

School Start Time Ad Hoc Committee Minutes

November 21, 2014

Attendance: Deirdre d'Albertis, Diane Lyons, Laura Schulkind, Joe Phelan

County Districts

Joe reported that the county Superintendents continue to discuss the possibility of changing start times for their secondary schools.

- Red Hook and Rhinebeck are doing research based on parent and BoE interest.
- Millbrook is doing research to determine cost savings based on doing single bus runs due to declining enrollment. There have been no parent requests at this point.
- Arlington is doing research though there have only had a handful of parents expressing interest. They have formed an ad hoc committee.
- Pine Plains is not sure that schools should consider a change if all the schools in the county don't make a change.
- Poughkeepsie City School made the change this Fall due in large part to the high number of students arriving late to their first and second period classes. The majority of students get to school via public transportation or on foot. Previously, classes began at 7am. Poughkeepsie city buses only start running at 6:50, so a large portion of the student body couldn't get to school on time. The Superintendent is seeing positive results while the Athletic Director will need to make further adjustments to the sports schedule.
- Onteora school district's school board made a unilateral decision to change their start time with little or no community engagement.

The County Superintendents continue to grapple with whether or not they should continue discussions if all districts are not interested in making the change. Some suggested surveying all parents county-wide to determine interest. Joe cautioned that asking opinions without having any understanding of costs and how a change like this would affect the school's operations could be counter-productive.

Committee Goals

The committee will spend some time engaging Administrators, AD, nurses, Social Workers and Guidance on this topic to gather as much insight as possible to develop a plan. During these discussions, we will generate a list of key questions, present them to the full Board for additional thoughts and determine a list of parameters (i.e. Cost neutrality, length of bus ride, etc.) for moving forward. Once parameters have been set, the committee will generate options for Board discussion.

The next step after local research and Board discussion will involve community outreach at some level. We will engage school district stakeholder groups, such as BLPT, CDEP, and/or the Health & Wellness Committee. We may consider having Dr. Button, a representative from the

NDH Sleep Center, and/or others with expertise present at a Board of Education meeting and/or perhaps at parent presentations, where local experts such as might present information on teen sleep research or related topics. Throughout the process, minutes of all meetings will be posted to the District website.

The committee's overarching goal is to determine what is best for our students. There will certainly be conflicting opinions on this topic, but the committee is most interested in overall student health and wellness.

Transportation

- Option 1: single run K-12
- Option 2: Flip CLS start time (earlier) and BMS/RHS start time (later)
- Option 3: Push all start times later

Questions:

1. How will we optimize bus runs to fill more seats?
2. If we don't provide a seat for every student, how would all students get home in case of emergency or early dismissal?
3. If we consolidate runs, what is the maximum time we would allow students to be on the bus?
4. What are the contract restrictions with Durham, if any?
5. Can we collaborate with other Districts? Durham has plenty of buses but lacks drivers
6. How do the private school buses factor in?
7. What time do students need to leave for BOCES in the a.m? p.m.?
8. Can we estimate how many kids actually ride the bus? The number will vary based on time of year, sports schedules etc., but we need a fair estimate.

After School Activities/Athletics

1. How is transportation to/from activities affected?
2. What schedule changes can be made to accommodate all players? Diane pointed out that Modified teams seem to be most affected by later game times. The committee would like Steve Boucher to address the scheduling issue.
3. How many schools in the section have lights on their fields?
4. What Master Schedule shifts can be made to accommodate athletes and students who work afterschool?

Financial Concerns

1. Are there savings? Are there additional expenses?
2. Facilities - how would heating and lighting costs be affected?
3. How would lunch be affected?

General

1. How late is late enough? The committee would like to ask Dr. Button to verify whether or not there is a minimum delay that makes a later start time worthwhile. Is 1/2 hour enough? Discussion turned to the possibility of piloting a new start time in an upcoming school year with the understanding that adjustments might be made. Is it too disruptive to make a change then change again based on information gathered?

2. Tardies/Absenteeism - the committee would like information on this. Comparative information between elementary and secondary might be useful.
3. Teen driving issues - the committee would like information from our SROs re: teen driving accidents
4. What benefits might we see?
5. If CLS start time changes, how will this affect before and after school care?

The committee concluded its organizational meeting by reiterating that the real significance of this possible change is in the interest of improving student health and well-being, especially in an era focused on increasing expectations for academic performance