

School Start Times Task Force

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 group 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.

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 care. More families may currently be relying on older siblings to care for younger students because of cost concerns. Pam Bukowski conducted a 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 to the space (opening up classrooms, etc).

2. Transportation

- a. If elementary schools shift an hour earlier, 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 dark to get to their bus if going to breakfast. Students may even be arriving to the school even earlier if they are getting there in time for breakfast (30 minutes before the start of school). Shifting times may also put younger students walking to school during rush hour.

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.

4. Extra Curricular/Co-Curricular programs

- a. Changing the start of school increases the competing needs for facilities from sports to clubs. If practice starts 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, will depend on when students can get to the location, not when they are out of school—making availability a question of affluence.

Overall, it was strongly agreed that after presenting the options to the Board of Education, the Task Force 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 will 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 Task Force will have to work hard to reach this population and 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.