

**Later School Start Times Community Forum
Submitted Questions**

76 People Registered for Forum (staff, parents and community members)

****Similar questions are grouped together with the response to the group in red below the questions****

Childcare:

- How will this affect before/after care, such as Kids Club?
 - Representatives from Kids Club have been part of the committee and engaged in the discussions. While the need for morning childcare will be less in the new schedule, it will be greater for the after-school hours. The time need for after-school care will also increase due to an earlier dismissal time for elementary students
- Will Kids Club be opened to more children? New times are very inconvenient to working parents
 - Derry Township Parks and Rec has applied for an additional site license from the State and was provided that license (for the 2019-2020 school year); however, they were not able to secure the required staffing to realize the opening of that second location which would have allowed them to increase the number of families they serve. They are planning to apply again in the 2020-2021 school year, but staffing will be a determining factor as to whether or not they are able to expand their enrollment
- Many families of elementary students with special needs rely on teenager babysitters after school because our children are not able to go to the same daycares that typically developing children are welcomed at. These teenage babysitters will now be in school when our elementary students get off the bus. Does the district have any plans in place to assist the families of students who receive special education services in finding appropriate child-care?
- The impact of early start times on K-5 student daily sleep requirements. Concerned about elementary student being first home at end of school day, as our work schedule does not allow either parent to be home to receive child from bus with earlier dismissal time.
- Childcare for an additional hour after school is also a major concern
- We both work full time and feel hard to handle the childcare for our kids after school if the school time is off earlier
 - This is understood and was considered by the committee. Every family's situations and needs are different. We realized that any schedule creates its own unique challenges for families dependent on their individual needs and there was no way to address everyone's unique needs and meet the best educational environment for our students.
- What is being removed from the elementary day with the loss of a half hour?
 - The actual school day is fifteen minutes less than the current schedule for elementary students. Additionally, DTSD is approximately 100 hours over the

required hours of instruction at the elementary level as per the State requirements. School day schedules will be fully developed during the 2020-2021 school year. No instructional time will be lost in the new schedule.

Elementary Impacts:

- There is not much data with regards to impact of earlier start times on elementary students and I am concerned that for this group of students it may lead to increased fatigue and sleep deprivation and affect school performance. Do we have any data to support earlier start times for elementary students and if there is a concern that this may have a negative impact? How would the school address this?
- While I agree with adolescents not starting so early, I do not think it is good for younger students to start/be up too early either. I am interested in hearing about how early younger students will have to be up in order to dress, eat and be ready for the bus
- The school day (elementary) appears to be 20 minutes shorter with the new schedule – where does this 20 minutes being taken away from? Does this new schedule support the 10-13 hours of sleep recommended for 5 year olds and 9-12 hours of sleep recommended for 6-12 year olds that would be in ECC through elementary school? This could mean asleep by 7:30 (upstairs for bed starting much earlier) and awake at 7:30, missing the bus, or heading up for bed by 6
 - The recommended school start times for all levels balance the sleep needs of all students K-12 in the best manner as possible given the parameters with regard to PA School Code requirements and transportation timeframes. While we understand that any change impacts each family differently and will require adjustments for some families, we understand that nighttime routines are family decisions and respect that each family will handle bedtimes as best meets the needs of their family and children.
- What research studies were reviewed in regard to the impact on elementary students' sleep patterns with an earlier start time?
- What evidence is there that the earlier time start for elementary students does not affect school performance?
 - There is a very limited amount of data on impacts of a later secondary start time on elementary students. One study out of Minneapolis, MN does provide some data. This research titled: [Elementary Feedback on Changed Start Times](#) can be accessed by clicking on the link or on the District website page dedicated to Later School Start Times. This study shows that there were positive impacts for the most part for elementary students in schools that started earlier including students experiencing fewer morning transitions, more ready to learn and more productive. Additionally, these schools noted fewer behavior problems which contributed to a calm, positive school environment. Additionally, moving the start time of elementary to an 8AM start, allows more of our instructional time to be in the morning hours which is optimal for young children.
- How and at what cost would elementary after school programs to keep kids until 6PM when parents are done with work?

- Kids Club currently offers after-school care until 6PM each evening. We are not sure what the rates for before/after school care would be; however, the amount of additional time required for after-school care is offset by the reduction of time in before-school care.
- Will school district expand childcare coverage for before/after school?
 - The district does not provide childcare coverage. We do provide space for the Derry Township Parks and Rec to operate before and after school care in our elementary school and also provides busing to/from the private childcare facilities in Derry Township
- Will there be any loss in curriculum or change in school calendar?
 - The change in school start times will not result in a loss of curriculum nor a change in the school calendar. We are still required under PA School Code to provide 180 days and 900/990 hours of instruction for students.

Transportation:

- I have a DC Tech student. What, if any, changes will she be facing with transportation? As of right now, they barely make it to school on time.
- What happens when your child's home school is Hershey High but goes to DCTS and uses the bus transportation?
 - Our Director of Transportation, Mr. Bell, has been an integral part of our committee work and has been developing transportation plans that provide for the needs of our DCTS students and the schedule the Tech School will have.
- If the middle and high school will end at 3:30 the bus takes half-hour, which means the students will come home at 4PM. That hardly leaves any time at all for sports and extracurricular activities when it is needed much more in middle and high school. To fit in sports/extracurricular activities late in the evening would mean pushing back the bed time, which will still result in less hours of sleep for the adolescent? Is it possible to shorten the time for Middle school and high school? Maybe start at 8:30am and end at 3:00pm?
 - In Pennsylvania, School Code requires students to attend school 180 days per school year as well as requires schools to provide at least 900 (elementary) and 990 (secondary) instructional hours in a school year. While we are significantly above the elementary hour requirement, we are only slightly above the secondary hour requirement (on average, we have approximately 45-60 additional hours beyond the minimum). This time does not take into account weather related delays/early dismissals (which reduce the instructional hours)

Athletics/After-School Activities:

- I am just curious to know how afternoon sports and games will be handled with neighboring schools who finish the day at 2:30? Are any other surrounding districts also considering change? I am in full support of this – thank you for taking it on!!

- Currently, Mechanicsburg SD has a later start time for secondary and Ephrata SD (Lanc. Co) will be moving to a later secondary start time in the 20-21 school year. Others are starting to talk about/look at it, but no decisions have been made
- With regard to athletics, games will occur at times that they have in the past. Student athletes and coaches will have to be dismissed at similar times to what they are now. However, there are options for what how the secondary schedules their day that may minimize the impact to instructional time. We are fortunate to have many other districts who have already made this change to use as resources as we begin developing the best schedule for our students.
- Will athletic practices still be held after school since the benefits of the later start would be erased if practices are held before school?
 - Yes, practices will need to be held after the school day.
- What's the solution offered for parents with children in multiple buildings (ie. ECC and Primary) as far as drop off/pick up is concerned?
 - All elementary (K-5) will be on the same start/end time so drop off for students in the ECC, Primary and Intermediate will all be dropped off and picked up at the same time.
 - Additionally, MS and HS (6-12) will be on the same start/end time
- Elementary school after care solutions
- ECC children's sleep. Need 12 hours. How early will buses start?
 - With the current number of buses, almost all elementary runs will begin after 7AM. There currently are three runs that would have to start slightly before 7AM, but we are looking at ways to avoid any pre-7AM runs.
- What are the safeguards and modifications for having elementary children return home earlier for working parents?
 - As noted earlier, every family's needs are different with regard to childcare. It is our goal that by giving families the 2020-2021 school year to plan that any modifications for childcare needs could be arranged in that time period. Some families have noted that neighbors may be able to watch their elementary age children while others would look to existing childcare providers.
- Will the bus schedule change accordingly with the new school schedule? (eg. My son is currently picked up at 8:08am, will he be picked up at 7:28?)
 - Yes, bus schedules will change but those routes and times have not been solidified at this time.
- I am open to the idea of pushing the times of school start for middle and high school students, however the times of elementary school students should not be moved earlier than the middle and high school students. The district should consider to have the elementary school students released after the middle/high school students. Current options can lead to very high costs to the families of elementary school students.
 - This option was discussed but determined not to be in the best interest of students. Since our district utilizes the same buses for elementary and secondary students and there is about an hour needed in-between dismissal

runs, having elementary dismiss after secondary would require a 4:30PM elementary dismissal with students not getting home until well after 5:00PM.

Miscellaneous:

- You have invited an expert on the “pro” side of this debate, but the research is far from definitive. Please review the evidence and the “cons” that do not support this change. Additionally, address the effects and cost of this change on young children in the ECC and elementary levels.
 - We do have articles and information on both sides of this issue on our website. However, the majority of the research and data supports a later school start time for adolescents due to the biological needs and circadian sleep patterns of adolescents/young adults.
- Sample schedules for all grade levels
 - School day schedules will be developed during the 2020-2021 school year
- Is there any evidence from other school districts that starting the school day later for adolescents increases their time sleeping at home?
 - Yes, several PA schools have already instituted a later secondary start time and students in those schools are indicating they are getting more rest
- What does this later start time mean for after school clubs, faculty meetings, IEPs, etc...? Will time before school remain at the discretion of individual teachers for the completion of tasks both personal and work related?
 - These are all questions and considerations that will be considered during the 2020-2021 school year as each building looks at developing their optimal schedule based on the new start/end times. There are many options to consider from other schools who have instituted new start times that may actually increase opportunities for involvement in school clubs and provide time for PLC's and staff collaboration
- Before/after school childcare: As an educator myself, my children (one in each level) will have to get up at 5:45 since I leave the house at 6:45. Your proposed schedule will extend my children's day even longer, how is THAT beneficial for the children of working parents?
 - The childcare concern was discussed and considered by the committee. The committee came to the realization that every family's situations and needs are different and trying to find an option that addressed the biological needs of adolescents and meet the needs of individual families was not possible. We realized that any schedule creates its own unique challenges for families dependent on their individual needs and there was no way to address everyone's unique needs and meet the best educational environment for our students. Understanding the adjustments some families will need to make is one reason for the one-year delay of implementation of the new start times.