

**SHAKER HEIGHTS CITY SCHOOLS**

Shaker Heights, Ohio

**Notes from Start Time Subcommittee   
of the District Calendar Committee**

Conclusions:

1. Share notes with greater committee of discussion (below).
2. Recommend that there is a leadership discussion with other districts’ leadership teams about whether any neighboring districts and/or districts in our athletic league are considering a change to their start times (we are one of the later start times in the league and in our area). There are some MSAN schools with a later start, whom we could reach out to for more information as well to see how different SES groups in the communities are affected (for example, in NC, where the high school gets out later than the middle school and elementary schools).
3. We do agree that there is a health benefit for teenagers with a later start, but at the cost of extra-curricular activities, jobs, family responsibilities and athletics.
4. Without parent buy-in to these opportunity costs (see below), the later start will not work. It was remarked that the more we examined the issue, the more we discovered impacts that a later start would have on the community and on the schools.

In attendance:

Sarah Davis, Chris Hayward, Brian Johnson, Doug Myles, Alexandria Nichols, Don Readance, James Reed, Bill Schmoldt, Hylah Schwartz, Ella Shlonsky, Missy Sherwin

Notes from discussion:

* If we were to shift, we would be focusing on the High School. The evidence for changing start times for the elementary grades does not have the potential impact that it would for adolescents at the High School.
* High School students tend to go to bed later (11 p.m. or later) and naturally wake up after 8 or 9.
* A key issue for us to consider: Most area schools are starting earlier. Many districts are busing their high school students/students are travelling across a large city, meaning these students are really getting up much earlier than the average Shaker student.
* Moving conferences to the morning was not considered to be an equitable arrangement for the students who most need conferences; shortening the overall school day would mean that students would be unable to take the same load of courses, detracting severely from all students’ abilities to graduate on time/take advantage of Shaker’s extra course offerings.
* Importantly, moving conferences to the morning defeats the purpose of a later start.
* With our current late start schedule at the High School every Tuesday (for students, 8:45 a.m.), we have a 30% increase in tardy students on that day during first period — the late start does not increase student attendance, but negatively affects students being on time. This late start is the High School faculty’s only common planning time, which is less than the Middle School and Elementary faculty’s time.
* High School Faculty lengthened a shorter conference time (which existed in the 1980s) due to the need for a full amount of time for makeup tests and students who need extra time on assignments. Furthermore, the evidence that pushing back a start to, say 8:15 instead of 8:05, is not clear that would make any significant impact on students’ academic performance.
* Changing the school day to contain shorter class periods does not accommodate the MYP or DP demands for group discussion, Socratic seminar or project-based learning or digging deep into a subject area. The Middle School just lengthened its class period time to match the High School’s period length (50 minutes) due to this and other concerns.

Some Concerns re: Athletics (more than 40% of the student body participates):

* Of our athletic league, we are the latest start. Some are starting at 7:20 in the morning.
* For athletics, students leaving for games would have to miss more classes to travel to and participate in the games.
* We have approximately 800 High School Students (more than 40% of the student body) participating in sports.
* The urban schools that have changed their start times seem to have fewer athletic and extracurricular options compared to the plethora at Shaker.
* If we were to start later, practices would need to be shorter/students would be practicing in the dark on fields by October and in March.

Some Potential Community Impacts:

* Students who work may be negatively affected in their ability to get to their jobs/keep their jobs.
* Students who get younger students in the family or the neighborhood would be unable to do so; this would negatively impact then multiple parts of the district. Mr. Hayward and Mrs. Schwartz discussed the significant issue of young students being returned to school by our bus drivers in the late afternoons, since no one was at home to watch the child/let the child into the home.
* The City’s Recreation program will be impacted significantly in its offers for all residents by a later start. No pools, gyms or fields can be used until school has let out. Area leagues for children and adults depend on access to fields.
* Public Works and the crossing guards would also be affected in their scheduling.
* Elementary schools would be impacted, due to the number of older students picking up family and/or neighborhood children while parents work. There could be considerable push back on this issue alone.