



School Start Time Report

4.10.2017

Westborough Public Schools
School Start Time Subcommittee
Final Report and Recommendations

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School Start Time Committee Members:

Amber Bock <u>Co-chair</u>	Superintendent of Schools
Ilyse Levine-Kanji <u>Co-chair</u>	Community Member/School Committee (until July 2016)
Leigh Becker	Hastings Principal
Brian Callaghan	WHS Principal
Cindy Crowley	Transportation Coordinator
Johanna DiCarlo	Athletic Director
Jack Foley	Gibbons Middle School Principal
Beth Hall	Psychologist/Parent
Chris Martin	Director of Fine Arts
Jeff Slomski	Mill Pond Assistant Principal
<u>NEW MEMBERS:</u>	Extended Membership For Phase II Work
Cynthia Arnold	Mill Pond Paraeducator
Sara Dullea	School Committee
Mary Flanagan	High School Faculty
Karen Forrest	Fine Arts Teacher
Patty Marcus	3rd Grade Teacher Armstrong
Pam Pellegrino	Gibbons Counselor
Tina Roney	High School Faculty
Kerry Stamm	Gibbons Paraeducator; Union President

Introduction:

In March of 2015, the School Committee voted to have the Superintendent form a subcommittee to study the potential of shifting to a later school start time for students in 7th - 12th grades. A committee was formed and over two years, the committee studied the impacts and potential options for a later school start time. The work was undertaken in response to the growing body of scientific evidence that early school start times negatively impact adolescent health, given the biological shift in sleep patterns during puberty.

After extensive work and collaboration the committee has finalized its research and development phase and has concluded with certain recommendations. It is the goal of this report to share the following:

- A recommendation for start times
- The meaningful data gathered during our process
- Impacts to resolve
- Implementation considerations & Impacts to consider

It is our hope as a committee that this report will provide the framework for both the decision making and implementation process needed for the School Committee to accept the committee's recommendation for a school start change. Following our recommendation, the remainder of the report provides informational detail on the committee's work, data on our learning, and additional considerations for implementation.

Recommendation:

A substantial majority of both the Westborough Leadership Team and the School Start Time Committee support a later start time for the Gibbons Middle School and the Westborough High School, and a slightly earlier start time for Mill Pond School. After an exploration of numerous options the recommendation is for the following start times to be implemented for fall of 2018:

FLIP MILL POND AND WHS/GMS SCHEDULES	
Current Time	Potential Time
Mill Pond: 8:08-2:25	Mill Pond: 7:45-2:02
WHS/Gibbons: 7:30-1:57	WHS/Gibbons: 8:10-2:37
Pre K-3: 8:50-3:05	No change

Process:

To reach a majority conclusion the committee and WLT have used the last two years to both understand the need for later sleep patterns for adolescents, and then committed to selecting an option that met the following criteria:

- It had manageable or no financial impact
- It limited potential negative impacts
- It achieved meaningful added sleep opportunity for middle school and high school students

Over the first year of study the committee analyzed current research on sleep (see Appendix 1), explored the process and decisions of other districts (Appendix 2), and identified the constraints limiting establishing ideal start times for all schools. As noted at several stages of our work, the two major limitations of transportation and after school obligations confine options for both the start and end time of school for students in all grades. At the close of year one a transportation study was enlisted to ensure that the committee was leveraging all options for how to best optimize bussing (Appendix 3). Additionally, at the close of year one the committee conducted a survey that explored a 20 minute delay option across district. The learning from that survey guided the modifications and direction of year two. That feedback resulted in lengthening the time for exploration, adding faculty and support staff onto the committee for phase II of the work, and seeking more 'meaningful added sleep opportunity' beyond just 20 minutes.

Communication throughout the process was a priority. The committee presented an initial overview of its work (Appendix 4) and a mid-cycle review (Appendix 5) to the School Committee, and multiple Connect5 messages were used to share information to faculty and families. As a part of the learning phase, as well as community outreach, a presenter who was an expert on the topic of sleep and teens hosted an event that was well attended.

During year two the committee began the work of synthesizing and analyzing the large amounts of data available from surveys, research, and informal discussions within each building. Focusing on three best possible options, a final survey was developed to present options and gather final feedback. That survey data and the guiding criteria led to the emergence of a final best option.

Executive Summary of Survey II

Full survey data is provided in Appendix 6, but the summary highlights data that provided information to help guide decision making:

Synthesis:

Robust response to survey from all sectors of the school community:

- Parents: 1131 responses
- Staff: 317 responses
- Students grades 7-12: 630 responses

All 3 survey groups favor changing the current schedule, although staff are almost evenly divided.

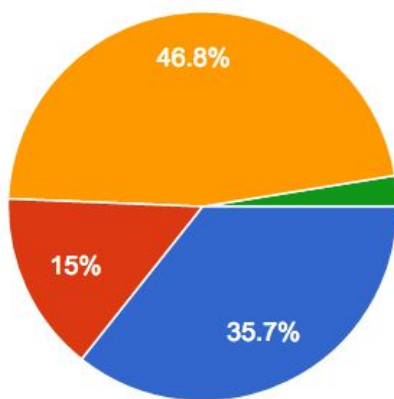
- Parents heavily favor changing the current schedule: 74% to 24%
- Staff slightly favor changing the current schedule: 50% to 46%
- Students favor changing the current schedule: 58% to 38%

For those who favor change, "flip" is most popular option, although parents are almost evenly divided.

- Staff: 35% (112) favor flip; 15% (47) favor 20 min delay
- Parents: 38% (432) favor 20 min delay; 36% (404) favor flip
- Students: 39% (245) favor flip; 19% (118) favor 20 min
- Note: there is a substantial number of staff whose first choice was "no change"

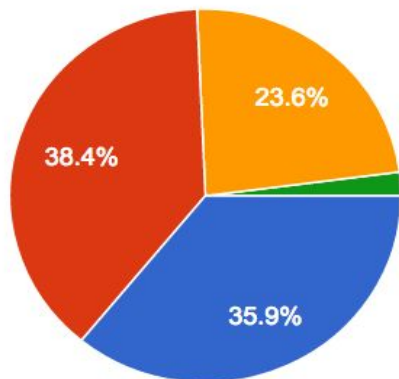
A summary of question: "Which proposal do you prefer?"

Staff:



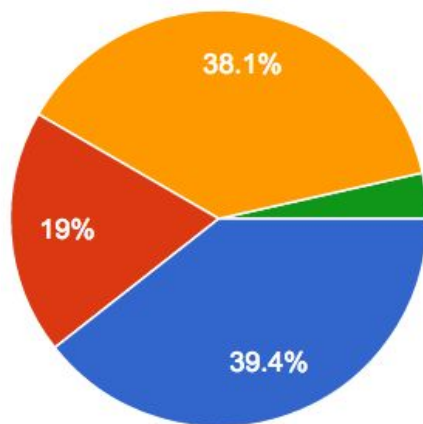
- "Flip" so Mill Pond starts first (bells would become MP: 7:45-2:02; WHS/Gibbons: 8:10-2:37; preK-3: 8:50-3:...
- 20 minute delay for older students (bells would become WHS/Gibbons 7:50-2:17; MP: 8:28-2:25; preK-3: 9...
- No change (bell times would remain WHS/Gibbons: 7:30-1:57; MP: 8:08-2:25; preK-3: 8:50-3:05)
- I need additional information to decide

Parents:



- "Flip" so Mill Pond starts first (bells would become MP: 7:45-2:02; WHS/Gibbons: 8:10-2:37; K-3: 8:50-3:05 [...])
- 20 minute delay for older students (bells would become WHS/Gibbons 7:50-2:17; MP: 8:28-2:25; preK-3: 9:00-3:05)
- No change (bell times would remain WHS/Gibbons: 7:30-1:57; MP: 8:08-2:25; preK-3: 8:50-3:05)
- I need additional information to decide

Students:



- "Flip" so Mill Pond starts first (bells would become MP: 7:45-2:02; WHS/Gibbons: 8:10-2:37; preK-3: 8:50-3:05 [...])
- 20 minute delay for older students (bells would become WHS/Gibbons 7:50-2:17; MP: 8:28-2:25; preK-3: 9:00-3:05)
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- I need additional information to decide

Primary benefits to students of flip:

- 40 minute additional sleep potential for students grades 7-12
- Timing of sleep better aligned to teens' biological rhythms
See Appendix 1 for research on teen sleep
- More efficient entry/dismissal procedures for Mill Pond students
- Transportation route increases efficiencies
- No time change impact on preK-3 students
- Morning events at HS (clubs, Fine Arts rehearsals, help sessions) can begin at 7:30a.m. as opposed to 6:30a.m
- Maintains option for Community Ed to be staffed by HS student workers

Major take-aways:

- Change is logistically difficult

- No single option works best for everyone, particularly as children age/change schools
- Holistic approach is desired, including reviewing homework/outside commitments
- Additional education required regarding the scientific underpinnings of proposal
- Additional education required about necessity of sleep, reducing exposure to electronics/bluelight, balanced scheduling

Implementation Considerations & Impacts to Resolve:

The committee felt strongly that in developing a final option for recommendation that the following section on implementation guidelines and mitigation of impacts were fundamentally connected to receiving a majority recommendation to properly and adequately coordinate a change of start time in the fall of 2018.

- Form an implementation committee in the fall of 2017 to manage the planning and communication. WLT will anchor the majority of this work, with some additional working committee groups as needed.
- Explore student health and wellness as a complex issue that requires a continued 'multi-prong' approach inclusive of the study on homework, a focus on wellness and life balance, and parent education on the importance of sleep and wellness for young people.
- Establish a Schedule Committee at the high school to explore changes to schedule as well as use of time during the day. The committee will be chaired by the principal.
- Impacts to resolve or minimize:
 - HS sports teams and middle school teams being dismissed from last block of the academic day for games
 - Gymnastics, Golf, Hockey and Swim teams may face increases in cost for scheduling rental time for practice space. Practice times at these off site locations will likely be changed to evenings instead of afternoons.
 - Explore what the end of the day looks like for students and staff- extra help sessions, practice start times, etc.
 - Cost to develop Mill Pond schedule. Anticipated 1.5 - 2.0 staffing needed to cover shared specialists who will be unable to travel due to schedule shift at Mill Pond.
 - Faculty impacts to family daycare, need time for exploration and discussion to support a change in schedule.

Conclusion:

The two year work of this committee is to be commended. As a committee, the group illustrated some of the best components of a functional and committed team, in that the process was authentic and all of the decisions evolved from the work of the committee and what was learned. How the group moved toward decisions was continually evolving based upon the learning, the data, and each member's guiding commitment to act on behalf of what he or she believed was best for students. People did not work out of their own best interests, but focused on the betterment of the school and life experiences of the students we are charged with serving.

Achieving a majority decision on a best option for approval, by both WLT and the Start Time Committee, was arrived at through a thoughtful and careful process where review of current research and feedback from the community and faculty guided important improvements of the early direction of the committee. The group is to be commended for its commitment and collaborative contributions from all members.

Appendix:

Appendix One: Research on Sleep

[Los Angeles Times: Op-Ed on unexpected outcomes of later start time](#)

[Community Advocate article on sleep hygiene/importance of sleep](#)

[School Start Times for Adolescents](#)

[Link to Video Presentation by Mary Carskadon, Ph.D. \(sleep expert, Bradley Hospital, Brown Medical School\)](#)

[Synchronizing education to adolescent biology: "let teens sleep, start school later"](#)

[Examining the Impact of Later School Start Times on Health and Academic Performance of High School Students \(Wahlstrom, et.al., 2014\):](#)

[Sleepless in Fairfax: The Difference One More Hour of Sleep Can Make for Teen Hopelessness, Suicidal Ideation, and Substance Use \(Winsler, et. al., 2014\):](#)

[Sleep and Athletes:](#)

[Impact of Delaying School Start Times on Adolescent Sleep, Mood, & Behavior \(Owens, et.al., 2010\):](#)

[The Impact of School Daily Schedule on Adolescent Sleep \(Hansen, et.al, 2005\):](#)

[Link to AAP Policy Statement \(abstract\):](#)

Appendix Two: Other District Notes

[Start Time of Districts](#)

[Start Times of districts](#)

[School Start Time Sharon Public Schools](#)

Appendix Three: Transportation Study

[Transportation Report](#)

[Transportation Study Questions](#)

Appendix Four: SC Report Update on Initial Work

[Update to SC February 3, 2016](#)

[SC Update January 4, 2017](#)

Appendix Five: SC Report on Mid-cycle Update

[Mid-cycle Report](#)

Appendix Six: Survey Data

[Teacher Survey](#)

[Student Survey](#)

[Parent Survey](#)

Appendix: Other data

[Full List of Impacts](#)

[Community Update Phase 2](#)

[Staff Communication](#)