

School Start Times Task Force

Meeting 5 - June 12, 2014

Minutes

Members Attending: M. McMahon, K. Lane, W. McIntire, C. Truffer, H. MacIntosh, D. Batten, K. Chandler, P. Bukowski, F. Chaney,

Absent Members: G. LeGrand, W. Meyers, C. Streeter, J. Horstkamp; T. Tudor, K. Snyder

Also in Attendance: L. Grey-Hawkins (recorder)

This meeting was hosted as an Adobe Connect/teleconference meeting to discuss **the impact of school start times on elementary and middle school students**. Maureen opened the meeting by asking the Task Force to consider the major concerns that still need to be examined about the impact of changing the start times of elementary and middle school students and their families.

The following major topics arose:

1. Change in need for Before/After School Care

- a. The research is not current on the impact of the recession on families with two working parents who need daycare. More families may currently be relying on older siblings to care for younger students because of cost concerns, but this information comes to us only through anecdotes. Pam Bukowski conducted an informal community survey which indicated that more elementary school parents sought before school care. In terms of Recreation and Parks, they currently run before school at 7:00 a.m. and after school until 6:00 p.m. but would adjust to fit the needs of the school. The only limitation on Rec and Parks taking more students is the available amount of space. They can always find additional staff, but depend on the school for the space (opening up classrooms, etc). They run before and after care at 34 of our public schools currently.

2. Transportation

- a. If elementary schools shift an hour earlier, some elementary school students will be walking to school (up to one mile)/bus stop in the dark. Already, some schools have students walking in the twilight to get to their bus in the cases where the bus is scheduled to arrive at the elementary school in time for students to eat breakfast prior to the start of the school day (30 minutes before the start of school). Shifting times earlier may put younger students walking to school during rush hour in the morning; shifting times later may put younger students walking to school during rush hour in the afternoon.

3. Limited Family Time

- a. If elementary schools begin later in the day there will be less available family time with young students. On the other hand, if elementary schools start sooner, students will get out earlier, but working parents may not be available to pick them up or care for them after school.

4. Extra Curricular/Co-Curricular programs

- a. Changing the start of school increases the competing needs for facilities for sports, music, and clubs. If practices start at a different time, it may affect the number of parents who are able to act as coaches for sporting events. More students can participate in after-school activities in the organization, if a parent or guardian is available to get them to the activity location. Ultimately, co-curricular start times, and access to these co-curricular offerings, will depend on when students can get to the location, not when they are out of school—making student engagement a question of socio-economics.

Overall, it was strongly agreed that after presenting the options to the Board of Education, the Board's designee must then reach out to the elementary school community. The Task Force must consider what today's elementary-aged parents look like and what their needs are. This is especially true when ensuring equity across all students. Underlying all early childhood issues is the concern of equity. Adjusting the start times for all schools will have an impact on turn-key students who are home by themselves in the afternoon and those who depend on the supervision of an older sibling. While affluent parents may be able to adjust with increased paid day care or at-home supervision (only one parent working or working from home), other families may have less options available. When reaching out to the community, the Board of Education's designee will have to work hard to reach this population to determine their realistic needs and impacts.

Moving forward, the Task Force must also start considering specific start time options. What are the ideal times for elementary, middle, and high school students and how can the county take advantage of these hours? This decision may need to be supported by further research.

Next meeting:

June 25, 2014

5:00-7:00 pm

Anne Arundel County Public Schools

Center III

2644 Riva Rd

Annapolis, MD 21401.