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Dear SOMS and MMS School Communities:

As we come to the end of the first quarter, we thought it might be helpful to review our new middle school schedule and our exciting new approach to electives.

Over the past two years, we have worked to restructure the Middle School Schedule to achieve three goals:

- To provide additional time for struggling students to get support during the school day;
- To provide teachers with common planning time with their grade level and department; and
- To enhance our Related Arts Program to provide students with exciting elective options.

This year's newly revised schedule achieves all three of these goals in all three grades.

More time has been allocated to address the needs of struggling learners. After years of having to choose only one content area in which to offer intensive support for students who are struggling academically, the new schedule makes it possible to effectively support learners who are struggling in both math and language arts during the school day.

Teachers now have additional daily planning time to work with their grade level colleagues, collaborate and plan together.

We have expanded our offerings to include: World Drumming, Song Writing, Bandology and Spotlight on Strings. We have also added Model United Nations, Lego Robotics, STEM: Creative Computing and Design, and MMS/SOMS Investigates! An explanation of the changes this necessitated in the schedule, and descriptions of the electives for your school, are attached to this letter.

As this is the first year of this new schedule, we will carefully evaluate its effectiveness and determine if any adjustments could improve it even further for next year.

Thank you for your partnership!

Sincerely,

Susan Grierson