

**School District of Elmbrook**

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**Calendar  
Committee  
Recommendations**

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**School Year Calendars for 2017-18 and  
2018-19 and Associated  
Recommendations**

**Calendar Committee Membership**

*Kristin Westrick, Parent, Co-Facilitator*

*Dr. Dana Monogue, Assistant Superintendent, Co-Facilitator*

*Kathryn Wilson, School Board President, Ex-Officio*

*Dr. Mark Hansen, Superintendent, Ex-Officio*

<b>Parent/Community Representatives</b>	<b>Student Representatives</b>	<b>Staff Representatives</b>
Chris Birt, Parent	Everett Cartier, BEHS	Ronn Blaha, Teacher/Coach, BCHS
Joe Jeanguenat, First Student Bus Company	Justin Parbs, BEHS	Deena Camden, Teacher, WHMS
Heidi Kohler, Parent	Pranav Shashidhar, BCHS	Brett Gruetzmacher, Principal, BCHS
Valle Moretti, Parent	Brandi Thomsen, BCHS	Julie Hardie, Teacher, Swanson Elementary
Silvia Pasquini, Parent	Caroline Westrick, BEHS	Don Kurth, Athletic Director, BCHS
Dave Richter, Parent	Riley Wistrom, BCHS	Mark Peperkorn, Principal, PVMS
Sharie Sinson, Parent		Cheryl Schenck, Assistant Principal, BEHS
Dr. Rodney Willoughby, Parent		Jean Nigel, Teacher, WHMS
		Kristin Olson,

		Principal, Tonawanda Elementary  Ben Westphal, Athletic Director, BEHS  Michael Goodman, Teacher/Coach, Burleigh Elementary and Brookfield East
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**Executive Summary**

The Calendar Committee, comprised of a diverse group of Elmbrook Community stakeholders, was charged to analyze five key opportunities and make recommendations to the School Board for consideration and approval. The five key opportunities were:

1. Develop school year calendars for 2017-18 and 2018-19 for Board Approval;
2. Analyze the need for and realities associated with adjustments to school day start and end times;
3. Analyze the impact of homework load on students and provide guidance regarding any recommended actions warranted;
4. Analyze the impact of student schedule intensity on the health and wellness of our student body and provide guidance regarding any recommended actions warranted;
5. Analyze the current Thursday early release structure to determine if a different structure is desired and warranted.

Taking into consideration research on the sleep needs of adolescent and teen students, state statute requirements set forth by the Department of Public Instruction, information about bus transportation schedules and costs, and considerable stakeholder feedback from parents, students, and staff, the committee has put forth the following recommendations:

<p><b>School Year Calendars</b></p>	<p>The committee’s final recommendation for the 2017-18 school year can be found <a href="#">here</a>. The committee’s final recommendation for the 2018-19 school year can be found <a href="#">here</a>.</p>
<p><b>School Day Start and End Times</b></p>	<p>Summary Recommendations:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Survey feedback across the three stakeholder groups was decidedly mixed when it came to satisfaction/dissatisfaction with our current school day start and end times and did not provide the committee with clear direction nor a mandate for change from our current structure.</li> <li>2. The costs associated with a move away from current school day start and end times appears cost-prohibitive at this time.</li> <li>3. The committee believes it important to allow the new bus transportation provider time to become acquainted with the district so that they can become an informed and engaged partner in these discussions in the future.</li> <li>4. The committee would like the medical research reviewed on the topic of adolescent sleep to be shared with the broader Elmbrook Community, to include internal and external groups whose activities and actions may have a direct impact on student sleep schedules. These include, but are not limited to athletic and activity coaches and advisors, club</li> </ol>

	<p>sports organizations who use district facilities for practices, and private and parochial school leaders.</p> <p>Specific Actions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Presentations at Principal Chats at each school will be completed by November 1, 2017 during which research on the sleep needs of adolescent and teen students will be shared.</li> <li>2. This report will be sent to all private and parochial schools within district boundaries by October 1, 2017.</li> <li>3. Athletic Directors, during regularly scheduled meeting with coaches and advisors, will share the sleep research findings. This will be done with all coaches and advisors by April 1, 2018.</li> </ol>
<p><b>Homework Load</b></p>	<p>Summary Recommendations:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Continue to educate teachers and administrators on best practices in the area of homework to ensure appropriate use.</li> <li>2. Continue to educate students and parents on the importance of a balanced course load on the overall health and wellness of students.</li> <li>3. Increase sensitivity to homework intensity during specific times of the school year (e.g., Homecoming, Prom, musical productions, ACT and Workkeys Examinations).</li> <li>4. Ensure “homework-free” breaks for students (Thanksgiving break, winter break, spring break).</li> <li>5. Encourage more coordination amongst teachers so that homework assignments and projects are given in a more dispersed way.</li> </ol>

	<p>6. Continue to encourage students to advocate for themselves if they need homework accommodations due to competing priorities in their schedules.</p> <p>Specific Actions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Information regarding homework best practices will be shared by principals at each school by October 1, 2017 and will be monitored through the Educator Effectiveness process with each individual staff member during the 2017-18 school year.</li> <li>2. This report and associated recommendations will be shared with guidance counselors at the middle and high school levels to inform and influence their work with students and their families as they plan courses of study.</li> <li>3. This report and associated recommendations will be shared at “Principal Chats” at each secondary school by November 1, 2017.</li> <li>4. Principals will engage teachers and teacher teams in discussions regarding strategies to better coordinate the intensity of homework assignments and administration of tests.</li> <li>5. Principals will ensure “homework-free” breaks and will message and monitor the intensity of homework during specific times of the year according to school-specific activities.</li> </ol>
<p><b>Student Schedule Intensity</b></p>	<p>Summary Recommendations:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Engage internal and external stakeholders who are directly responsible for student athletic and activity schedules in a discussion about the work of the committee and stakeholder feedback.</li> </ol>

2. School administrators are asked to discuss this issue with coaches and advisors and more closely monitor practice/meeting schedules and practice/meeting durations. This is particularly warranted during certain periods of the school year, such as finals week.
3. School administrators and guidance counselors are asked to conduct student focus groups each semester to continuously gain feedback about student schedule intensity.
4. Continue to educate students and parents on the importance of a balanced course load and sleep on the overall health and wellness of students.

Specific Actions:

1. Athletic Directors will share this report and associated recommendations with all coaches and advisors by April 1, 2018.
2. Athletic Directors will monitor facility usage and practice schedules/club meeting schedules and provide feedback to coaches and advisors when and where appropriate.
3. This report and associated recommendations will be sent to all athletic club organizations who rent gym space.
4. This report and associated recommendations will be shared at Principal Chats by November 1, 2017.
5. Principals (or designees) will conduct focus groups with students to ensure students are being encouraged to take a load of courses that is balanced. This should occur between November 2017 and February 2018.

<p><b>Thursday Early Release Structure</b></p>	<p>Summary Recommendations:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The committee recommends the current Thursday Early Release model remain in place and that the district works to continuously improve its effectiveness using ongoing stakeholder feedback.</li> </ol> <p>Specific Actions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Annual stakeholder survey data will be used to monitor effectiveness and satisfaction.</li> </ol>
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**Calendar Committee Charge from the Superintendent**

During the last two school years, stakeholder feedback regarding school calendars, school start/end times, and the social, emotional, and academic well-being of our students, staff and families remains consistent and calls for action. In response to this feedback, the School District of Elmbrook will convene a Calendar Committee. The objective for the Calendar Committee is to make a two year school calendar recommendation to the Board of Education’s Personnel Committee. To help, the district established critical success factors to guide the work.

Critical Success Factors

1. Solicits broad stakeholder input to include families, staff and community partners.
2. Promotes student, staff, and family well-being.
3. Allows for professional development of our staff during the work day.
4. Considers all Federal Holidays, Religious Observations, and State Mandates.

Key process steps include:

1. Conduct and evaluate segmented stakeholder survey results that include feedback and input on:
  - a. school start/end time.
  - b. school year start date.
  - c. scheduled breaks.
  - d. exam schedules.
  - e. stakeholder needs/desires.
2. Provide recommendations on specific work-free weekends and/or scheduled breaks because we value our students and staff and want them to focus on well-being and family.
3. Recommend adjustments regarding co-curricular time requirements for staff and students.
4. Analyze the Thursday early release model for changes/modifications.

The Calendar Committee will be co-chaired by the Assistant Superintendent and an Elmbrook Parent Leadership Council representative and work from a timeline that includes:

- September - Ground committee in research and benchmark practices;  
Develop and deploy survey
- October - Analyze survey results, develop ideas, prioritize requirements
- November - January - Develop possible solutions and solicit feedback
- February - identify school year calendar options for board approval
- April - identify other recommendations to the school board for approval in the area of overall wellness (homework guidelines, student schedule parameters, etc)

## **Connecting the Work of the Calendar Committee to District Strategy**

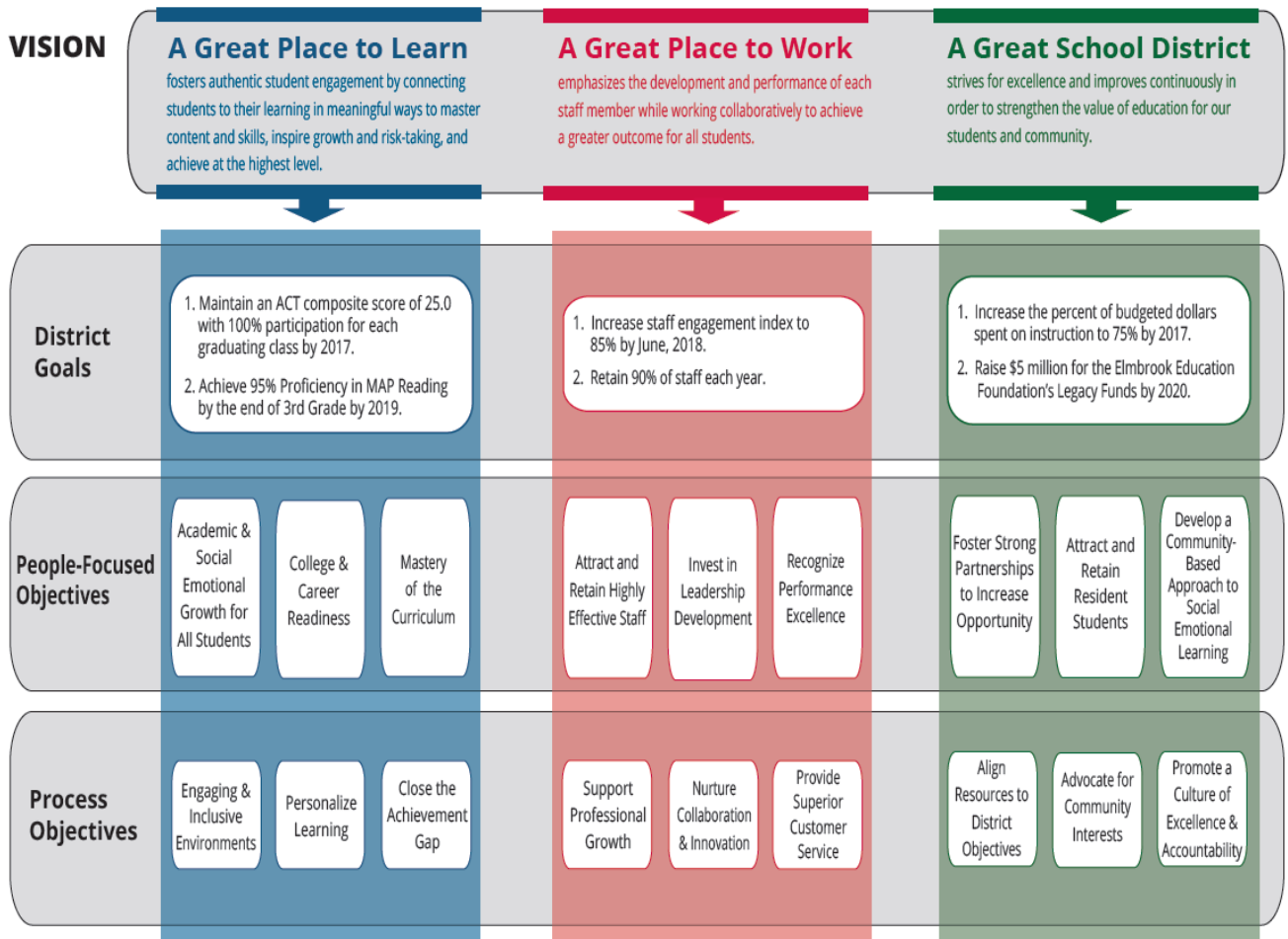
The work of the Calendar Committee is directly linked to two “people-focused objectives” on the Elmbrook Strategy Map: “Academic and Social Growth for All Students” and “Develop a Community-Based Approach to Social Emotional Learning.” The opportunities listed above connect to the district’s desire to engage

the larger Elmbrook Community in a meaningful discussion about the factors within our control that contribute to the overall health and wellness of the students and adults within it. The key opportunities addressed by the committee were developed to foster academic and social emotional growth in students.



## ELMBROOK STRATEGY MAP

Our MISSION to *educate and inspire every student to think, to learn, and to succeed* is guided by our CORE VALUES: Visionary Leadership, Relationships, Collaboration, Agility, and Continuous Improvement.



## Relevant Research and Information Used

In order to approach the key opportunities with the knowledge needed to make informed and thoughtful decisions, the committee used research and information from a variety of sources. Because school-day start and end times were being

considered for adjustment, the committee relied upon these resources for guidance:

1. [School Start Times for Adolescents: Adolescent Sleep Working Group, Committee on Adolescence and Council on School Health](#)
2. [Insufficient Sleep in Adolescents and Young Adults: An Update on Causes and Consequences](#)
3. [Recommended Amount of Sleep for Pediatric Populations: A Consensus Statement of the American Academy of Sleep Medicine](#)

The committee needed to work within the parameters and guidelines set forth in state law with respect to school-year calendars, hours of instruction, and school year start date. Details regarding state statute requirements can be found by following this [link](#) to the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction.

## **Meeting Dates and Structures**

The Calendar Committee met on five occasions between September 2016 and March 2017. Smaller design teams, such as the survey development team, also met periodically during this period and then brought their work to the larger committee for feedback and fine-tuning. Each full-committee meeting was held in the evening to accommodate the schedules of members. Meetings were held at the Central Administrative Offices building. Agendas, research articles, presentations, and other resources used by the committee were shared using Google Applications.

Meeting agendas were comprised of presentations, survey development and analysis, and small and large group discussion. Decisions were made using a consensus process.

The committee's work and processes were made transparent to the Elmbrook Community via a webpage linked to the School District of Elmbrook's webpage. The Calendar Committee webpage can be accessed [here](#).

## **Community Engagement in the Process**

In order to ensure the work and outcomes of the committee were grounded in the needs and wants of the stakeholders it serves, surveys were developed and administered to parents, students, and staff. A small design team comprised of committee members developed the surveys. Their work was improved and eventually validated by the full committee. The questions included in each survey were connected to each of the key opportunities. Survey results were then used to inform and influence the committee's recommendations aligned to each key opportunity. The committee came to consensus on the fact that equal weight would be given to the feedback received from each of the three stakeholder groups during the decision making process. The surveys were launched using "Survey Monkey", an online survey tool that ensured confidentiality for participants. A total of 3,491 stakeholders took part in the survey: 1,137 parents, 1,865 students, and 489 staff. To view the survey data in its entirety, please follow these links:

[Parent Survey Results](#)

[Student Survey Results](#)

[Staff Survey Results](#)

## **Key Opportunity #1: School-Year Calendar Development and Recommendations**

The committee was charged with the development of school-year calendars for 2017-18 and 2018-19. Stakeholder survey data, state law that mandates a school-year start date of September 1 or later, and respect for religious holidays informed the committee's school-year calendar recommendations. The following stakeholder survey data was used by the committee in the development of each school-year calendar.

Survey Responses - School Year Calendar Options  
Stakeholder Summary

**School Start Date for 2017-18**

	<b>Friday, Sept. 1</b>	<b>Tuesday, Sept. 5</b>
<b>Students</b>	74.96%	25.04%
<b>Parents</b>	55.49%	44.51%
<b>Staff</b>	82.82%	17.18%

**Maintain a fall break or move the day elsewhere in the calendar** (Wednesday before Thanksgiving)

	<b>Maintain a fall break</b>	<b>Use the day elsewhere in the calendar</b>
<b>Students</b>	52.82%	47.18%
<b>Parents</b>	36.61%	63.39%
<b>Staff</b>	47.03%	52.97%

**Schedule spring break the same time as surrounding districts**

	<b>Parents</b>	<b>Staff</b>
<b>% Important/Very</b>	33.98%	61.76%

<b>Important</b>		
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**Schedule spring break the same time every year**

	<b>Parents</b>	<b>Staff</b>
<b>% Important/Very Important</b>	21.59%	17.18%

**Schedule spring break after third term so students have a homework-free spring break**

	<b>Students</b>	<b>Parents</b>	<b>Staff</b>
<b>% Important/Very Important</b>	84.67%	59.96%	32.52%

**Support of move away from Thursday Early Release to monthly Full-Day Release**

	<b>Students</b>	<b>Parents</b>	<b>Staff</b>
<b>% Supportive/Very Supportive</b>	31.37%	45.57%	56.85%

**Support to move away from Thursday Early Release to weekly Late-Start**

	<b>Students</b>	<b>Parents</b>	<b>Staff</b>
<b>%</b>	33.09%	23.09%	27.61%

<b>Supportive/Very Supportive</b>			
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### Key Opportunity #1: Committee Recommendations

The survey data was analyzed by the committee and three draft calendars for each school year were presented for discussion. The committee’s final recommendation for the 2017-18 school year can be found [here](#). The committee’s final recommendation for the 2018-19 school year can be found [here](#).

The following topics received considerable discussion within the committee and should be noted:

- Stakeholder survey feedback did not provide the committee with an overwhelming mandate to move away from the current Thursday Early Release model, and therefore that was maintained.
- The committee recommends that the current Thursday Early Release model continue to be improved and refined so as to garner increased levels of satisfaction and support from parents, students, and staff.
- Martin Luther King Jr. Day was discussed as a day-off for students and staff. This was achieved in the 2018-19 calendar, but not in the 2017-18 calendar. This was affected by the need for each term of the school year to have approximately the same number of student contact days and a no-contact day for staff at the end of each term.
- Because state law mandates a school year start-date of September 1 or later, the start-date for the 2018-19 school year falls on Sept. 4, the latest possible date using this requirement. Graduation that year falls on Sunday, June 9, which is early, compressing the entire school-year, leaving few options for days off during the course of the year. The committee discussed the possibility of moving graduation to the following Sunday, Father’s Day, but that did not receive a consensus of support. The possibility of moving graduation to a weeknight during the week of June 9 was also discussed, but

also did not receive a consensus of support and demanded a much grander conversation with those outside of the Calendar Committee. The committee is willing to reconvene if necessary.

## **Key Opportunity #2: Adjustments to School Day Start and End Times**

The research on the sleep needs of adolescents and teens provides very clear evidence and recommendations. According to The American Academy of Sleep Medicine, students ages six to twelve should get nine to twelve hours of sleep in a twenty-four hour period and students ages thirteen to eighteen should get eight to ten hours of sleep in a twenty-four hour period. If students do not get the recommended hours of sleep consistently, academic performance and social-emotional well-being can be compromised. The committee studied the research previously cited in this report and included questions in each stakeholder survey on this topic. Several data points from the three stakeholder surveys were used by the committee to determine recommendations. For specific information about data from each of the stakeholder surveys, please click the following links:

[Parent Survey Results](#)

[Student Survey Results](#)

[Staff Survey Results](#)

The committee's review and analysis of stakeholder feedback related to this key opportunity included the following key findings:

1. There is a strong level of satisfaction, across all three stakeholder groups, with the current school day start and end time schedules.
2. There is a strong level of concern, particularly with staff and students, with the idea of making changes to school day start and end times due to the potential impacts on athletic and activity schedules, and family transportation routines and needs.

3. There is concern, across all three stakeholder groups, about the potential negative impacts on students not getting enough sleep, but not clear direction regarding recommended actions to take to address the concerns.

Parents/Guardians and staff were asked to respond to three sample school-day schedules with respect to their acceptability:

Plan A:	Arrival Time	Bell Time	Bell Time	Depart time	Home Arrival (latest)
Elementary	7:30 am	7:40 am	2:33 pm	2:40 pm	
High School	8:07 am	8:17 am	3:31 pm	3:40 pm	
Middle School	8:50 am	9:00 am	4:13 pm	4:22 pm	5:02 pm

Plan B:	Arrival Time	Bell Time	Bell Time	Depart time	Home Arrival (latest)
Middle School	7:27 am	7:40 am	2:53 pm	3:02 pm	
High School	8:07 am	8:17 am	3:31 pm	3:40 pm	
Elementary	9:02 am	9:12 am	4:05 pm	4:12 pm	4:45 pm

Plan C (current):	Arrival Time	Bell Time	Bell Time	Depart time	Home Arrival (latest)
Middle School	7:05 am	7:18 am	2:31 pm	2:40 pm	
High School	7:45 am	7:55 am	3:09 pm	3:17 pm	
Elementary	8:40am	8:50 am	3:43 pm	3:40 pm	4:30 pm

	Plan A	Plan B	Plan C
Parents - % Acceptable/ Very Acceptable	<b>45.58%</b>	<b>70.09%</b>	<b>69.95%</b>
Staff - % Acceptable/Very Acceptable	<b>51.24%</b>	<b>54.81%</b>	<b>89.11%</b>

The strongest support from parents and staff was for Plan C, which is our current school day schedule.

### **Bus Transportation and Its Relationship to School-Day Schedules**

Another variable impacting school-day schedule scenarios is bus transportation. The School District of Elmbrook transports nearly 7,000 students every day in the district's nine public schools and nine area parochial schools. The geographic layout of the district and the large distances between schools play an important role in scheduling and coordination of bus routes amongst public and private school locations. Our current school day schedules at the elementary, middle, and high school levels are driven, in large part, by our bus transportation costs.

We currently employ a "three-tier" system of bus transportation. Fifty-three school buses are needed to transport students first to our middle schools (38 routes), then to our high schools (32 routes), and lastly, to our elementary schools (47 routes). Twenty-five routes are used to transport private school students to nine parochial/private schools. Eighteen routes are used to transport students with disabilities needing specialized transportation services. The need for a three-tier bus transportation schedule is driven by financial factors. Each individual bus route costs approximately \$34,000 annually.

The committee brainstormed a variety of school-day start and end-time scenarios, including a two-tier transportation system that would include a middle and high school start-time that was the same. To achieve this, an additional 36 bus routes would need to be added, resulting in a cost increase of approximately \$1,759,900 annually. The committee also costed Plan A and Plan B as presented in the stakeholder surveys. Plan A would result in the need to add fifteen bus routes, resulting in a cost increase of \$733,300. Plan B would result in the need to add seven bus routes, resulting in a cost increase of \$342,200 annually. The committee decided at the outset of its process that fiscal stewardship would be a primary consideration in the decision-making process. Because adjustments to school day start and end times would result in considerable increases in funding, these scenarios did not receive committee support.

In the midst of the Calendar Committee's process, the district went through a "Request for Proposal" process and eventually selected a new bus transportation provider whose services will be put into place at the beginning of the 2017-18 school year.

## Key Opportunity #2: Committee Recommendations

Stakeholder feedback from parents, students, and staff regarding school day start and end times, concerns about student sleep needs and potential impacts to achievement and wellness, and information regarding bus transportation factors that inform and influence school day start and end times at the elementary, middle, and high school levels, were analyzed by the committee. The following were determined by the committee:

1. Survey feedback across the three stakeholder groups is decidedly mixed when it came to satisfaction/dissatisfaction with our current school day start and end times and did not provide the committee with clear direction.
2. The costs associated with a move away from current school day start and end times appears cost-prohibitive at this time.
3. The committee believes it important to allow the new bus transportation provider time to become acquainted with the district so that they can become an informed and engaged partner in these discussions in the future.
4. The committee would like the medical research reviewed on the topic of adolescent sleep to be shared with the broader Elmbrook Community, to include parents, internal and external groups whose activities and actions may have a direct impact on student sleep schedules. These include, but are not limited to athletic and activity coaches and advisors, club sports organizations who use district facilities for practices, and private and parochial school leaders.

## **Key Opportunity #3: Homework**

Students and parents have long provided anecdotal feedback about their concerns regarding homework load and intensity and cited this as a factor affecting the overall health and wellness of our student body. The committee reviewed the

following specific stakeholder survey data when contemplating its recommendations in this area:

How concerned are you about homework?

	Students	Parents	Staff
<b>Not concerned</b>	12.01%	33.27%	25.97%
<b>Somewhat concerned</b>	25.74%	27.13%	32.31%
<b>Concerned</b>	29.81%	19.32%	21.27%
<b>Very Concerned</b>	27.94%	18.0%	11.25%
<b>No Opinion</b>	4.5%	2.28%	9.2%

On average, how many hours do you (students) spend on homework daily?

<b>I typically don't have homework</b>	5.36%
<b>Up to 1 hour</b>	24.83%
<b>1-2 hours</b>	39.13%
<b>More than 2 hours</b>	30.67%

Do you believe your course load has an impact on your (students) overall health and wellness?

<b>Yes</b>	68.79%
<b>No</b>	31.21%

Are you (staff) supportive of "homework-free" breaks for students?

<b>Yes</b>	86.91%
<b>No</b>	13.09%

**Key Opportunity #3: Committee Recommendations**

Stakeholder feedback again provides mixed results regarding concerns in the area of homework load for students. Clearly, students are concerned with both the intensity of homework and their course load. Parents and staff are less concerned. It should be noted that parents and students have much control over course load choices and are urged to seek a balanced approach. The committee recommends the following:

1. Continue to educate teachers and administrators on best practices in the area of homework to ensure appropriate use.
2. Increase sensitivity to homework intensity during specific times of the school year (e.g., Homecoming, Prom, musical productions).
3. Ensure “homework-free” breaks for students (Thanksgiving break, winter break, spring break).
4. Encourage more coordination amongst teachers so that homework assignments and projects are given in a more dispersed way.
5. Continue to encourage students to advocate for themselves if they need homework accommodations due to competing priorities in their schedules. This should include scheduled activities, such as the ACT Examination and Workkeys Examination in March.

**Key Opportunity #4: Student Schedule Intensity**

Students in The School District of Elmbrook are highly engaged, active learners who take part in a wide array of athletic and extracurricular activities and events. The district prides itself on the accomplishments and achievements of its students. We

recognize, however, that the time demands placed on students outside of the academic school day, for those participating in these endeavors, can have negative impacts on the health and wellness of those involved. Therefore, the committee sought stakeholder feedback in this area. The following survey data was analyzed by the committee:

How concerned are you about the impact of involvement in early morning/late evening athletic or activity participation on overall health and wellness?

	Students	Parents	Staff
<b>Not Concerned</b>	22.36%	17.91%	19.22%
<b>Somewhat Concerned</b>	28.20%	30.47%	29.24%
<b>Concerned</b>	21.29%	24.85%	25.56%
<b>Very Concerned</b>	10.56%	17.30%	11.25%
<b>No Opinion</b>	17.59%	9.48%	14.72%

The committee also reviewed information from both district high schools regarding facility utilization for athletic practice or other clubs/activities. School district athletic facilities are in use on most days as early as 5:30 am and as late as 9:30 pm with a variety of programs. The student representatives on the committee provided considerable insight and perspective into the discussions in this area and helped the committee as a whole gain a greater understanding of student schedule intensity. The commitment to and expectation of excellence in all aspects of our students’ lives is appreciated but also viewed as a cause of stress and pressure for many.

**Key Opportunity #4: Committee Recommendations**

Stakeholder survey data regarding student schedule intensity and its impact on the health and wellness of our study body was mixed, yet consistent across the three surveyed groups. There is clearly some level of concern for a cross section of our community. The committee is making the following recommendations aligned to this key opportunity:

- 1. Engage internal and external stakeholders who are directly responsible for student athletic and activity schedules in a discussion about the work of the committee and stakeholder feedback.
- 2. School administrators and guidance counselors are asked to discuss this issue with coaches and advisors and more closely monitor practice/meeting schedules and practice/meeting durations. This is particularly warranted during certain periods of the school year, such as finals week.
- 3. School administrators are asked to conduct student focus groups each semester to continuously gain feedback about student schedule intensity.

## **Key Opportunity #5: Thursday Early Release Structure**

As previously noted in the Key Opportunity #1 section of this report, the committee recommended adherence to the current Thursday Early Release model. Stakeholders were asked about their support of a move away from our current model to either a full-day release model or a late-start model. The following data was used to inform that recommendation:

### **Support of move away from Thursday Early Release to monthly Full-Day Release**

	<b>Students</b>	<b>Parents</b>	<b>Staff</b>
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<b>% Supportive/Very Supportive</b>	31.37%	45.57%	56.85%
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**Support to move away from Thursday Early Release to weekly Late-Start**

	<b>Students</b>	<b>Parents</b>	<b>Staff</b>
<b>% Supportive/Very Supportive</b>	33.09%	23.09%	27.61%

Student voice during committee discussions was important in this area. Our student representatives expressed a strong satisfaction with our current model as they appreciate the altered Thursday schedule and view it as a welcomed change during the course of a school week.

**Key Opportunity #5: Committee Recommendations**

The committee recommends the current Thursday Early Release model remain in place and continuously improved using ongoing stakeholder feedback.

**Summary and Next Steps**

The Calendar Committee, comprised of a diverse group of Elmbrook Community stakeholders, was charged to analyze five key opportunities and make recommendations to the School Board for consideration and approval. The five key opportunities were:

1. Develop school year calendars for 2017-18 and 2018-19 for Board Approval;

2. Analyze the need for and realities associated with adjustments to school day start and end times;
3. Analyze the impact of homework load on students and provide guidance regarding any recommended actions warranted;
4. Analyze the impact of student schedule intensity on the health and wellness of our student body and provide guidance regarding any recommended actions warranted;
5. Analyze the current Thursday early release structure to determine if a different structure is desired and warranted.

Taking into consideration research on the sleep needs of adolescent and teen students, state statute requirements set forth by the Department of Public Instruction, information about bus transportation schedules and costs, and considerable stakeholder feedback from parents, students, and staff, the committee has put forth the following recommendations:

<p><b>School Year Calendars</b></p>	<p>The committee’s final recommendation for the 2017-18 school year can be found <a href="#">here</a>. The committee’s final recommendation for the 2018-19 school year can be found <a href="#">here</a>.</p>
<p><b>School Day Start and End Times</b></p>	<p>Summary Recommendations:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Survey feedback across the three stakeholder groups was decidedly mixed when it came to satisfaction/dissatisfaction with our current school day start and end times and did not provide the committee with clear direction nor a mandate for change from our current structure.</li> </ol>

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. The costs associated with a move away from current school day start and end times appears cost-prohibitive at this time.</li> <li>3. The committee believes it important to allow the new bus transportation provider time to become acquainted with the district so that they can become an informed and engaged partner in these discussions in the future.</li> <li>4. The committee would like the medical research reviewed on the topic of adolescent sleep to be shared with the broader Elmbrook Community, to include internal and external groups whose activities and actions may have a direct impact on student sleep schedules. These include, but are not limited to athletic and activity coaches and advisors, club sports organizations who use district facilities for practices, and private and parochial school leaders.</li> </ol> <p>Specific Actions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Presentations at Principal Chats at each school will be completed by November 1, 2017 during which research on the sleep needs of adolescent and teen students will be shared.</li> <li>2. This report will be sent to all private and parochial schools within district boundaries by October 1, 2017.</li> <li>3. Athletic Directors, during regularly scheduled meeting with coaches and advisors, will share the sleep research findings. This will be done with all coaches and advisors by April 1, 2018.</li> </ol>
<b>Homework Load</b>	Summary Recommendations:

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Continue to educate teachers and administrators on best practices in the area of homework to ensure appropriate use.</li> <li>2. Continue to educate students and parents on the importance of a balanced course load on the overall health and wellness of students.</li> <li>3. Increase sensitivity to homework intensity during specific times of the school year (e.g., Homecoming, Prom, musical productions, ACT and Workkeys Examinations).</li> <li>4. Ensure “homework-free” breaks for students (Thanksgiving break, winter break, spring break).</li> <li>5. Encourage more coordination amongst teachers so that homework assignments and projects are given in a more dispersed way.</li> <li>6. Continue to encourage students to advocate for themselves if they need homework accommodations due to competing priorities in their schedules.</li> </ol> <p>Specific Actions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Information regarding homework best practices will be shared by principals at each school by October 1, 2017 and will be monitored through the Educator Effectiveness process with each individual staff member during the 2017-18 school year.</li> <li>2. This report and associated recommendations will be shared with guidance counselors at the middle and high school levels to inform and influence their work with students and their families as they plan courses of study.</li> </ol>
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	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. This report and associated recommendations will be shared at “Principal Chats” at each secondary school by November 1, 2017.</li> <li>4. Principals will engage teachers and teacher teams in discussions regarding strategies to better coordinate the intensity of homework assignments and administration of tests.</li> <li>5. Principals will ensure “homework-free” breaks and will message and monitor the intensity of homework during specific times of the year according to school-specific activities.</li> </ol>
<p><b>Student Schedule Intensity</b></p>	<p>Summary Recommendations:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Engage internal and external stakeholders who are directly responsible for student athletic and activity schedules in a discussion about the work of the committee and stakeholder feedback.</li> <li>2. School administrators are asked to discuss this issue with coaches and advisors and more closely monitor practice/meeting schedules and practice/meeting durations. This is particularly warranted during certain periods of the school year, such as finals week.</li> <li>3. School administrators and guidance counselors are asked to conduct student focus groups each semester to continuously gain feedback about student schedule intensity.</li> <li>4. Continue to educate students and parents on the importance of a balanced course load and sleep on the overall health and wellness of students.</li> </ol> <p>Specific Actions:</p>

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Athletic Directors will share this report and associated recommendations with all coaches and advisors by April 1, 2018.</li> <li>2. Athletic Directors will monitor facility usage and practice schedules/club meeting schedules and provide feedback to coaches and advisors when and where appropriate.</li> <li>3. This report and associated recommendations will be sent to all athletic club organizations who rent gym space.</li> <li>4. This report and associated recommendations will be shared at Principal Chats by November 1, 2017.</li> <li>5. Principals (or designees) will conduct focus groups with students to ensure students are being encouraged to take a load of courses that is balanced. This should occur between November 2017 and February 2018.</li> </ol>
<p><b>Thursday Early Release Structure</b></p>	<p>Summary Recommendations:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The committee recommends the current Thursday Early Release model remain in place and that the district works to continuously improve its effectiveness using ongoing stakeholder feedback.</li> </ol> <p>Specific Actions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Annual stakeholder survey data will be used to monitor effectiveness and satisfaction.</li> </ol>

The district sincerely thanks and recognizes the members of the Calendar Committee for their time and commitment to a productive, transparent, and truly collaborative process.

The recommendations found within this report will be presented to the Teaching and Learning Committee of the School Board in April 2017 and then to the School Board for final approval in May 2017