

School Start and Dismissal Time Adjustments for 2021-2022

Presented by:

Dr. Wayne Kazmierczak, Superintendent

Key factors

- **The recommendation aligns with the District's Strategic Plan:**
Strategy 2: We will provide expanding access to a broad range of opportunities for all students.
 - *Specific Result 5a: Academic scheduling is critical to the social and emotional wellbeing of each student.*
 - *Evaluate and revise start times of elementary, middle, and high schools using evidence based best practices.*

Key factors continued

- **The proposed change aligns with research on adolescent sleep.** There are many resources available to learn more about this topic, two of which are: the National Sleep Foundation and the National Center for Biotechnology Information (NCBI). As these and other resources delineate, delaying school start times for adolescents has shown many benefits including improved academic performance, reduced engagement in risky behaviors, and improved health. Later school start times positively correspond to improved attendance including fewer tardies, fewer disciplinary issues, reduced irritability, fewer symptoms of depression, and fewer motor vehicle crashes.

Key factors continued

- **The proposed change is consistent with a commitment the District made to the City of White Bear Lake and current WBLAHS - North Campus neighborhood residents to prioritize the mitigation of traffic impact.**

When current North Campus becomes the unified high school in the fall of 2024, the start time will need to be approximately 8:30 a.m. based on the results of the traffic study that was completed as part of the facilities planning process. An 8:30 a.m. start time allows the heaviest morning traffic to move through Highway 61 before the bulk of high school traffic begins.

Key factors continued

- **The proposed change would allow the District to run a more efficient, three-tiered transportation system**, resulting in significant savings in operating costs. A three-tiered system utilizes the same buses to transport students at all three grade levels (elementary, middle school, and high school).

**QUESTIONS
&
ANSWERS**

What would the new school start/dismissal times be?

Grade Level/School	2021-22 School Year
Preschool - Full-Day <i>Half-Day schedule will be re-evaluated and shifted</i>	7:45 a.m. - 2:15 p.m.
Elementary - Birch, Hugo, Oneka, Otter, Lakearies, Lincoln, Vadnais, Willow	7:45 a.m. - 2:15 p.m.
Elementary - Matoska	8:30 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.
Middle School - Central and Sunrise	9:15 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.
High School - North Campus	8:25 a.m. - 3:10 p.m.
High School - South Campus	8:45 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.
High School - ALC	8:40 a.m. - 3:25 p.m.

Why is the district considering this change?

- The recommendation aligns with the **District's Strategic Plan**.
- The proposed change aligns with **research on adolescent sleep**.
- The proposed change is consistent with a commitment the District made to the City of White Bear Lake and current WBLAHS - North Campus neighborhood residents to prioritize the **mitigation of traffic impact**.
- The proposed change would allow the District to run a **more efficient, three-tiered transportation system**.

How will this change affect elementary students?

- Research results suggest that bedtimes and wake times are malleable in elementary aged children allowing modification to accommodate changing start times without affecting the overall amount of sleep obtained. Younger children are able to modify bedtimes forward to compensate for the earlier wake up time; this is biologically difficult in older adolescents (Appleman, et al., 2015).
- Unlike teens, elementary-aged children are biologically capable of falling asleep earlier in the evening and thus can awaken early as well, with no ill effects (*Facts About Sleep*, Iber & Wahlstrom).
- An early start will increase prime morning instructional time, which is advantageous to elementary-aged students, especially children with emotional and behavioral disorders (Wahlstrom, 1998).

How will this change affect elementary students? (continued)

- Research suggests that the academic achievement of elementary aged children is not negatively affected with earlier start times (Dupuis, 2015).
- Young children are more alert at the beginning of the day and stay more energized throughout the day.
- Research suggests that earlier start times would allow for more productive and energetic learning in the afternoon as well as the morning.
- Earlier release times for elementary students would allow for more outdoor playtime, fresh air, and physical exercise before dark.

How will this affect elementary activities?

- Most Rec practices start at 5:30 p.m. or later, practice times will not need to adjust to accommodate the change in elementary dismissal time. Association sports may need to adjust practice times slightly but it will not be a major change. Typically the younger the student the earlier practice will take place.

How will this affect middle school and high school students?

- Teens whose schools start later still tend to fall asleep around 11 p.m., enabling them to attain more sleep every school night than teens whose schools start earlier.
- 55-60% of teens whose high schools start at 8:30 a.m. or later are likely to sleep 8 or more hours per school night.
- Summary of academic outcomes with later start: Significantly improved grades, reduced tardiness, reduced absenteeism, improved graduation rates.
- Social/emotional and other outcomes with later start include: Statistically significant less reported depression, fewer discipline incidents, fewer emotional outbursts, reduced risky behavior, and fewer car accidents.

How will this affect middle school activities?

- There have been no districts identified in which athletic programs were canceled or “significantly adversely affected by school start time change. To the contrary, a number of districts found that more students participated in athletics and that sports programs grew after” bell times were delayed, and teams performed better (Owens, et al., 2014).
- Our middle schools currently offer some activities prior to the school day; this proposal creates a larger window for those opportunities.
- After school clubs and enrichment will still happen, with transportation available on activities buses for those who wish to be transported home.
- Middle school activities would shift to approximately 4:15-5:45 p.m., when the activities bus would be available for those who wish to be transported home.
- We acknowledge there will be instances where student athletes need to be released from school early for competitions. This practice is currently in place now and we do not anticipate a sizable increase in the frequency of early release days.

How will this affect high school activities?

- There have been no districts identified in which athletic programs were canceled or “significantly adversely affected by school start time change. To the contrary, a number of districts found that more students participated in athletics and that sports programs grew after” bell times were delayed, and teams performed better (Owens, et al., 2014).
- Our high school typically runs two sessions of practices, this will continue
- Athletic facilities improvements and additions will be coming on line in the next two school years, which will dramatically improve access for student athletes:
 - The new South Campus gymnasium will open in the fall of 2021
 - The new fieldhouse and additional turf fields will be completed in the fall/winter of 2022
- We acknowledge that lower-level contests take place at 4 p.m. or 4:30 p.m., so students may need to get out of class more frequently than they do now (especially for non-conference contests with longer traveling distances).

How early will students be waiting at a bus stop?

- 7:10 a.m. will be targeted as the earliest bus pick-up time for any student who receives district transportation. To mitigate the dark bus stop concern we worked hard to push the proposed elementary start time as late as possible under the recommended scenario. As always, families are encouraged to accompany their younger students at bus stops.
- In the district's current schedule, high school students are picked up as early as 6:30 a.m.

Why is the Matoska schedule different?

- Matoska students are transported from throughout the entire district boundary rather than from a smaller neighborhood boundary like the other elementary schools.
- The amount of time to travel the entire district takes longer, up to 50 to 60 minutes for some bus routes. Some students would be picked up between 6:30-6:45 a.m. if Matoska's schedule matched the other elementary schools' start time of 7:45 a.m.

What is the budgetary impact of this change?

- The proposed change would allow the District to run a more efficient, three-tiered transportation system.
- Seven fewer buses would be needed to transport students, which results in a savings of over \$600,000 in annual operating costs.

Did the district explore other options so all schools could start after 8 a.m.?

- Our Transportation Department has run through many scenarios. The proposed plan fits into an efficient three-tiered transportation system (drivers complete a total of three routes - one for each level elementary, high school and middle school).
- Any shifting of the proposed elementary start time would shift the high school and middle school start and end times by the same amount of time.
 - For example, if the elementary start time was shifted 15 minutes later to 8 a.m. in this scenario, all other levels would also shift 15 minutes later at the beginning and the end of the day.

What before and after school options will be available?

- Extended Day School Age Care will be available at all elementary schools with before and after school options for families.
 - Morning care would be available starting at 6:30 a.m. until the start of the school day.
 - Afternoon care would begin at the end of the school day with 2 different dismissal options in the afternoon at 4:30 p.m. or 6 p.m., with a variety of contract options to provide the most flexibility for families.
 - We will continue to offer financial assistance options for families that qualify for free and reduced lunch. Additionally, long-term county fee assistance for qualifying families will continue to be available.
- Additional after school enrichment classes will be offered.

What other districts have implemented this change?

- Other Minnesota school districts that have changed start times include:
 - Buffalo-Hanover-Montrose
 - Burnsville-Eagan-Savage
 - Edina
 - Farmington
 - Mahtomedi
 - Minneapolis
 - Moorhead
 - Mounds View
 - St. Louis Park
 - St. Paul
 - South Washington County
 - Wayzata

What professional organizations have endorsed later school start times for middle and high school students?

- Professional organizations that have endorsed later school start times for middle and high school students include:
 - American Academy of Pediatrics
 - American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry
 - American Academy of Sleep Medicine
 - American Medical Association
 - American Psychological Association
 - Center for Disease Control and Prevention
 - Minnesota Medical Association
 - National Association of School Nurses/Society of Pediatric Nurses
 - National Parent Teacher Association
 - Society of Behavioral Medicine

Why now rather than when the high school is unified?

- We are prioritizing student health and well-being. Waiting only delays the delivery of significant and numerous benefits to students.
 - Starting our preK-5 day earlier will better align with elementary prime learning time, when younger students are more alert and well rested.
 - Starting our middle and high school days later will allow our teenagers to get the right amount of sleep to feel well rested, successful and healthy.

What will be the timeline for this change?

- The proposal will be on the April 12, 2021 School Board Regular Meeting agenda as an action item. The changed school start/dismissal times would start in the fall of 2021.

Research referenced in this presentation

- [*School Start Time FAQ*](#), Minnesota Sleep Society
- [*Delayed Middle School and High School Start Times Promotes Student Health and Performance: An American Academy of Sleep Medicine Position Statement*](#), Journal of Clinical Sleep Medicine
- [*Position Statements and Resolutions on Sleep and School Start Times*](#), Start School Later
- [*Later School Start Times*](#), Kyla L. Wahlstrom, Ph.D.
- [*School Start Time Changes and Sleep Patterns in Elementary School Students*](#), Appleman, et al., 2015.
- [*The Association Between Elementary School Start Time and Students' Academic Achievement in Wayzata Public Schools*](#), Dupuis, 2015.
- [*Facts About Sleep*](#), Iber & Wahlstrom, acquired March 2021.
- [*School Start Time Change: An In-Depth Examination of School Districts in the United States*](#), Owens, et al., 2015.

How can I learn more or ask questions?

- www.isd624.org/SchoolStartTimeChange website
 - Links to presentations and communications
 - Q&A information
 - Submit a Question button
- **School Start/Dismissal Time Change informational meeting**



School Start/Dismissal Time Change informational meeting
(Meeting in-person, viewable via electronic means) 📌

🕒 6:30 PM - 7:30 PM

📍 DC Community Auditorium (4855 Bloom Avenue, WBL)

An in-person informational presentation about the district's recommendation to change schools start/dismissal times will take place at 6:30 p.m. on Tuesday, March 30 at the Community Auditorium (4855 Bloom Avenue, WBL). Social distancing will take place and capacity limits will follow state guidance.