

**SCHOOL DISTRICT OF SOMERSET
BOARD OF EDUCATION
SPECIAL SESSION
MONDAY, APRIL 23, 2012**

Minutes

Board President Tim Witzmann called the meeting to order 5:02 p.m.

Roll Call was taken. Present were Board members Tim Witzmann, Brian Moulton, Bob Gunther, Marie Colbeth, Mike Connor, Kelly Ott and Tom Walters:

Gunther moved, with second by Colbeth, to approve the agenda. Motion carried unanimously.

High School Scheduling committee members in attendance were Shawn Madden, Andrew Emerson, Jeremy Kerg, Marie Mathys, Jen Grambort, Bill Roll, and Tom Sheffel.

Approve 2012-2013 High School Building Schedule: Madden, Emerson, and Kerg presented information for review with regard to the 2012-13 High School Building Schedule. Kerg stated the ACT composite scores were the driving forces of the new schedule as it is low in several areas as compared to other Middle Border school districts. Kerg stated the school district is also low in WKCE scores in Reading, Science and Social Studies, but is highest of the schools in Math. Kerg stated the objective was to find the best solution to improve student achievement at Somerset High School. Kerg reviewed the parameters and influences that were used when developing the schedule. Emerson presented a teacher survey that asked 32 teachers what the best set up for their class would be, with the goal to improve scores without losing what the district is doing well. In addition, a student and parent survey was also sent. Emerson stated the majority of student and parent respondents wanted more AP classes offered, and more college and career readiness opportunities offered. The student survey questions were similar to parent questions, with varying outcomes.

Emerson then explained and presented the schedule options considered. He stated the recommended schedule is a hybrid schedule for Board consideration based on a modified 8-period day, but also has some classes blocked (meet periods one and two) for example, lab classes and tech ed classes. Kerg explained how this schedule would work, with much of the schedule individualized based on each student. Students could have as many as eight classes a day, or as few as four classes a day, based on the bell schedule. The schedule was also based on 45-minute prep periods and 45-minute assigned duty periods.

Kerg said the committee extensively discussed pro's and cons to the schedule including staff professional development needs, future schedule committee tasks, and shared teaching staff. Kerg stated they are working with foreign language issues and will need to use the district's on-line options in this area for now. A benefit of this schedule is that it will provide an increase AP programs, and benefit to the music department as students will not be forced any longer to pick between band and choir.

Witzmann thanked the committee for the information, stated the Board had been concerned about the low ACT scores. Witzmann said the hybrid schedule makes sense and gives the student some flexibility. The Board appreciates all of the work this may create for instructional staff. Madden said the goal is to have top ACT scores in the conference. Some board members felt this could be a big challenge for high school

guidance staff; Kerg agreed, and said guidance department will continue to improve communication with students and parents, noting that—for the first time—the ACT will be offered to students on June 9th at Somerset High School.

Gunther asked which 25 % of teaching staff would not get the change? Kerg stated core teachers didn't necessarily get what they wanted, but the committee had to do what was best for students, though the committee tried to accommodate those teachers with the idea that student achievement is the goal. Core teachers are feeling the pressures of the test and may have reservations and frustrations as they are concerned about cutting their class time down to 45 minutes. Core teachers will need special coaching and guidance through this process.

Richard Thompson said teachers are trying to work together to reduce fears. Recommendations and course examples will be provided in course offering books to help students figure out what they need. It will take some guidance from teachers for students. Witzmann said having the flexibility for students throughout their four years is great, but realizes there will be challenges.

Connor moved, with second by Ott, to approve the 2012-13 high school schedule as presented by the Somerset High School Scheduling Committee. Motion passed unanimously.

Ott moved, with second by Connor, to adjourn at 6:07 p.m. Motion carried.

Tim Witzmann, President

Brian Moulton, Vice-President