

Reading Public Schools
Late Start Working Group

Minutes

April 5, 2016
7:00 – 8:30 p.m.

Superintendent's Conference Room
Central Office

I. Our mission and objective (5-10 min.)

- The Middlesex League Superintendents have agreed to move the start time of high schools to later times within the next few years.
- Late Start Working Group will research changing the start and end times for our schools for the 2017-18 school year. This working group will focus on how the implementation process would occur if we were to change the start times at our schools.
- The Working Group would be appointed with a charge of researching reasonable start times for all grade levels, investigating possible obstacles to a change in start times, proposing possible solutions, and creating an action plan for any changes in time.
- The Working Group should report final recommendations to the School Committee no later than November, 2016.

II. Introductions and Perspectives (30-40 min.)

- Members introduced themselves and explained their interest in this topic.

III. Questions, Issues, Obstacles to explore? (15-20 min.)

Topics and questions raised and/or discussed:

- How late? Depending on how late we switch the time will determine what we have to look at and the needs. What time is best? Are we talking about moving the elementary times?
- Does the teacher's contract indicate a specific start time? No, only in relation to the student start time at each level. (The teacher's work day begins fifteen minutes prior to the student start time.)
- How do we implement a later start time without penalizing the families that have figured out the system and it works well for them? Board of health came to school committee a year ago making the recommendation of a later start time. There are some parents that are concerned with the impacts at the end of the day (sports, arts, clubs, etc.). This will be explored further.
- Technology is a factor that affects sleep and unless we can help parents manage that for their kids this change will not help unless everything is explored.
- Students worried about how they would change their day. This is a cultural shift. Will we see an immediate difference? Do we have information on other school

districts that have already made the change? When did they start to see a difference? What were their obstacles?

- The topic of expectations regarding homework may need to be addressed. There needs to be a cultural shift for all – students, families, and teachers. What are our values around student performance?
- Some families in town rely on high school kids to help with elementary and middle school pickups in the afternoon.
- What are the concerns regarding sports: facility usage for RMHS. We are off our fields at 6pm and then the town rec takes over. Fall sports finish up around dark. In the spring, we have groups in the field house until 10pm right now. We use the Burbank YMCA, ice rink and we have to rent spaces at other places which may be difficult. Buses currently leave at 2:30 does this mean they leave ½ hour later and what does this mean for traffic to get to Lexington.
- Extended day: 440 kids in elementary schools. Time does not affect program too much other than staff. Sandy does know that there are many parents that rely on HS students to assist with pick up. Ext day may need to do a little restructuring of the pickup plan but that is doable.
- Police: looking at traffic patterns. At the high school there is a 15 minute window where there is chaos. Middle school has a shorter drop off time. Elementary school has a very long drop off. Traffic concern with elementary school kids walking while high school students driving at the same time. Staggered time is important. We should look at option to open gate at high school to also help with traffic concerns.
- Extracurricular activities:
- METCO program: This could be beneficial for our Boston students on both ends. There are two buses right now.
- Extra-help: how do we incorporate extra time help with teachers?
- We live in a town with a lot of commuters. What will this do for traffic? Do we need more supervision before school because parents need to get to work?
- Student perspective: There are some activities that are not athletic and not in school activities. Music programs outside of RMHS would be affected and some students would have trouble making rehearsals.
- Student perspective: Can we do athletics in the morning? Athletics in morning gets the blood flowing and may help with athletics.
- Do we have a sense of how many families have kids in multiple schools?
- Do we have the data on the group that existed 10 years ago?
- Air flow with no air conditioners, what will temp be at 3:00 in August? Is it any different from 1:00 or 2:00?
- Would this impact delayed-start days due to snow?
- Teacher contract – now going in to a negotiating year so should not be too much of an issue.
- Would a survey to students and parents be helpful at all? AP stats class could help with this. AP computer science can help as well.
- Percentages and data would be helpful to the group.
 - How many kids do activities?
 - Can we look at the start times for non-Middlesex league schools private and public?

IV. Articles and Website (20-25 min.)

- A handout of recent articles, studies, editorials, etc. was distributed for members to read for the next meeting.
- The following website was also cited:
<http://www.startschoollater.net/major-studies--other-resources.html>

V. Looking Ahead / Next Meeting (5 min.)

- We will keep with Tuesday meetings.
- May 10th is the next meeting.
- Meeting adjourned at approximately 8:40 p.m.