

Dear WPS Families,

I want to provide an update on the decision at last week's Westwood School Committee meeting on WPS start times for the 2023-2024 school year.

As context, one of the goals of Westwood Public Schools is facilitating a healthy and supported community. Research on adolescent sleep and its impact indicates that later school start times are beneficial for the physical and mental well-being of secondary students.

The Westwood School Committee and the Superintendent formed a committee last year to consider changes in school start times for the 2023-2024 school year with the goal of shifting WHS to a start time after 8 am. The committee was composed of members from WPS district leadership, WPS faculty representatives across all grade levels, and parents. The committee reviewed survey input from WPS staff, parents and students, a traffic study and lessons from other districts to develop three feasible scenarios. Once these three scenarios were developed, we received additional feedback on the scenarios from WPS staff at two in-person forums and from parents via a community forum and Google form.

Based on the feedback we received and weighing the three scenarios, the School Committee voted unanimously in support of Scenario B which makes minor changes to the elementary and TMS schedules, with a meaningful change to the start time for WHS. The following start times and end times will go into effect for the 2023-2024 school year:

- Westwood High School: 8:15 AM start time and 2:55 PM end time
- Thurston Middle School: 7:45 AM start time and 2:22 PM end time
- Elementary Schools: 9:00 AM start time and 3:20 PM end time

On behalf of the Westwood School Committee, I would like to thank the committee on start times for its thoughtful efforts over the past year and for the input we received from WPS staff, parents and students into this process.

Over the coming months, additional details on the schedule will be communicated. In meantime if you have any questions you can reach out to me, your principal, or Superintendent Parks.

Best wishes and have a great Thanksgiving!

Tony Mullin

Westwood School Committee