

July 12 Board of Ed Meeting

Blake, Ann Marie <AMBlake@hamden.org>

Sun 7/10/2022 3:40 PM

To: input, public <publicinput@hamden.org>

Hello Members,

As an elementary educator in Hamden since 1989, this proposal to change the start and ending times of the school day for the elementary schools is the **perfect opportunity** to acknowledge and create an equitable arrangement for all your educational employees. I am referring to the minutes in the school day for the elementary school educators. Are you aware our day is longer than the middle and high school educators and yet we follow the same salary rubric? Please see below, I'm using the late elementary schedule to showcase this grave inequitable scenario.

PM Late Elementary Schools- 8:45 AM - 3:34 PM = 6 hours, 49 minutes

Note: In addition, by contract, teachers must arrive 15 minutes before and stay 15 minutes after the school day. Our day: 8:30am-3:49pm

Hamden Middle School- 8:15 AM - 2:29 PM = 6 hours, 14 minutes

Hamden High School- 7:31 AM - 2:00 PM = 6 hours, 29 minutes

My proposal to help our town save the money is to go forward with the time changes BUT allow the elementary teachers to leave at 3:49 rather than 4:04. Give us back the 15 minutes to level (somewhat) the minutes on the job OR reduce the elementary school day to match our colleagues' schedules in the middle and high schools. Equity is the key word and our salaries should represent the same number of hours no matter what school one works at. I see this change as something positive that can benefit us all.

Thank you for your thoughtful consideration as I implore you to recognize the inequality that currently exists amongst your schools and make it fair.

Respectfully Submitted,

Ann-Marie Blake

Ann-Marie Blake
Teacher
West Woods School
350 West Todd St.
Hamden, CT 06518

July 12 Board of Education Meeting

Angier, Jamie <jangier@hamden.org>

Tue 7/12/2022 11:03 AM

To: input, public <publicinput@hamden.org>

Cc: Board of Education <BoardofEducation@hamden.org>; Irwin, Shelby <ShelIrwin@hamden.org>

Board,

While I understand the Board's financial reasoning for changing school times, as both a teacher and parent in our town, I have to voice my objections to this change. My main concern is child care not only for myself but for other teachers and families in our town. One of my daughters attends the Hamden Early Learning Program and their hours of operation are from 8:00am-5:00pm. On our contracted meeting days, I would be required to stay until 5:04pm and 5:34pm, well after their closing time. My husband is unable to leave work earlier and this would force us to rely on others, if possible, and place an undue burden on our family. I know there are other teachers, who do not live in our town, who would have an even greater burden of having to travel home before picking up their children. Which could be well past 6:00pm on those meeting days. There are not many daycares or after school programs that are open that late and if they are, they will most likely have to incur further financial responsibilities for child care.

I am also concerned with the many families at Church Street and other elementary schools who may be negatively affected by the drastic change in start/end times of school. Will there be financial support for families who would now need before or after school care due to their work schedules and this change? Have families even been notified of this considered change? I only know of this considered change because I am also a teacher. In early June, teachers received a communication that there was talk of a survey from the board about this issue to be sent to both teachers and families. How come there was never a survey sent out to get the opinion of those that it would most impact?

I know the board is working on a theme of transparency, however, your agenda topic of "Review of bus times for the 2022-2023 school year" may be misleading to some. You are in fact, reviewing and possibly changing the start/end times of an entire population of school aged children, not just the "bus times."

While the board would be saving a great deal of money, many families would be forced to spend more money on unnecessary child care due to this change in our schedule. Despite these concerns, which I am sure are felt by other Hamden educators and parents with school aged children, if you do vote to move forward with this change I hope you will take into account the child care issues that you will be putting on many of us and consider helping and supporting options for those who will be affected.

Respectfully,

Jamie Angier

2nd Grade

Church Street School

jangier@hamden.org

Elementary Start Times

Conti, Carrie <cconti@hamden.org>

Tue 7/12/2022 11:04 AM

To: input, public <publicinput@hamden.org>

Dear Board of Education Members,

My name is Carrie Conti and I am a first grade teacher at Ridge Hill School. I am writing to you today to express my concern for changing the start time of our school day.

Changing the start times will make it challenging for many families who have parents that work. More parents will have to find before care for their children in order for them to get to school on time or be some place safe until they can start their school day. Also, if a child attends an extra curricular activity (gymnastics, basketball, karate, etc.) it will be difficult to get them to a 4:00 practice or class. Younger students are more alert and able to focus better earlier in the day. As the day goes on, they tire more easily and their focus is less which can have a significant impact on learning. I see this first hand as a first grade teacher, as students want to rest and struggle to produce their best work later in the day. This will also lead to students now getting home later which means later dinner and bedtime which can make it harder for children to function the next day.

On a personal level, I have two children (5 years old and 2 years old) who will be attending Kindergarten and daycare 30 minutes away in the town where we live. Pushing the start time back means a later dismissal which makes it challenging to pick them up after school, get dinner on the table in a timely fashion, spend quality time with them and get both boys to bed at their respective bedtimes. I am the primary person to pick them up everyday. When we have our late Thursday meetings, it will be very challenging to make sure I am in two places before the end of their respective program time ends. I know that other people in the district are in similar situations and will be rushing to pick up their children at their daycare before it closes. If we do not pick up our children by the programs end, we are then charged a fee, in some cases by the minute.

Also, as educators, we are asked to make our appointments outside of school hours. Pushing the time back makes it even harder to get that last appointment of the day. Many offices close at 4:30 or 5:00, which makes getting to an appointment very difficult to do. This could lead to more teachers being out for a half day in order to take care of their personal health. Regardless of where we live, not all of our appointments are in the town where we live or work, which could make finding coverage and substitutes hard to do if multiple people have to leave at any given day to attend an appointment.

I understand the importance of saving money, as well as creating equity across the district in terms of start times, however, I think the impact will be far less beneficial in the end. Our students and their families lives, as well as our own personal families lives will be impacted in many challenging ways. Please consider keeping the school start times as is or moving the elementary start time to an earlier time across the district.

Respectfully,
Carrie Conti

Sent from my iPhone

FW: July 12 Board of Education Meeting

Westcott, Jeffery <JWestcott@hamden.org>

Tue 7/12/2022 2:01 PM

To: input, public <publicinput@hamden.org>

From: Westcott, Jeffery <>**Sent:** Tuesday, July 12, 2022 2:00 PM**To:** Board of Education <BoardofEducation@hamden.org>**Subject:** July 12 Board of Education Meeting

Hello Members of the Hamden Board of Ed,

My wife and I are sending this email regarding the change in time schedule for all schools in Hamden. I hope you will all consider not only the effect on not only the families in Hamden, but also on the teachers that work for Hamden Public Schools. I am in my 26th year at Church Street School and my wife, Diana Westcott is in her 21st year at Church Street and together we have a beautiful 3 year old daughter named Olivia entering pre-school this fall. The decision to changes times, in rapid fashion, without giving teacher families time to adjust and make plans in an appropriate, thoughtful way will have a negative impact on our family and daycare plan.

A 9 am start time, and more importantly, a 4:04 pm end time would cause us to make major changes in our schedule and/or work options. Olivia has attended the same school since she was an infant and it is in her best interest at this time for her to continue to attend the same school. The late start time would cause us to pick her up well after 5 pm on most days and on mandatory meeting days (whether 90 minutes or 60 minutes) would cause us to be there close to or after 6pm (her learning center closes at 6 pm).

Many times ideas look good on paper or on a spread sheet, but the affects on families, teachers, and schools often are not considered until after the fact, or the logistics simply don't work. For example, it is quite apparent that Hamden, and many towns in Connecticut, have a bus driver shortage. At Church Street last year we had 2 busses that had significantly late pick ups every day that caused the Central office and the BOE to have to pay teachers daily extra money to cover the time the students were left at school, sometimes a half hour or more. I have a hard time believing those issues have been worked out or the appropriate number of bus drivers have been trained and hired to meet the needs of all schools starting the same time which is the crux of this plan.

Good teachers don't always leave at he set end time, either because of responsibility to our students, parents, or schools. This plan will be forcing a 4:04 exodus, if we even have the real opportunity to leave at the time. We will not have the opportunity to make phone calls meet with colleagues, pull supplies, or adjust lesson plans like we currently do. This would force us to spend more time doing these thing at home, which we already do, and spend even less time with our families. Likewise, nothing has been mentioned about how we are suppose to deal with our required meeting days and how conferences will be handled with this new schedule.

It seems to us that this could be tabled for a year for all sides involved to have input in this decision. Thank your for your time and consideration.

Diana and Jeff Westcott

July 12th Board of Education Meeting

DiFonzo, Elizabeth <edifonzo@hamden.org>

Tue 7/12/2022 2:56 PM

To: input, public <publicinput@hamden.org>;Board of Education <BoardofEducation@hamden.org>;Irwin, Shelby <Shelrwin@hamden.org>;Nelson, Mary <mnelson@hamden.org>

Dear School Board Members,

My name is Elizabeth DiFonzo. I am a third-grade teacher at Spring Glen school. I have taught in Hamden for 13 years and will begin my 20th year of teaching next month. I am also a mother to a 9-year-old boy.

I am writing with my concern regarding the decision to change the start and end time for all elementary schools. This change will have a huge implication for students, parents, and teachers alike. While it makes great sense to have all schools start and end at the same time, this time should be considered further.

Let me explain. The start time is too late. This later start will have a negative impact on both ends. Many families, especially single parent households will struggle with this time. Most jobs begin before 9:00. This time needs to include getting your child ready, and commuting. Having the day begin at 9 puts many in a very tough situation. For starters, those who do not have a flexible job or work farther away from home will now need to have their child attend before care programs. Considering the state of the economy and inflation, many households are stretched to the max and struggling financially to put food on the table, pay bills, and purchase everyday necessities. Energy cost across the board has risen and will continue to rise. Parents who will now need to pay for childcare due to the time change, will be burdened with even more financial strain. This is truly unfair as it is unnecessary. This NEEDS to be considered.

On the back end, students participate in sports, and other activities. These extracurricular activities outside of the normal school day typically begin no later than 5. The kids who will be impacted the most are the bus students. Certain buses are always late regardless of what the bus company says or promises. For 19 years, it has always been this way. You may be wondering, why it matters if a bus is late? It matters because students who are not able to walk home or be picked up, will get home VERY late. Getting home at this later time may prevent them from being able to participate in sports and extracurricular activities. They will miss out unfairly and unnecessarily. Those of you who are parents will also understand that kids NEED down time between getting home and going to an activity. They are exhausted! They need to have something to eat, they need to change, they need to breathe! Getting home later in the day does not allow for this flexibility. As mentioned in the previous paragraph, many parents will be financially burdened with an additional cost of child-care which they did not require before. This means that things will need to be cut out of the budget. The money parents might have used to provide their child with these engaging and wonderful sports and activities, will most likely go towards the new before-care cost. During the winter months, kids will be going home in the dark. This is another point that needs to be considered. They are not teenagers. They are little kids.

Another negative factor that has not been considered is the ability of this age group to focus and learn later in the day. Let's not forget that most elementary aged children wake up and begin their day very early. This means that they will be up for several hours before even getting to school, which is going to have a negative impact in the classroom regarding instruction and on task learning behaviors. Young students do not have the stamina it takes to be focused and engaged until 3:45/3:50. As it stands, by 2:30 most teachers are struggling to keep their kids engaged and focused as they begin to tire. With all

the learning being pushed back, I am extremely concerned about loss of learning due to lack of stamina and mental exhaustion. They are not adults. They are children. Please remember this.

Lastly, please do not forget about the teachers. We matter too. Too often, we are considered warm bodies that should do what the taxpayers want us to do. Seldomly, are we viewed as individuals who are separate entities and exist beyond the school day hours. Our own families and our own children are not being considered with this time change. I have given so much of myself over the last 19 years. I am beyond dedicated to my students and my school community. While I love my job and I love being a part of such a wonderful community, I also have my own child and I have a family. They matter just as much as the children I teach and the community that I serve. The later start means that I am not going to be able to get my child off the school bus. Because of this 15-minute change, I now must pay for before and after care. This will cost me \$600 dollars a month. This is unfair. This is not a small expense. Coupling this with the immense cost for groceries, electricity, goods, taxes etc. we are now going to be financially burdened with this unnecessary additional payment which is a huge strain on our family. This is an extra \$5000-6000 dollars I will need to come up with. Teachers who are single parents are going to be in similar positions. This is going to burden their financial situation undoubtedly. Considering the state of our town finances, I am sure Hamden does not intend to give teachers compensation for the HUGE childcare cost that will be imposed due to this time change. Let's not forget our late 90-minute meetings. The later time for this will also be extremely challenging to find child-care that extends to this new later time (consider commuting to get the child) AND will cost more.

Not all teachers live in town, myself included. I live 25 minutes away. My son also deserves to play sports. With the dismissal as it was, I was already 15 minutes late to all practices and after school activities. With this change, I may not be able to enroll my 9-year-old in any sports or enrichment activities as we would be 45 minutes late. I can tell you now, the conversations that teachers are having regarding this change is not positive. We collectively deserve to be considered. Our families and children matter too. This has caused myself and other teachers I have spoken with to consider seeking positions in other towns and cities. While we care deeply about our schools and our school communities, we also care deeply about our own families, which goes without saying.

While you may think this is a small change, being 15 minutes for late schools, it is a 45 minute change for early schools. Please keep in mind that even 15 minutes has a snowball effect. It has negative implications for families, students, and staff. Please consider changing the start to the early school time or an earlier time. Starting before 8:30 would be better for learning and for child-care. It is important to consider everyone when making these decisions. Thank you for your time and consideration. I appreciate you taking time to read my email.

Thank you,
Elizabeth DiFonzo