

July 13,2022

To the Board of Education;

It has been my privilege to meet many Board members during our Union meetings and I appreciate the time you spend on the Board of Education, especially given your expressed desire to work as liaisons with our schools to understand the needs within each. I am hopeful that you will value my experience with the elementary aged school children that will be the most impacted by the decision you are making.

The decision to begin school at 9:00 am and end after 4:00 pm does not have a significant impact on me or my family, as I am becoming an "empty nester" as of August 22, 2022. However, this decision will have a significant, negative impact on the families and students that I serve - and that you serve, as well. As a "late school" teacher, I see the impact that the 3:30 pm dismissal time has on our young people and how their ability to self-regulate emotions, focus, engage, socialize, and to process information diminishes with every hour after 2:00 pm. If you have spoken to an elementary staff person, pediatrician, or childcare provider, you know that this is the case - and research supports this.

Hamden families will have to begin to make arrangements for preschool care, at a short notice, because many work days begin at 8:30 - 9:00 am. Time as a family and money will be lost for families to fill this childcare void. The proposed time change will increase the length of the school day for many, and will increase the stress level of every family - including the families' of your staff - and additional stress is not something that is needed in Hamden; especially given the past years coping with tornadoes, internet high-jacking, COVID and our attempts to heal from all of it. Your teachers, staff, administrators and families of Hamden need you to please consider other alternatives.

I implore you to find another way to resolve the increased cost and to push back on First Student to solve this problem. We are the customers and our children should come first. There is always another way. This is too important an issue to determine without exhausting all resources and your teachers may prove to be invaluable, if you choose to utilize the direct experience we have.

Again, thank you all for the time, energy, and efforts you make for our schools.

Respectfully,

Michele Pollock
Ridge Hill School
Special Education Resource Teacher
Grades K - 6

2022-2023 Calendar

Frank <frankp70@gmail.com>

Mon 7/25/2022 10:12 AM

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

Cc: Heather Porto <heatherlporto@gmail.com>;Melissa Kaplan <makaplan6@yahoo.com>

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Dear Superintendent and BOE,

I am writing with concerns about the 2022-2023 School calendar. I have noticed that April vacation begins on April 17 for Hamden. New Haven and most towns surrounding Hamden, as well as ACES has the previous week off. My wife and I have an 8th grader and a 4th grader in Hamden schools and a junior at ACES Whitney Academy. I am a teacher at a different ACES school and my wife is a teacher in North Branford. The difference in calendars makes it so we cannot take any family trips. It also forces us to leave our 13 year old and 8 year old home all day alone for a week in April. April vacations have not been the same for local districts for years. This year seemed different. Most neighboring districts seemed to aligning, except for Hamden.

Hamden is an outlier in picking the week of April 17.

This affects families like ours who have children at Hamden schools AND a child at another school like ACES or a New Haven magnet school. It will be an inconvenience for those families as well as for the bus company.

We know districts vary when it comes to calendars but it would seem to make the most sense for Hamden to have the same vacation schedule as New Have and ACES, at the very least.

I was told part of the thinking was to have Friday April 21 off in recognition of Eid al-Fitr. This is a fine idea, as Hamden strives to be a model district when it comes to inclusion. But moving an entire week for one day, and being the only area district to have that particular week off, makes little sense. Why not just have April 21 off from school and add a day to the end of June? If Hamden follows New Haven and ACES and most other districts and has the week of April 10 off AND recognizes the Muslim holiday with April 21 off from school it would be far less inconvenient for families and transportation.

Thank you for taking the time to consider, and hopefully, reconsider, the calendar for the upcoming school year.

Sincerely,

Frank Porto

90 Willowcrest Dr.

Hamden 06518

203-464-5111

Special Board Meeting 7/26

Conti, Carrie <cconti@hamden.org>

Mon 7/25/2022 8:24 PM

To: input, public <publicinput@hamden.org>; **Board of Education** <**BoardofEducation@hamden.org**>

As a first grade teacher, starting the school day later will be detrimental to our students, especially our littlest ones. They will lose interest in what we are teaching and become more fatigued because their day has been extended even longer due to attending before care, school for 7 hours and potentially after care. It's too long and not fair to them.

This also puts a strain on us as teachers who have families of our own who need us, too.

Please keep start times the same or have elementary all start earlier. Thank you.

Carrie Conti
Ridge Hill School

moving school start times

Bower-Phipps, Kathleen <kbower-hipps@hamden.org>

Mon 7/25/2022 9:22 PM

To: Asbery, David Lee <dasbery@hamden.org>;Carter-David, Siobhan <scarterdavid@hamden.org>;Cesare, Austin <acesare@hamden.org>;Darius Cummings <cummingsdhps@gmail.com>;Kaplan, Melissa <mkaplan@HamdenPublicSchools.onmicrosoft.com>;Khan, Mariam <mkhan@hamden.org>;Melissa Kaplan <makaplan6@yahoo.com>;Morton, Walter <wmorton@hamden.org>;Parks, Reuel <rparks@hamden.org>;Shea, Kevin <kshea@hamden.org>;Walsh, Gary <gwalsh@hamden.org>;input, public <publicinput@hamden.org>

Dear Board of Education members,

I am writing as both a Hamden High School teacher and also a Hamden resident (122 Russell St) with a soon to be second grader. My family shares your concerns about the difficult decision that faces the BOE Tuesday night, both because there is a significant budget gap you are hoping to close and also because it affects many families in our town.

My vote in brief: Three tier system with Elementary first, HHS second, HMS third.

I appreciated the lunch meeting that Ms. Khan and Dr. Carter-David held that resulted in some good take-away consensus points.

My thoughts are that if research tells us that high school students should start later, then let that be a driver for a later HHS start time. There is anecdotal evidence from Hamden elementary teachers (and parents) who state that their students will be less able to focus with a later start time, and this would be more profound for both very young students and students with learning disabilities. Having the earliest start time for elementary would also reduce the need for BOTH before and after school care for families needing childcare.

If a significant change in schedules is considered again in the future, I hope the discussion happens sooner so that people have more time to plan for any potential changes. I suspect that it is difficult to glean meaningful information from the "thought exchange" sent to Hamden stakeholders because of its complex design and crosstalk/ feedback/ comment rating system. Having an initial survey with opportunity to choose or rank a small number options (not hundreds of comments), then holding small group sessions as follow-up to learn more about the "why" could be one way to improve your public input quality.

Thank you for your service, and for taking on this difficult task,
Kat Bower-Phipps

School start times

Bill DeLucia <deluciaw@gmail.com>

Sat 7/23/2022 5:32 PM

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

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Dear Board of Education members,

I urge you not to change the start and end times of this next school year. There is simply not enough notice and time to get childcare arrangements in order for our family and many others. This is not something to change so close to the start of the school year.

Bill DeLucia
16 Dorrance Pl

School Start and End Times

Avi Kamrat <akamrat@gmail.com>

Tue 7/26/2022 12:59 PM

To: input, public <publicinput@hamden.org>; **Board of Education** <BoardofEducation@hamden.org>

Cc: Alison Hoffmann <senchadragon@gmail.com>

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Dear Members of the Board of Education:

I received an email last week asking for my input regarding a potential change in school schedules through Thought Exchange. This is not the first time that this platform was used to solicit feedback about an critical issue that will have widespread impact on the entire community. The results of the "thought exchange" will have no value whatsoever and will not provide any useful information on which the administration and BoE can take action. If the BoE values input from stakeholders (students, teachers, parents, and staff), then the board needs to engage people to conduct surveys who are trained in survey and data science.

My older daughter graduated and my younger daughter will be a senior, so at this point the decision that will be made regarding school schedules will have very little impact on my family. However, I am providing feedback as a concerned member of the community. Making a change to the start and end of the school day will have far-reaching consequences. Such a decision should not be made in a rush. I understand that some things are outside of the control of the BoE and administration, however the town budget was passed in mid-May and the BoE knew that the town would likely level-fund the education budget for longer than that. The administration and BoE should have been planning for this for months rather than waiting to July 12th to start the discussion.

I urge the Board not to make any changes to the school schedules. If it is impossible to keep the current schedules, then make temporary changes that will impact the fewest number of people as possible. Then, the Board should hire a consultant to thoroughly evaluate all of the ramifications of changing the school start and end times - including how it will impact academic performance, childcare, student and parent work, teachers who may have kids at home and need to get their kids off to school, special programs likes ECA and sports, etc. The consultants should seek input from all stakeholders and the BoE and administration should build in time to conduct outreach and educate stakeholders on why changes are necessary.

I am sure there are other ways for the BoE to balance the budget this year that will not cause the disruption and mayhem that this hasty change to school start and end days will certainly launch.

Thank you.

Avi Kamrat
135 Dessa Drive
Hamden CT
Parent of a rising senior

Transportation and Schedule Changes

Moras, Dana <dmoras@hamden.org>

Tue 7/26/2022 12:22 PM

To: input, public <publicinput@hamden.org>; Board of Education <BoardofEducation@hamden.org>

📎 1 attachments (30 KB)

HBOE-2.pdf;

Hello Board Members,

Thank you all for your continued support and work in the Hamden Public School System. I hope after reviewing the survey and listening to all the concerns you will reconsider changing the start time for elementary schools to a later time.

Pushing the start of school to a later time for elementary, would be a disservice to our children and to our wonderful Hamden Community for the following reasons:

- Working families would have an added financial burden of before and after child care for their children. Not to mention we are giving them only a few weeks to "figure it out." That is unacceptable and unfair.
- Young children wake up early. Even if you can provide before and after school care to eliminate the burden put on the working family, our little ones would be at a higher risk of burn-out, difficult behaviors would increase, and the academic social/emotional well-being of our children would be at risk. Our children's well-being should be our number one priority. Making this change would be detrimental to our little ones who have already endured so much over the last few years. It is unnecessary for them to suffer as a result of a district issue.
- Teaching is supposed to be a family friendly profession. It is hard to retain teachers as it is, many teachers would be forced to leave to a district with different start times. Why would we want to lose teachers who are dedicated to our district? I personally would have no choice but to leave the district I am proud to call home for 15 years for my own 3 children's child care issues. Additional child care is not a financial option for my family, even if we were able to find it within the few weeks left ahead.
- We pride ourselves in Hamden with the term "equity". There is nothing equitable with this change. We would be hypocrites to pass this through for selfish reasons of leaving this decision and problem to the last minute. It is not ok to pass this burden of the town onto every Hamden parent, student, teacher and staff member.

I thank you in advance for hearing our concerns and hope you make a decision in the best interest of our wonderful Hamden Community.

Dana Moras

Kindergarten Teacher

Shepherd Glen Elementary School

Comments for July 26, 2022 BOE Special Meeting

Sarah Morrill <sarahamorrill@gmail.com>

Tue 7/26/2022 11:10 AM

To: Parks, Reuel <rparks@hamden.org>;Asbery, David Lee <dasbery@hamden.org>;Carter-David, Siobhan <scarterdavid@hamden.org>;Cesare, Austin <acesare@hamden.org>;Khan, Mariam <mkhan@hamden.org>;Morton, Walter <wmorton@hamden.org>;Shea, Kevin <kshea@hamden.org>;Walsh, Gary <gwalth@hamden.org>;dbaez@hamden.com <dbaez@hamden.com>;Melissa Kaplan <makaplan6@yahoo.com>;input, public <publicinput@hamden.org>;**Board of Education <BoardofEducation@hamden.org>**

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Good morning,

Just a few more comments and thoughts regarding the proposed schedule changes to the start times for HPS.

To solve the budget issue it's going to take creative planning/thinking and not just making broad, arbitrary cuts that are beyond inconvenient, but are downright reckless!

1. Have you thought about combining bus routes/stops with St. Rita's, and Sacred Heart Academy? There is \$1M in Non-Public Transportation costs within the BOE budget. If a student attends St. Rita for example and lives in Dunbar's district, why not combine St. Rita routes with the Dunbar routes? This would eliminate, 7 buses for St. Rita. You could adjust the start times of both slightly to accommodate dropping off St. Rita students first at their school and then continue to drop them off at Dunbar. You could do the same for HHS and SHA. Not just HPS students/families should have to be the ones to drastically adjust their schedules when Hamden BOE is footing the bill. In the town I grew up in - the parochial school students rode the same buses as the public elementary school students. This past year when there was a problem with our Dunbar bus - the St. Rita bus did pick up our route and dropped off the St. Rita students first, and then the Dunbar students.

Further - I believe the High School and Middle School bus routes could be consolidated further to eliminate buses. There are 30 buses for the high school, with an average of 7 stops each (and one bus route with only 1 stop!) There are 48 stops that pick up at individual houses, as opposed to a single corner stop for a "neighborhood". There are 23 buses for the middle school with an average of 12 stops and 76 stops that pick up at individual houses, as opposed to again single corner stops. There must be ways to consolidate these routes to eliminate at least one bus each from the high school and middle school.

Buses are never full - even when there were staff shortages last year - our Dunbar bus route was combined with two other bus routes to "cover" for absent bus drivers (Bus 29, would also do the Bus 30 and Bus 8 routes - and there was plenty of room for all the kids)

2. It's still not clear how streamlining the elementary schools' start time saves any money on transportation costs - it would be nice to have a clear explanation and cost analysis presented AND what other avenues did you explore for cost savings besides transportation? meaning if we didn't adjust the transportation budget - what would be cut/adjusted instead? If the bus routes aren't adjusted, how does a change in start time for any school save money? Is this really a financial matter or is it b/c First Student cannot accommodate? It has been mentioned that First Student cannot accommodate certain scenarios that more families are in favor of - why are we allowing a service provider to dictate our school schedule? They need to accommodate the district - not the other way around. If they can't accommodate our schedule, then we probably need to look at another service provider.

3.. Have Before/Aftercare programs been contacted to ensure they can handle a significant increase in families needing before/after care at the elementary schools? And have crossing guards been made aware of these

potential changes and can they too accommodate this schedule change? (And if you're thinking of subsidizing before/aftercare costs - then just put that money towards the transportation budget and leave the schedule the way it is).

Please, get creative with adjustments that need to be made, and don't make the decision that makes the least sense for all. There is a solution that could be far better received, tolerated, and have meaningful cost savings if you properly thought through the situation. Our students and families have been through enough over the past two years - don't continue to add to the stress of trying to parent and educate our children while still dealing with the effect of a pandemic and ALL the world issues going on right now. Further - I don't believe changing the start times puts us in a better financial position for next year's budget cycle and we will be in the same boat again next year; and then what?

Thank you,
Sarah Morrill
65 Cassella Dr., Hamden
Dunbar Hill Elementary School parent of two.

School transportation

Myla <iheartruiner@gmail.com>

Tue 7/26/2022 10:32 AM

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

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Board of Education,

Late start time impacts working families & informing us in late summer leaves people scrambling for childcare.

Thank you,

Myla Wilson

30 Penn St, Hamden, CT 06514

Children attending Dunbar Hill School & HCLC

--

Myla Wilson

she/her

sent via mobile, pardon brevity or errors

Input on school start times, 2022-2023

Valen Diaz <valen.r.diaz@gmail.com>

Tue 7/26/2022 11:56 AM

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

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Dear Hamden Board of Education members,

Please avoid changing elementary school start times to 9am. If this is the only option, please ensure low-cost (even no-cost) before school care for working parents. Instead, I support elementary schools starting at the same time or earlier.

I also must express great concern that this decision and these conversations are taking place about a month before school is due to start. Planning school, child care, work, extracurriculars, and various appointment schedules is a delicate balance that takes an incredible amount of time. The timing of this decision is already too late to allow adequate time for necessary planning. After all parents, teachers, students, and the school communities at large have been through over the past two years (and counting) of the pandemic, this late-breaking school start time change is incredibly unresponsive to the collective burden of instability and uncertainty we have carried as a community. What we need now is stability – for our kids most of all.

Finally, please consider Helen Street School, which does not rely on buses for transportation. The start time is currently 8am-8:15am, so pushing to 9am would be a dramatic change for our school community, when we do not rely on buses and the issues with bus transportation are driving this decision. This would be inequitable for the Helen Street School community.

Thank you. Sincerely,
Valen R. Diaz
112 Pleasant Drive
Hamden, CT 06514

Change to Start of Day

Jennifer <jenstep0303@gmail.com>

Mon 7/25/2022 12:26 PM

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

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Hi,

As a parent to a 2nd grader at Bear Path Elementary School I am extremely concerned about pushing a later start time to school. This will affect our family in a negative way. Our daughter has sports 3x a week starting at 5pm, this would give her very little time after school for relaxation. To go from learning all day which is taxing on the mind and body to come home and have no time to eat or decompress from the day is not fair to her. There are many parents who need to leave the house for work at an early time, how will they maintain their home financially if their employer is not sympathetic? Providing free care before and after school only solves a small part of the problem and does this really benefit the kids? Our children and families should not have to take on the burden for our town administration mishandling funds. The superintendent and the Mayor need to look in at their salaries. The problems in this town are getting larger and to allow it to now affect our children is unbelievable.

Thank you
Jennifer Stephen
Bear Path Parent