

Board Approved Charge for School Start & End Time Work Group

January 6, 2020

The Board of Education is establishing a work group to review factual information and options regarding the start and end times of district school days.

Background

Over three years ago, the Board and administration reviewed research regarding the educational value of starting students at a later time than the current schedule. However, because we were anticipating the construction of a new school and the establishment of new bus routes, the Board held off on modifying the school schedules until the beginning of the 2020-2021 school year in order to make all the related changes at once.

Three years ago, the Board and administration also began to review district bussing routes. In particular, the Board was concerned about the length of time some students spent on busses, the time they were picked up in the morning and dropped off in the evening, and the amount of time they spent waiting at school before school begins, and after school. The district retained a consultant to assist it in this task. Multiple models were reviewed, and it was determined that the most efficient and economical was a double run model, in which the bus contractors make two runs with staggered starting and ending times for certain schools. This would require a modification to school start and end times. The Board, again, held off on changing school start and end times until the beginning of the 2020-2021 school year.

During the fall of 2019, the administration began assembling information relevant to potential changes in school start and end times. This occurred at the same time as they were also modifying school attendance boundaries. In December 2019, a series of public informational sessions were held which included a review of a potential modification to school start and end times. That proposal generated much discussion and information sharing with the Board. The Board initially anticipated acting on the administration proposal with respect to school start and end times at its December 16, 2019 meeting, but instead deferred that decision until a later time so that it could review all the relevant information before it and assess potential options. At the December 16, 2019 meeting, the administration reviewed the working plan along with 7 additional options for school start and end times that had been considered.

Because of the significant amount of information presented to and the numerous options currently before the Board, it is seeking assistance from a work group to review factual information and to review the proposals before the Board to narrow them to a manageable number.

Composition

The work group will consist of representatives from the following groups: parents from the 4K, elementary, intermediate, middle and high school levels; a similar composition of teachers; two Board representatives; and administrative team members (Jina Jonen, Andy Weiland and Mike Carr). Dr. Leslie Bergstrom will facilitate the work group.

Charge

The work group will perform the following tasks:

1. Review the data relevant to the issue of start and end times for district schools currently before the Board and identify any additional data that will aid the Board in its review of options. The work group will have access to the information which has to date been shared with the Board.

The factual review will include information and/or data regarding:

- The District's mission and values.
 - Student demographics.
 - The current bussing schedule, including the number of students who are eligible to ride the bus, the pick-up and drop off times of students at their residences, the length of time students are on busses, the drop off and pick up times relative to the school days, and the length of time needed to stagger start and end time of schools to accomplish a double run. This will also include how this would change under the proposals. The work group will not review the decision to utilize a double run model other than what it would cost to keep the current start and end times. The work group will also not review the decision to transport students who live one-half mile or more from their school.
 - Relevant research regarding the impact of start and end times on students at all levels.
 - The impact on start and end time changes on students with respect to co-curricular activities and after-school work. It will also assess how many students go directly home after school or are taken to other locations prior to going home.
 - The number of instructional minutes students will receive under the proposals compared to the minimum state requirements and comparable neighboring school districts.
 - The start and end times of comparable neighboring school districts along with data regarding those schools achievement data.
 - The impact on school staff.
2. Provide the Board with 1 to 3 options to consider, outlining the pros and cons of each option and financial implications, if any. At least one option will have no additional transportation costs above those in the administration's working plan.

The work group will present its work product to the Board no later than the Board's February 24, 2020 meeting.

The final decision on school start and end times is reserved to the Board.