

Community Forum with Dr. Winslow

November 1, 2021 9:00 a.m.

- Dr. Winslow introduced herself and members in attendance, that will help with the forum, and their rolls. Attendees were invited to put comments and questions in the chat or raise their virtual hand for an open discussion.
- A presentation of “School Start Times – Update” was provided with information and further details provided by Dr. Winslow. This presentation is similar to the one also provided in a recent board meeting.
- The issue with the previously approved but now rescinded school start time is the transportation turn around time frame. With the growth that has occurred in Hershey it is not conducive to the short 34 minutes allotted for this. The administrative team, particularly now, requests to not lose any instructional time.
- Looking to have workable times by the end of November/first week of December to propose to families through a survey.
- Changing the school start times has a lot of research for secondary level, but no research for the elementary level.
- Dr. Winslow answered questions coming into the chat.
- Questions:
 - Would the survey be posted on the website – yes
 - What is going on with lunches (question from registration) – Mr. Hummel has been working diligently to stay on top of supply chain issues and staffing shortages. Schools are seeing the same kinds of issues with food supply and staffing that restaurants are having. Mr. Hummel has switched vendors and worked hard to ensure a full supply of both fresh and frozen foods. The federal government has eased the requirements for what counts as a “full meal” for the time being.
 - COVID funding and the ESSER fund usage – used to balance our budget in order to not raise taxes and to be able to keep staff though we did need to furlough some foodservice staff, all of whom have been invited back at this point. The District will likely need to commit to a moderate tax increase in the upcoming years in order to maintain the staff we have and those we would like to bring back that were not replaced after retirements.
 - Is there a contingency plan for delaying school start times – looking to roll out the plan for the 2022-23 school year. If it is delayed to the 2023 school year, it will be because this is what families have requested via the survey we send out.
 - After school care for students – Survey will be sent to reflect the needs of parents with regards to this. The District doesn’t provide the child care but partners with an outside group to provide after school care.
 - ESSER fund usage survey will be available on the website.
 - Comment: Accommodations of high schoolers that have sports – the switch will put elementary in the dark, high school participate in the morning but this defeats the purpose, utilize a flex period to allow for those students to leave school at the end of the day for these sporting practices/events.
 - Community member – gave estimated figures of the cost increase to the community the flip to the school start times will cause – Dr. Winslow shared that the impact on childcare is definitely something to consider. Things are different for the families now than pre-COVID.

- What is meant by a flexible type schedule for the HS – This is a blended course schedule for students to allow for time in and out of school to fit the needs for extra-curricular activities. It also includes study halls that can be scheduled at the end of the day.
- Community member spoke to being a part of the committees and original panels for school start times where they had similar concerns in their discussions. His thoughts are of the administration and board being aware of the cost to families and that this may not reflect the entire communities' concerns. This will be a tough decision. He proposed that the 2022-23 year may be too soon as well but moving it out to the 2024-25 school year may be a better decision to give more time to prepare and recover from the pandemic. There will be an expense, but there is no getting away from it. After school activities are of course a concern – consider not holding them in the earlier hours as this will take the time allowed in the morning for the sleep. He asked for transparency as the process moves forward. He has hopes to see a high percentage of responses to the survey. – Dr. Winslow agreed that there is a great cost involved she also agreed that not having the morning activities other than swimming since that is the only time they are able to get water time.
- Community member – spoke in support of the District and that it is still the parent's responsibility to enforce the bed times at home. Also, encouraged elementary parents to understand that eventually they will also be in the position with a high schooler needing this extra sleep in the morning.
- It was asked where the teachers and the teachers union stand on this – It was shared that the teachers were a part of the original discussions. We are in communications with the teaching staff now and they are expecting this to come. They receive the minutes and attend the board meetings so they are aware of the items being discussed.
- Community member – wondered if this will just provide secondary students time to stay up later. Also, that as they get older they will not be afforded the same opportunity as they go to college and get jobs.
- Community member shared – that middle school and high school students have a hard time falling asleep earlier as discovered by the research.
- Dr. Winslow closed the forum by thanking all in attendance for their time and participation and announcing the next meeting will be held on January 10, 2022 at 12:00 p.m.