Bedford Central School District

Later School Start Times Feasibility Workgroup:

Committee Recommendations

A Report to the Board of Education
March 11, 2026



Sessions Prior to the Formation of the Workgroup

Created following two Community Conversations which the workgroup was required to watch as a prerequisite

- **October 1 2024-** Panel presentation on the **research on adolescent sleep time** & student cognitive & emotional functioning
- **January 13, 2025-** Interactive virtual panel **of school district superintendents discussing lessons learned** in their journeys toward later school start times for secondary students

Research Summary- *Delaying adolescent school start times to 8:30 a.m. or later aligns with biological sleep patterns, significantly increasing total sleep duration and reducing daytime fatigue. Benefits include better mental health, improved academic performance, increased attendance, and a decrease in teen motor vehicle accidents.*

About the Workgroup

An “all-call” invitation was issued to the community. All who applied were admitted to the group.

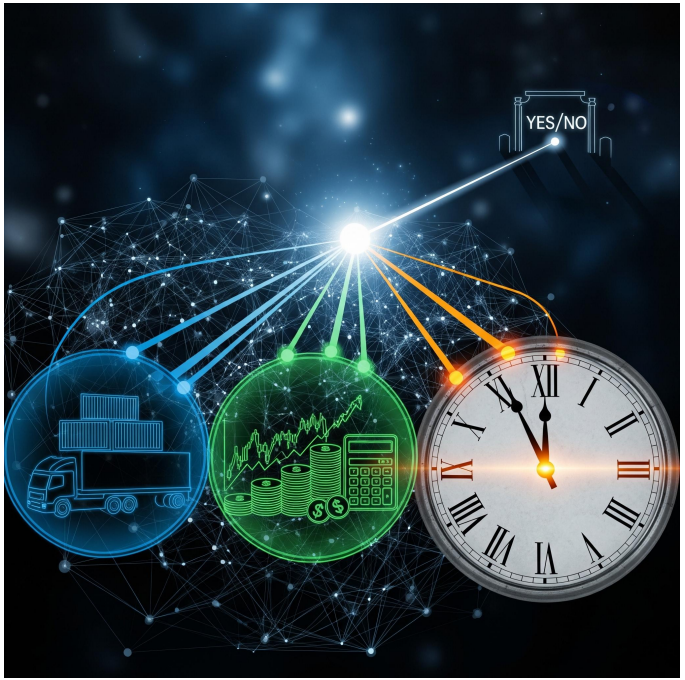
Composition: 36 individuals

- 3 Board members
- 11 parents/community members
- Building administrators
- Central administrators
- Directors of Transportation & Athletics



Workgroup Mission

To objectively determine over the course of several work sessions the overall feasibility of implementing a later secondary school start time, focusing on logistical and financial impacts, and recommending mitigation strategies.



Workgroup Meeting Dates & Topics

- October 6, 2025- Norm setting; **transportation deep dive**
- November 3, 2025- Transportation cont'd; **athletics deep dive**
- **November 24, 2025-** Discussion and **decision-matrix**
- January 12, 2026- Final discussion and **recommendations**

Note- Source documents are hyperlinked above



Charge of the Workgroup

*While **no decision to move to a later secondary school start time has been made**, the Board of Education has authorized the administration to explore in more detail what consideration of adopting a later start time might potentially look like for BCSD.*

The charge of the workgroup is to:

1. ***Start to unpack what a change to school start times might mean** in terms of impacts to transportation, athletics, various programs, budget and other factors affecting student, staff and family life.*
2. ***Provide a recommendation to the administration & Board of Education** about the overall feasibility of a later secondary school start time, along with the impacts to the areas listed above.*
3. ***This workgroup will be exploring** what this change might look like if hypothetically implemented in the future rather than whether later school start times for adolescents should be implemented.*

Possible Transportation Approaches to Achieve Later Secondary Start Time

- **Tier Swap –** Elementary schools move to first tier; secondary schools move to second tier.
- **Later Start Times –** School remain in existing tier structure with later start times of 15 or 30 minutes
- **Three Tier System –** Not effective for implementing later start times. Multiple tiers lengthens the overall school day resulting in early first tier start times and increased transportation costs.

2025-26 Transportation Structure

- Home to School Buses – 74

- Current BCSD Bell Schedule:
  - FLHS – 7:45 AM – 2:14 PM
  - FLMS – 7:50 AM – 2:20 PM
    - After School Busses – 4:00 PM & 5:15 PM
  - Elementary – 9:00 AM – 3:00 PM

- In-District Non-Public Schools – 2
  - The Hawthorne School – 8:00 AM – 2:30 PM
  - Rippowam Cisqua – 8:10 AM – 3:30PM/4:10PM



2025-26 Transportation Structure

- **Out-of-District Schools – 42**
  - Non-public Schools
  - Special Education Schools/Programs
  - OOD Non-Public Transfers
    - – FLMS 7:30 AM departures - 6 schools/programs

- **PNWB Tech Program –** 3 sessions with shuttles between Hillside/FLHS and PNWB
  - 8:00 AM – 10:00 AM
  - 10:00 AM – 12:00 PM
  - 12:00 PM – 2:00 PM

Elementary-Secondary Tier Swap

- **Revised BCSD Bell Schedule:**
  - Elementary – 8:45 AM – 2:45 PM
  - FLHS – 9:15 AM – 3:44 PM
  - FLMS – 9:20 AM – 3:50 PM
    - Secondary Activity/After School Busses – 4:45 PM & 5:30 PM

Notes:

- Dismissal interval of at least 1 hour needed between elementary and secondary due to finishing location of elementary busses and travel time to Fox Lane.
- FLHS/FLMS start times calculated using 3:50 PM dismissal time with current bell schedule.
- BTA/CSEA – 7 hour contractual day.

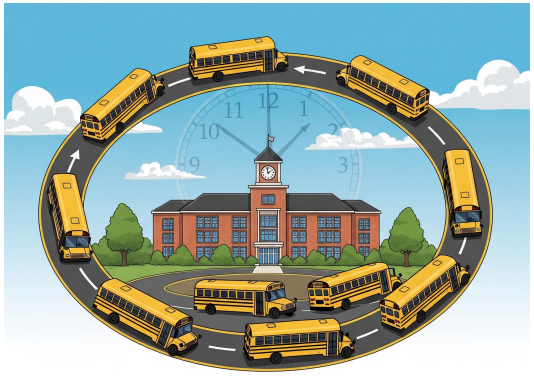
Elementary-Secondary Tier Swap

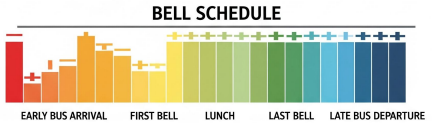
Notes Continued:

- Concerns: older students who receive younger sibling from the bus; increase in need for daycare for elementary students.
- FLMS 7:30 AM Transfer busses - 6 OOD schools/programs will need separate busses.
- FLHS students will not be able to attend AM session of PNWB Tech program with later start time.
- Additional busses needed – unknown variables – increase/decrease in non-public school requests; increase/decrease in special education placements in and out-of-district.

15 Minute Later Start Time

- Revised BCSD Bell Schedule:
  - FLHS – 8:00 AM – 2:29 PM
  - FLMS – 8:05 AM – 2:34 PM
    - Secondary After School Busses – 4:15 PM & 5:30 PM
  - Elementary – 9:15 AM – 3:15 PM





Notes:

- BCSD Schools 15 minute later start time.
- Current in-district non-public school arrival times 7:55 AM – 8:10 AM. Current morning routes (10 trips) are between secondary and elementary BCSD routes. Routing combinations not possible with 15 minute later start time.
- FLMS 7:30 AM Transfer busses to 6 OOD schools/programs will need separate busses.
- FLHS students will not be able to attend AM session of PNWB Tech program with later start time.
- Additional busses needed – unknown variables – increase/decrease in non-public school requests; increase/decrease in special education placements both in and out-of-district.

30 Minute Later Start Time

- Revised BCSD Bell Schedule:
  - FLHS – 8:15 AM – 2:44 PM
  - FLMS – 8:20 AM – 2:49 PM
    - Secondary Activity/After School Busses – 4:15 PM & 5:30 PM
  - Elementary – 9:30 AM – 3:30 PM

Notes:

- BCSD Schools 30 minute later start time.
- Current in-district non-public school arrival times 7:55 AM – 8:10 AM. Current morning routes (10 trips) are between secondary and elementary BCSD routes. Routing combinations not possible with 30 minute later start time.
- FLMS 7:30 AM Transfer busses to 6 OOD schools/programs will need separate busses.
- FLHS students will not be able to attend AM session of PNWB Tech program with later start time.
- Additional busses needed – unknown variables – increase/decrease in non-public school requests; increase/decrease in special education placements both in and out-of-district.

Athletics 2024-25

Number of Students:

- **Fall-** 561 student athletes
- **Winter-** 325 student athletes
- **Spring-** 558 student athletes

Number of Teams:

- **Fall-** 24
- **Winter-** 14
- **Spring-** 21



8-12 buses per week on average to athletic competitions

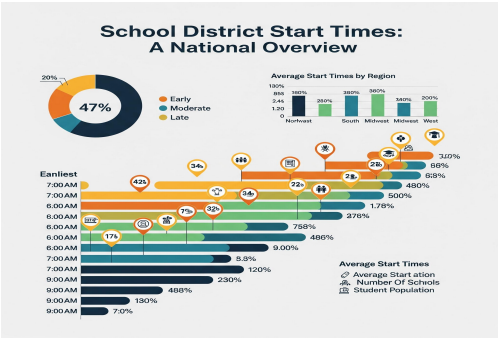
Athletics Issued a Regional Survey

34 Responses out of 78 Districts- some of the questions asked:

- Has your district moved to a later start time at the secondary level within the last 10 years?
- Positives & Negatives observed
- Is your district considering moving to a later start time at the secondary level?
- Reasons your district is looking to move to a later start time?
- Current start & end times for elementary, middle, high?
- Proposed start & end times for elementary, middle, high?

Survey- Are other Districts doing it?

- 5 out of 34 have moved to later start time
- 4 out of 34 are considering moving to later start time (2 maybe, 2 yes)
- The average start time for middle schools is 08:08 AM, and the average end time is 02:49 PM
- For high schools, the average start time is 08:02 AM, and the average end time is 02:40 PM



Survey- Are other Districts doing it?

Survey comments- Positives:

- We still end relatively early (2:35), but the later time does help with out-of-district coaches, providing them additional time to get here on a daily basis.
- The later start time does improve attendance, and student-athletes that get home late are able to get additional sleep because they are not back at school quite as early the next day.
- Students perform better with a later start time.
- Even a few extra minutes in the morning seems to be a positive thing based on all the studies/data that children should be getting more sleep than they are getting. More sleep for children is better.
- Hard to tell, we are in the first month of school.
- The thought was that there would be less student late to school.

Survey- Are other Districts doing it?

Survey comments- Challenges:

- It does have an impact on transportation.
- Buses leaving later
- Scheduling extracurriculars becomes more limited.
- Transportation and away Modified and JV Outdoor sports. Lack of daylight to complete a game.
- When the HS end time was earlier we were able to travel to athletic contests and start games earlier.
- Busing is more of an issue now that the JHS and HS end their day at the same time. Fewer drivers and later departures resulting in later game starts and getting home later after games.

Scenario Strengths & Challenges

Scenario #1 SWAP:
Elementary: 8:00 AM - 2:00 PM
Secondary: 9:10 AM - 3:40 PM

Cost of 16 Buses Added - $1.6 Million

Strengths

- Strong Alignment to Research

Challenges

- Compatibility with BOCES
- Older siblings not home in PM; schools would have to provide after school care, rather than before school care
- Very difficult for athletics

Scenario #2 SWAP:
Elementary: 7:30 AM - 1:30 PM
Secondary: 8:30 AM - 3:00 PM

Cost of 17 Buses Added - $1.7 Million

Strengths

- Alignment to Research for secondary (not for elementary; research says elementary no earlier than 8:00 AM)

Challenges

- 7:30 AM start too early for elementary
- Older siblings not home in PM; schools would have to provide after school care, rather than before school care
- Very difficult for athletics

Scenario Strengths & Challenges

Scenario #3 SWAP:
Elementary: 7:45 AM - 1:45 PM
Secondary: 9:00 AM - 3:30 PM

Cost of 12 Buses Added - $1.2 Million

Strengths

- Alignment to Research for secondary (not for elementary; research says elementary no earlier than 8:00 AM)

Challenges

- 7:45 AM start too early for elementary
- Older siblings not home in PM; schools would have to provide after school care, rather than before school care
- Very difficult for athletics

Scenario #4- 15 Min. PUSH:
Elementary: 9:15 AM - 3:15 PM
Secondary: 8:00 AM - 2:35 PM

Cost of 11 Buses Added - $1.1 Million

Strengths

- Alignment to Research (not that much later for secondary)
- Push schedule is less disruptive than swap schedule

Challenges

- Compatibility with BOCES that starts at 8:00 AM
- More challenging for athletics

Scenario Strengths & Challenges

Scenario #5- 30 Min. PUSH:
Elementary: 9:30 AM - 3:30 PM
Secondary: 8:15 AM - 2:50 PM

Cost of 12 Buses Added - $1.2 Million

Strengths

- Alignment to Research
- Push schedule is less disruptive than swap schedule

Challenges

- Compatibility with BOCES that starts at 8:00 AM
- Challenging for athletics

Scenario #6- 45 Min. PUSH:
Elementary: 9:45 AM - 3:45 PM
Secondary: 8:30 AM - 2:59 PM

Cost of 11 Buses Added - $1.1 Million

Strengths

- Strong Alignment to Research
- Push schedule is less disruptive than swap schedule

Challenges

- Compatibility with BOCES that starts at 8:00 AM
- Challenging for Athletics

Comparison of Scenarios

Scenario	Proposed Times- Elementary	Proposed Times - Secondary	Number of Buses Required	Estimated Cost Change ($)	Alignment with Research (2x)	Compatibility BOCES Program	Internal Disruption vs. Current	Impact to Athletics	Magnitude of Status-Quo Change for Families	Implementation Difficulty/ Complexity	Sum
Scenario 1	8:00 AM	9:10 AM	16	$1.6M							
Swap	2:00 PM	3:40 PM			10	1	3	1	2.5	2	19.5
Scenario 2	7:30 AM	8:30 AM	17	$1.7M							
Swap	1:30 PM	3:00 PM			4	1	3	2	1	1	12
Scenario 3	7:45 AM	9:00 AM	12	$1.2M							
Swap	1:45 PM	3:30 PM			8	1	3	1	1	2	16
Scenario 4	9:15 AM	8:00 AM	10	$1M							
15 min push	3:15 PM	2:35 PM			4	2	4	1	5	4	20
Scenario 5	9:30 AM	8:15 AM	12	$1.2M							
30 min push	3:30 PM	2:50 PM			8	1	4	1	4	3	21
Scenario 6	9:45 AM	8:30 AM	11	$1.1M							
45 min push	3:45 PM	2:59 PM			10	1	4	1	4	3	23
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Committee General Recommendations

General Consensus to ***Recommend Scenarios 5 & 6- PUSH 30-45 Minutes***-

Cost Impact $1.1M to $1.2M Annually

Strengths

- Less costly than other flip options
- Easier to understand transition
- Strong alignment to the research (close to 8:30 a.m. start)
- Less change for the elementary school families as compared to a flip
- Sharing faculty should be more seamless
- Ability to find routing efficiency in a known system should be easier (we may need some experts from outside to assist)
- Perhaps less impact to child care than flipped plans
- Less disruptive than flip scenarios for student after school plans (jobs, activities, etc.)
- Less disruptive to faculty and staff than flipped scenarios
- Can still have after school help without having to flip it to the morning

Committee General Recommendations

General Consensus to ***Recommend Scenarios 5 & 6- PUSH 30-45 Minutes***-

Cost Impact $1.1M to $1.2M Annually

Challenges

- Very difficult for athletics (all scenarios). Will need a solution or there will be additional added cost
- Challenging for BOCES schedules that start at 8:00 a.m.
- Projected impact to elementary families (child care)
- Impact to out of district busing

Possible Mitigation Strategies

- May need dedicated athletic buses (additional added cost)
- See if parents can opt out of transportation or if routes can be further optimized
- Seek routing expertise from TransFinder or other like-districts who have found solutions
- Might open up some opportunities in the morning (would need to be negotiated if involves staff;) which could involve more busing needed in the morning
- Can we create hubs for students to be picked up or dropped off at a central point (elementary?)

Committee General Recommendations

General Consensus to *Recommend Scenarios 5 & 6- PUSH 30-45 Minutes*-

Cost Impact $1.1M to $1.2M Annually

Possible Mitigation Strategies, Continued

- Could possibly consider changing the transportation distance or stops (would require Board policy change).
- Seek grant funding
- Reassess/reimagine after school runs
- Volunteers
- Conversations with other districts to collaborate/coordinate
- Support from networks or agencies who have developed specific expertise

Administrative Reflection

On the Workgroup's Recommendation of Scenarios 5 & 6- PUSH 30-45 Minutes

- The workgroup worked diligently and lived up to every aspect of the process with fidelity, including mission, charge, charter, norms & deliverable
- Workgroup members as a whole genuinely embrace the concept and benefits of later adolescent start times as supported in the research, even if some individual members may have misgivings about whether the costs and logistical hurdles can be overcome.
- Implementation of this approach has the potential to positively affect every single student across every age and demographic group in terms of academics, emotional well being, general health and safety. It is therefore worthy of consideration of being placed at or near the top of the Board's emerging long term priorities list.

Administrative Reflection

On the Workgroup's Recommendation of Scenarios 5 & 6- PUSH 30-45 Minutes

- While this recommendation outlines the most viable approach within our local context; there remain many very real and difficult challenges and roadblocks that would require substantial processing and problem solving community engagement and lead-time to overcome. Challenges include:
  - Substantial ongoing annual cost
  - State mandated electrification of our bus fleet is expected to add substantial additional cost simultaneously; we should ascertain that cost once the study underway is concluded and factor that information into any decision
  - Substantial hurdles to athletic transportation for which we have not yet found solutions until more districts move in this direction, thus enabling regional coordination
  - Communication with all stakeholders regarding the reason for the potential change, the nature of the change, obtaining of input and preferences where possible, and if implemented, enough lead time to adequately plan for the change.