many positive experiences at Julian.”
- “MSC is a great soft opening for our incoming students and helped facilitate some new friendships while alleviating a lot of anxiety about the transition.”
- “It was incredibly rewarding to see students step out of their comfort zones, collaborate with new peers, and connect with staff in such a positive and engaging environment. MSC truly allowed us to build community, foster trust, and set the tone for a supportive and connected school year.”
- “I like that this year's program was adjusted to include new sessions based on student & family feedback from last year's participants.”





MS Connection Next Steps

- Continue improving our communication with families.
“Save the date”.
- Add survey opportunities windows to support parent feedback
- Explore the opportunity to use Power School for enrollment (registration vs sign-in)
- Survey student ambassadors. Set aside a half-day for student ambassadors' orientation for both middle schools. (This year piloted at Brooks)
- Set up historical data progress monitoring by cohorts



Next Steps





SY26: Evaluate and Improve

- **Continue** working with our 2B Middle School redesign teams on the development and implementation of projects
- **Collect feedback - Mid-year**
 - 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



Middle School BOE upcoming updates

Projected Presentations:

- **December 9 - K-8 Student Services - Student Ownership**
- **January 13 - K-8 Social Emotional Universal Screener**
- **February - 6-8 Social Science Implementation (Board Memo Update)**
- **March 24 - K-8 Teacher Leadership Roles**
- **May 12 - 6-8 ELA Resource Review**
- **May 26 - Career Exploration Update**
- **June 9 - WIN/Advisory Update**



Thank you!
Questions?

