

Westwood Public Schools

School Start Times - Initial discussion

October 13, 2022

Subcommittee Mandate

- District goal of facilitating a healthy and supported community
- In support, the School Committee and Superintendent formed a subcommittee earlier last year to consider changes in school start times for the 2023-2024 school year
- **The Start Times Subcommittee is exploring the feasibility of shifting the start time at the high school to after 8:00 am**



Why the interest in school start times?

Sleep patterns change over the life cycle. Teens need 8.5 - 9.5 hours of sleep per night. They naturally fall asleep around 11 pm and are best suited to wake up around 8 am.

Groups such as the American Academy of Pediatrics and the American Medical Association have identified insufficient sleep in adolescents as a public health issue, associated with physical, mental health, and academic risk factors, and recommend later secondary start times.

Tri-Valley League School Start Times

District	22-23 High School Times
Dover-Sherborn	8:35-3:10
Ashland	8:30-2:55
Bellingham	8:30-3:15
Norwood	8:15-2:50
Holliston	8:15-2:43
Medway	8:04-2:31
Hopkinton	8:00-2:30
Millis	8:00-2:20
Norton	7:40-2:09
Medfield	7:35-2:10
Dedham	7:35-2:10
Westwood	7:25-2:05



Issues considered:

- Bus runs (number of runs, length of runs, transportation costs)
- Traffic considerations (e.g. does changing the start time impact traffic, does that increase the length of bus runs, how are our Boston-resident buses impacted, etc.)
- Need for child care for both parents and staff (duration of care, impact on Extended Day, availability of older siblings to provide child care, etc.)
- Adjustment in family schedules (staff and students)
- Impact on athletics (e.g. start time for competition, gym time for practice, daylight issues)

Actions to date:

- Community forum with Dr. Owens about adolescent sleep
- Survey of staff, students, and families
- Outreach to other districts
- Analysis of current bus runs
- Development of possible schedules
- In-depth traffic study
- Development of evaluation criteria
- Staff and community forums

Existing Conditions

2022-2023 Start Times

	AM	Gap	PM	Gap
WHS	7:25AM		2:05PM	
		:23		:20
TMS	7:48AM		2:25PM	
		:62		:45
Elem	8:50AM		3:10PM	

**Three “stacked “ bus runs
(one for each level)**

What scenarios are under consideration?

*Times still high level, subject to adjustment.

Scenario B:

Scenario B				
	AM	Gap	PM	Gap
TMS	7:45AM		2:22PM	
		:30		:33
WHS	8:15AM		2:55PM	
		:45		:25
Elem	9:00AM		3:20PM	

Impact: Elementary and TMS start times about the same, WHS moves 50 minutes later.

What scenarios are under consideration?

*Times still high level, subject to adjustment.

Scenario C:

Scenario C				
	AM	Gap	PM	Gap
Elem	7:45AM		2:05PM	
		:45		:50
WHS	8:30AM		3:10PM	
		:30		:32
TMS	9:00AM		3:37PM	

Impact: “Flips” elementary to the early time slot. Both TMS and WHS have later starts, with the HS start after 8:30 In this scenario, TMS and WHS bus runs are separate.

What scenarios are under consideration?

*Times still high level, subject to adjustment.

Scenario C-2:

Scenario C2 - combined HS/MS				
	AM	Gap	PM	Gap
Elem	7:45AM		2:05PM	
		:45		:75
WHS	8:30AM		3:10PM	
		:10		:7
TMS	8:40AM		3:17PM	

Impact: “Flips” elementary to the early time slot. Both TMS and WHS have later starts. Bus runs combined.

Updates since the last meeting:

- Information about transportation
 - Traffic study results – all scenarios are feasible
 - Buses for our Boston-resident students
 - Info from our special education van company
 - Info from our bus coordinator
- Input/Feedback from community
 - Community forum
 - Staff forums
- Start Times Subcommittee Discussion

Evaluation criteria:

- Degree of change in secondary start times that leads to increased sleep
- Financial cost
- Feasibility based on traffic study
- Impact on parents/staff work schedules, particularly impact on child care
- Potential impact on athletics and after school activities including high school work schedules
- TMS/WHS schedule alignment
- Minimum start time for morning bus pick up for elementary to avoid darkness