

Class Scheduling Decisions: To Run A Class or To Not Run a Class

The 2009-2010 budget challenges led to changes in enrollment minimums needed for a class to run. Until this year, if a minimum of fifteen students registered for a class, the class would run. This year, the enrollment minimum rose to eighteen students, causing some classes that have run in the past to be dropped.

Most times, the public, and the School Board, is not aware of courses that are cut, unless their child is directly affected. The School Board approves the courses that are to - proceed, but not those that are dropped.

Early in the scheduling process it is determined which classes are under-enrolled. Once that is known, the principal, in conjunction with the scheduler and subject curriculum coordinator, will speak to the Directors of Secondary and Elementary Education to decide whether the class should run under-enrolled, such as some AP classes or a second or third year of a language, or whether the course should be discontinued. The final administrative decision comes from the Superintendent, who then presents the list of actual courses that will run for the year to the School Board for a vote. Should the same course be under-enrolled two years in a row, the administration will determine whether the course should be permanently removed from the Program Planning Guide.

This year, at Richboro Middle School, German 1 was dropped for 8th grade students. It was indicated that there were thirteen students enrolled, which did not meet the minimum to conduct the class. Since the teacher, who was a .2, part time teacher last year, left the district, and one class would mean a .2 staff member in an area that is difficult to find qualified teachers, it was decided to simply drop that class. Citizens For Education is concerned that this created a lack of parity between our middle schools. Eighth grade students at Holland and Newtown Middle Schools had three languages to choose from, while Richboro Middle students had only two. Next year, German will once again be offered at Richboro Middle School through the program planning guide, and will run as long as enough students enroll.

This situation also caused the other two languages, Spanish and French, to have higher class sizes (see Middle School Class Size article on page ____). This decision affected not just those students who would have preferred to take German, but the students who are in higher class sizes because of this decision. This illustrates how unintended consequences can affect far more students than it might appear on the surface, when the curriculum changes, because of a class that is no longer being offered.

While it is understood that smaller schools may have lower enrollment in classes, that should not preclude those students from having the same experience, and choices, as students at larger schools, especially in the core subject areas. Citizens hopes that the administration will look closer at these disparities if they continue to emerge, and make decisions to ensure that all students in every school have equal opportunities. Citizens also encourages a change in policy so that the School Board is made aware of courses that are being dropped, as well as those that will run.