Summary of High School Bell Times Work Group
April 11, 2013, 3:00–5:00 p.m.
Carver Educational Services Center, Room 127

Next Meetings:

- Thursday, April 25, 2013, 3:00–5:00 p.m., Carver Educational Services Center, Room 162
- Thursday, May 9, 2013, 3:00–5:00 p.m., Carver Educational Services Center, Room 120

Opening Remarks

John invited participants to contribute feedback gathered from stakeholders to date.

John reviewed a conversation with parents of students at Wheaton High School. Topics discussed included the following:

- Participants’ awareness that the issue of changing bell times was being discussed.
- Levels of concern about students missing information due to sleeping in class and the health impact of lost sleep.
- Levels of interest in a 60-minute delay or a 90-minute delay in high school start times; possible impacts of later start times on families’ lives (after-school jobs, child care, activities).

Review of previous meeting

John summarized the discussions from the previous meetings:

- Task 1: What was most compelling about presentations to date
  - Have not seen anything indicating grades will improve
  - Not convinced (lack of evidence) changing bell times will increase achievement
  - Inconclusive data
  - There are many factors that keep high school students up later and prevent them from getting to sleep before 11:00 p.m.
  - Circadian rhythm: one cannot get more sleep by going to bed earlier

- Task 2: What additional information participants would like to have
  - Child-care data for elementary students
  - Data linking school start times to performance
  - Outcomes of school system similar in size to MCPS who changed
  - Cost implications on budget and how we can offset costs
  - What do educators/all staff/school staff say about school times (parents, students, other stakeholders)
John shared examples of strategies used by Denver and Tulsa school districts to address start times, with mixed results. Denver no longer provides school bus service to high school students and moved to a flexible high school schedule. Students utilize the municipal transit system. Further, under the flexible schedule, the school day goes from 7:30 a.m.–4:15 p.m., with staggered start/end times. Teachers were given the opportunity to change their schedules, and students were given the option of arriving between 7:30 a.m. and 9:00 a.m. Tulsa considered adding 15 minutes to the school day, starting elementary schools at 7:45 a.m., and starting secondary schools at either 8:15 or 8:45 a.m.

**Breakout groups/discussion**

Participants were assigned the task of beginning to define options, which could include options put forward by the 1998 MCPS *Changing Bell Times* report (located on the MCPS High School Bell Times Work Group web page), or adding creative options of their own. All participants then were given the chance to vote for their three most preferred options. Options receiving votes from group members included the following:

- Option L (school start times are moved 35 minutes later but order remains the same)
- Maintain status quo with educational support (public education about importance of sleep) and flip classes for periods 1 and 2
- Maintain the status quo
- Option N (elementary day extended to 6 hours, 45 minutes): high school starts later, elementary schools start earlier
- Reduce class minutes (for high school) and increase number of instructional days (start later but same end time)
- Variation on Option H (provide separate school buses to serve the high schools): buy school buses from Fairfax County Public Schools (participant asked if this would incur savings), keep elementary and middle schools as now, and phase in changing high schools only, e.g., 1/3 each year, with tele-learning to allow some students to start later, plus optional self-drive 2nd period

Options raised in discussion but receiving no votes from group members included the following:

- No high school buses, parents/public transportation
- Tele-learning with limited morning classes
- Variation on Option L (school start times are moved 20 minutes later but order remains the same)
- Local learning centers
- Variation on Option L (earliest school start time moved to 8:00 a.m. but order remains the same) if Maryland legislature mandates no school start earlier than 8:00 a.m. (Maryland legislature discussed this requirement in the most current legislative session but did not act to mandate.)
- Option A (start school every half-hour beginning with elementary schools and ending with middle schools) but start 15 minutes later
- Rotating high school schedule (so that the same class does not always meet during the first class period)
Outreach plan

John and Traci presented a preliminary plan for outreach to the community, and the group discussed concerns for getting representation from specific stakeholder groups:

- Student members suggested a strategy for reaching student council representatives: the Montgomery County Region of the Maryland Association of Student Councils (MCR) and the Montgomery County Junior Councils (MCJC). John and Robin will work with the student representatives to draft questions.
- A Montgomery County Council of Parent-Teacher Associations (MCCPTA) representative recommended outreach to other parent groups besides MCCPTA to include boosters and other ways of reaching parents.

Other issues raised in discussion

- High schools are located on major traffic thoroughfares, while elementary schools are more likely to be located on less traveled residential streets. Changing start times may have differential impacts on general traffic congestion, depending on whether the school is located on a major thoroughfare and whether the school start time is during rush hour.
- Ride-On (public transit) does not have capacity for students using their buses during peak hours.
- One group member shared feedback from a colleague who reported that having her child in school later would save her money she would otherwise spend on extracurricular activities to keep her child occupied and supervised in the afternoon.
- Another group member shared feedback from a parent who reported that it would be desirable for her high school student to get her younger kids to school because it is easier to get after-school care than before-school care.
- “We’re number one,” commented one member. Are other comparable school districts moving to later start times?
- Even if later start times are not associated with academic outcomes, safety, and health are important enough reasons to shift to later start times.
- There is a need to educate stakeholders on sleep issues.
- Middle school students need sleep, too.
- A concern was raised that teachers who travel, such as special education teachers, have particular concerns if rotating schedules are to be considered.
- Clarification was requested regarding the charge to the group. Will only no-cost options be considered? The charge of the group is to create options for the superintendent of schools and the Board of Education to consider, and those do not need to be limited to no-cost. Having the cost of various options will contribute to the community debate.

Meeting adjourned at 5:00 p.m.
Welcome
High School Bell Times Work Group
Meeting #5
April 11, 2013

Conversations you have had?
Thoughts as you had time to reflect
Goals

Review what we have learned and discussed

Tie several divergent thoughts together

• By the end of this meeting, we will have:
  – reviewed initial outreach effort;
  – discussed previous meeting task exercises in greater detail;
  – begun to discuss options.
Meeting with Wheaton High School Parents

• A small focus group of parents discussed thoughts about a later start time

• Discussion topics included:
  – Were they aware the sleep discussion was occurring?
  – Are their students missing information due to sleepiness?
  – Are start times too early?
  – What is the impact to after-school activities and employment?
  – How much concern is there for the need for sleep?
  – What would the impact be to your family?
Outcomes 3/14/13  Task 1
Most Compelling Arguments that Support or Do Not Support a change in bell times

• Haven’t seen anything indicating grades will improve
• Not convinced (lack of evidence) changing bell times will increase achievement
• Inconclusive Data
• There are many factors that keep high school students up later and prevent them from getting to sleep before 11:00 p.m.
Outcomes 3/14/13  Task 1
Most Compelling Arguments that Support or Do Not Support a change in bell times

• Circadian rhythm: One can’t get more sleep by going to bed earlier
  – Students need more sleep
Outcomes from 3/14/13 Task 2
What do we still need to know?

• Child care data for elementary students (before and after care: Who provides care, times and numbers
• Data linking school start times and performance
  – More convincing arguments that other alternatives are not an option
• Outcomes of school system similar in size of MCPS who changed
• Cost implications on budget and how we can offset costs
• What do educators/all staff/school staff say about school times?
  – What do parents, students, staff think about changing bell times
  – Impact on parent work schedules
  – Stakeholder Perspective: What do other groups think about changing times?
Outcomes from 3/14/13 Task 2
What do we still need to know?

SUMMARY of Task Statements:

• NEED MORE DATA
• NEED TO ANALYZE OTHER SCHOOL SYSTEMS
• NEED MORE STAKEHOLDER INPUT
Survey Alignment

• Need to assure Alignment with our needs.
• What do we really need/want to know?
• Where should we be starting?
  – May be a little ahead of ourselves (now H.S. only)
  – Do we need to begin with a narrower starting point such as is there consensus on the need for more sleep?
• Only discussed surveying parents by phone
  – Need plan for gathering student input
Options

Review Denver & Tulsa Articles

30 Minute Group Exercise

Develop a list of three options you most prefer
- May pick from 1998 list
- May develop new options
- One should be something new & creative
  (examples: tele-learning, rotating schedule, no-change, create sleep-ed program)

Answer: What would you recommend if there was a new law prohibiting high school start times before 8:00 a.m.?
Outreach Plan/Define & Revise Stakeholders

• Review list from Office of Community Engagement

• How do we wish to engage groups for input?
  – Direct discussions e.g. WHS
  – Survey
  – Other

• Teacher/staff vs. parent/student
  – How do we weigh differing opinions?
Task 3
Relevant Stakeholders

• Students who work after school, either as interns or for pay
• Employers and the business community who employ students
• Extracurricular activity participants, whose concerns may differ by whether they are school-based or community based, and whether they meet immediately after school or in the later afternoon or evening
  – School-based activities/clubs/performing groups/teams (coaches/advisors, students
  – Community-based activities/clubs/performing groups/teams/coaches/private music teachers, students, recreation department
• School staff (elementary, middle, and high)
• Bus operators
• Child care providers, including sibling caretakers; before and after care providers (school-based or community-based)
## Office of Community Engagement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Committee</th>
<th>Audience</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Afterschool Sports Academies</td>
<td>Blair, Wheaton and Springbrook High Schools</td>
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<td>Student Participants</td>
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<tr>
<td>Youth Advisory Committee</td>
<td>Department of Recreation – Students, ages 13 to 20</td>
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<td>• Bethesda Chevy Chase Region</td>
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<td>• East County Region</td>
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<td>• Mid-County Region</td>
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<td>• Silver Spring Region</td>
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<td>• Upper County Region</td>
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<tr>
<td>Commission on Children and Youth</td>
<td>Department of Health and Human Services advisory commission focusing on children and youth issues; 20 or so individuals, including youth, parents, youth serving organizations – public and private</td>
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<td>Parent Academy Workshops</td>
<td>Parents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent Advisory Committee</td>
<td>Parents of current MCPS students. 15 to 30 parents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PTSA Meetings</td>
<td>Parents at Wheaton High School (we would have 30 minutes on the agenda).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teen Café</td>
<td>Youth talks with kids, sponsored by Department of Recreation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Assessments/Closing

Considering our review today, what would you most like to focus on next time?

What do we need to do to move forward?

Pluses/minuses

Closing Comments
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Options</th>
<th>Descriptions</th>
<th>Start Times</th>
<th>Estimated Annual Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Option A** | Start school every half-hour beginning with elementary schools and ending with middle | 8:45-5:30 High School  
9:15-4:00 Middle School  
7:45-2:00 Elementary A  
8:15-3:30 Elementary B | $5 million  
(130 additional buses) |
| **Option B** | Start school every half-hour beginning with elementary schools and ending with high schools | 9:15-4:00 High School  
8:45-3:30 Middle School  
7:45-2:00 Elementary A  
8:15-2:30 Elementary B | $4.7 million  
(130 additional buses) |
| **Option C** | Start school every half-hour, extend the length of the elementary day to 6 hours and 30 minutes, and end with middle schools | 8:45-3:30 High School  
9:15-4:00 Middle School  
7:45-2:15 Elementary A  
8:15-2:45 Elementary B | $5.1 million  
(130 additional buses) |
| **Option D** | Start school every half-hour, extend the elementary day to 6 hours and 30 minutes, and end with high schools | 9:15-4:00 High School  
8:45-3:30 Middle School  
7:45-2:15 Elementary A  
8:15-2:45 Elementary B | $4.8 million  
(130 additional buses) |
| **Option E** | Move from a four-tier bell schedule to a two-tier schedule with 30 minutes between starting times | 8:30-3:15 High School and Middle Sch.  
8:00-2:15 Elementary A and B | $13.1 million  
(399 additional buses) |
| **Option F** | Move from a four-tier bell schedule to a two-tier schedule with 1 hour between the starting times | 8:45-3:30 High School and Middle Sch.  
7:45-2:00 Elementary A and B | $5.7 million  
(291 additional buses) |
| **Option G** | Reverse starting times of high school and middle school and start all schools 15 minutes later | 8:10-2:55 High School  
7:40-2:25 Middle School  
9:05-3:20 Elementary A  
9:30-3:45 Elementary B | $1.9 million  
(50 additional buses) |
| **Option H** | Provide separate buses to serve the high schools | 8:30-3:15 High School (Times are illustrative)  
7:55-2:40 Middle School  
8:50-3:05 Elementary A  
9:15-3:30 Elementary B | $1.5 million  
(383 additional buses) |
| **Option I** | All schools begin at the same time | 8:30-3:31 High School  
8:30-3:15 Middle School  
8:30-2:45 Elementary A and B | $31.7 million  
(1052 additional buses) |
| **Option J** | Three-tier system | 8:00-2:45 High School and Middle  
8:30-3:15 High School and Middle  
3:00-2:15 Elementary A  
3:30-2:45 Elementary B  
9:00-3:15 Elementary C | $15.6 million  
(531 additional buses) |
| **Option K** | School starts times are moved 1 hour later, but order remains the same | 8:25-3:10 High School  
8:55-3:40 Middle School  
9:50-4:05 Elementary A  
10:15-4:30 Elementary B | $0 |
| **Option L** | School starts times are moved 35 minutes later, but order remains the same | 8:00-2:45 High School  
8:30-3:15 Middle School  
9:25-3:40 Elementary A  
9:50-4:05 Elementary B | $0 |
| **Option M** | Three-tier with variations | 8:30-3:15 High School  
8:00-2:45 Middle School A  
9:00-3:45 Middle School B  
8:00-2:15 Elementary A  
8:30-2:45 Elementary B  
9:30-3:15 Elementary C | $6.8 million  
(226 additional buses) |
| **Option N** | Elementary day extended to 6 hours, 45 minutes | 9:00-3:45 High School  
9:30-4:15 Middle School  
7:45-2:30 Elementary A  
8:15-3:00 Elementary B | $2.5 million  
(25 additional buses) |
## Statewide School Hour Survey
### September 2012–2013

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>County</th>
<th>High Schools</th>
<th>Middle Schools</th>
<th>Elementary Schools</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Earliest Opening Time</td>
<td>Latest Closing Time</td>
<td>Earliest Opening Time</td>
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<tr>
<td>Alleghany</td>
<td>7:45 a.m.</td>
<td>2:30 p.m.</td>
<td>7:45 a.m.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Anne Arundel</td>
<td>7:17 a.m.</td>
<td>2:05 p.m.</td>
<td>7:35 a.m.</td>
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<td>Baltimore City</td>
<td>7:45 a.m.</td>
<td>4:33 p.m.</td>
<td>7:45 a.m.</td>
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<td>Baltimore</td>
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<td>Calvert</td>
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<td>Caroline</td>
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<td>Carroll</td>
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<td>Cecil</td>
<td>7:27 a.m.</td>
<td>2:48 p.m.</td>
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<td>Dorchester</td>
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<td>Garrett</td>
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<td>Prince George's</td>
<td>7:50 a.m.</td>
<td>4:10 p.m.</td>
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<td>Queen Anne's</td>
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<td>Worcester</td>
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*Revised 1/31/13*