

Board of Education-School Start/End Time Task Force

Thursday, November 14, 2019 12:00 PM

Weston High School Main Office Conference Room, 24 School Road, Weston, CT
06883-1623

I. Welcome and Review of Agenda

**II. Preliminary Update Regarding Parent Focus
Group(s)-Jenny Walsh & Kristen Ancker**

III. Brief Transportation Update-Phil Cross

**IV. Reflections on Guidance from "Norwalk Report"
for Weston**

V. Athletics Update Part II-Mark Berkowitz

**VI. Update on SFCSA Superintendents' Roundtable on
SS/ET**

VII. Next Meeting Agenda Items

School Start/End Time Task Force Meeting

October 29, 2019 8:00 AM

Weston High School Main Office Conference Room

Task Force Attendance:

William McKersie
Kenneth Crow
Phillip Cross
Lisa Wolak
Laura Kaddis
Mark Berkowitz
Stacy Slater
Erin Merrifield
Kim Spangler
Matt Brodacki
Joe Parciasepe
Jenny Walsh
Kristen Ancker

1. Review of Task Force Purpose and Workflow Chart-William McKersie

Discussion:

Dr. McKersie reviewed the Task Force Purpose and Workflow Chart with the Task Force. As a shared Google Doc, all Task Force members can update as they have additional information. Jenny Walsh, PTO Representative for upper schools, handed out the agenda she will be using for the parent roundtable she is holding on November 6. Kristen Ancker, PTO Representative for lower schools, will schedule a roundtable to occur before the Thanksgiving break.

2. Implications for Athletics Part One-Mark Berkowitz

Discussion:

Mark Berkowitz, Director of Athletics, reviewed SWC school start and end times for the current year and also reviewed number of WHS athletes that participate in the fall season. Most team sports are able to travel together. If there were a change in times, busing options may change and the need for additional buses may be required.

Mr. Berkowitz mentioned that games during late fall and early spring may be difficult to play because of schools that may not have fields equipped with lighting. It was asked if we could also review the DRG-A School Start/End Times and review what are the anticipated driving distances to all SWC schools we play. On average, Mr. Berkowitz plans for an hour each way for travel. With most teams, both the JV/V teams play. When this occurs, he must factor approximately four hours of play.

The high school needs to review what period 7 & 8 and period 1 & 2 classes are consistently missed and what coaches are leaving early in order to travel to games. Mr. Berkowitz will speak to the athletic directors in both Norwalk and Greenwich to see how the changes they have made are working within athletics.

3. Implications for Afterschool Activities Part One-Joe Parciasepe

Discussion:

Joe Parciasepe, Program Director for Weston Parks & Recreation, schedules and manages all WOW programs, WMS afterschool programs and activities at the Senior

Center. This equates to approximately 150 sessions per year, with more than three-quarters of them after school.

With the numbers of Parks and Recreation staff that work within WMS/WHS and teach the programs at HES/WIS, flipping school start/end times would dramatically affect these programs. A change in later dismissal times would also impact the Ski Club, which runs most Thursdays in January, and would affect not only ski lessons but would have students returning to Weston later in the evening. Any changes in WMS end times would impact Parks and Recreation programs after school, and in turn, affect other programs like basketball (WBA) teams, which would push start times even later. Similar timing issues would occur with the use of the Weston Middle School pool.

The Senior center MOU states that it operates for seniors during school hours. Parks and Recreation run programs in the Senior Center after school and its hours may be affected. Mr. Parciasepe is concerned that later end times may affect students who not only participate in athletics but music and arts, leaving them to choose which activities they have time to participate in. Mr. Parciasepe will create a chart similar to Mr. Berkowitz's chart, regarding program offerings and start/end times.

Ms. Wolak asked what would happen in the evenings for practices such as jazz groups, mock trial teams, music related activities, and other co-curricular groups. When are they currently meeting and how often are they meeting? She will work on obtaining this data.

Dr. Craw will begin to look at the individual school schedules and how they might look given changes in school start times.

4. Traffic Study Review-Captain Brodacki

Discussion:

Captain Matt Brodacki of Weston Police Department, noted that any changes in start and end times will greatly affect the drop off lines and ultimately the traffic patterns within town. He noted that in a 24-hour period, 12,000 automobiles travel on Weston Road every day within the stretch of road near the Weston Historical Society.

Captain Brodacki spoke about the future work that is in process regarding reconfiguring the intersection of Weston Road and School Road and the plans to improve the safety between School Road and Weston center. The timing for new sidewalks is scheduled to be a two-year plan to implement. He noted that between School Road and Norfield Road there have been 50 crashes in the past three years. With apps that are pushing commuters to "fastest" routes, some additional travel on Weston roads may affect our traffic patterns and timing, and therefore affect traffic during school times.

A question was asked as to how many students take the buses versus being driven to/from school daily. Phil Cross, Director of Finance and Operations, will look to see if there is a way to increase students riding buses with a change in start/end times. Mr. Cross met with First Student and they will be conducting bus runs at different times to see what the impact will look like with changes in start/end times.

Chief Henion and Captain Brodacki were asked if they could speak with Norwalk and Greenwich police to obtain their reflections and insights on changes in school start/end times.

5. Topics for Next Meeting

Discussion:

Teachers Stacy Slater and Erin Merrifield will be attending the Weston Teachers' Association Board Meeting to discuss school start/end times. They created a survey regarding commute times and how many teachers also have an additional job outside of their commitments in Weston.

Kim Spangler, representative for AFSCME, will be working on creating a survey for all members.

For the next meeting on November 14, the Task Force will discuss the Norwalk Study and talk about which groups we aren't hearing from yet.

6. Public Comment (3 Minutes Per Speaker)

Discussion:

Meeting adjourned at 9:29 a.m.

Chairperson

Superintendent

School Start/End Time
Task Force Focus Group
November 6th, 2019 7-8:30pm
Weston Public Library Conference Room
Jenny Walsh, PTO Representative for Upper Schools Perspective
Jennywalsh_2002@yahoo.com

Attending the Focus Group
Jenny Reilly- WMS
Christa Gross - WMS
Ilana Escandon - WHS
Beth Lubline - WHS
Mike Nevitt – WHS/WMS
Nancy Hayden – WHS/WMS
Jill Jorschick – WMS
Billy Sherlock – WHS
Erica Schoscia – WMS
Amea Borys – WHS
Nicci Wiese – WMS
Debbie Morvillo – WHS
Cathy Greene - WHS

Each participant will be emailed a copy of Superintendent, Bill McKersie's Memorandum to the BOE on the Preliminary Work Plan for the Task Force prior to Focus Group and asked to review.

7-7:10

*Welcome/Introduction-Parents Names, Child/Students Grade & any other involvement they have with the school district. IE Coach, PTO etc.

7:10-7:15

*Intro of who sits on the Task Force-
Bill McKersie, Superintendent – Chair of School Start/End Times Task Force
Ken Crow, Associate Superintendent for Curriculum & Instruction
Phil Cross, Director of Finance & Operations
Lisa Wolak, Principal, Weston High School (Representing Upper Schools)
Laura Kaddis, Principal, Hurlbutt Elementary School (Representing Lower Schools)
Mark Berkowitz, Athletic Director
Stacy Slater, WTA Representative for Upper Schools Perspective
Erin Merrifield, WTA Representative for Lower Schools Perspective
Kim Spangler, Non Cert Staff Rep
Jenny Walsh, PTO Representative for Upper Schools Perspective
Kristen Ancker, PTO Representative for Lower Schools Perspective

7:15-7:20

*Highlight Analytical Priorities

- 1) Academic Program
- 2) Health Impact – Physical, Emotional, Psychological
- 3) Co-Curricular – Athletics
- 4) Co-Curricular – Music & Performing Arts
- 5) Co-Curricular – Clubs & Activities
- 6) Non-School Programs
- 7) Contractual Obligations
- 8) Non-Contractual Issues for Staff
- 9) Budget and Financials
- 10) Transportation – Safety
- 11) Transportation – Traffic Congestion
- 12) Family Life Arrangements
- 13) Campus & Building Operations
- 14) External Relations

7:20-8:00 (10 min per question)

*Break into 3 groups of 4. Review Analytical Framework/Guiding Questions

Examine four broad questions—

1. What are the pros and cons of shifting the start/end times of school for all buildings to 15/20 minutes later?
 - a. WMS/WHS starting at 8:00 a.m. and ending at 2:45 p.m.
 - b. HES/WIS starting at 8:50 a.m. and ending at 3:35 p.m.
2. What are the pros and cons of shifting the start/end times of school for all buildings to 45/50 minutes later?
 - a. WMS/WHS starting at 8:30 a.m. and ending at 3:15 p.m.
 - b. HES/WIS starting at 9:20 a.m. and ending at 4:05 p.m.
3. What are the pros and cons of flipping the start/end times of school for the Lower and Upper Schools?
 - a. WMS/WHS starting at 8:35 a.m. and ending at 3:20 p.m.
 - b. HES/WIS starting at 7:45 a.m. and ending at 2:30 p.m.
4. Considering the three sets of pros and cons, within the above set of analytical priorities, what is the recommended change for school Start/End Times in the Weston Public Schools?

8-8:30 (Each Group given 10 min)

*Groups present their feedback to the whole focus group.

Currently

WMS/WHS 7:45-2:30 (6:45 hours per day)

HEM/WIS 8:30-3:15

Team A

Switch times and length of school day

WMS/WHS 8:50-3:25 (6:35 hours per day)

HES/WIS 8-2:35

Team B

Flip the schedule

HES/WMS 7:45-2:30 (6:45 hours per day)

WMS/WHS 8:30-3:15

Or

A slight modification to the schedule-

Shorten the day. Similar to Greenwich, dropping a block.

Or shave off 3 mins of each class. A suggestion of making up the lost time on their computers/chrome books.

Team C

Flip the schedule

HES/WMS 7:45-2:30 (6:45 hours per day)

WMS/WHS 8:30-3:15

Due to the research and data regarding the importance of sleep in our adolescents each group wanted to see a change to the current schedule.

As a side note, homework & the length of time HS students spend on homework became a hot topic.

*Conclusion/thanks

INITIAL RESPONSE FROM FIRST STUDENT

Options 1, 2 & 3	As operating window for each run is unchanged, no change in route (vehicle) count is anticipated
Options 4A & 4B	The impact of these bell times will require a complete system re-route. Essentially, we'll have to break up both Tier 1 in the AM and Tier 2 in the PM of the existing routes to compress the time. It should be noted that we expect these options to add additional buses as the available operating window will be reduced from 50 minutes to 30 minutes.
Option 4C	As this option effectively eliminates all tiering, we would expect total route (vehicle) count to increase to 40 (current run is 22). Note: there may be consolidation opportunities with existing runs, but we would expect these to be very limited – if they exist at all – as current runs generally max out their existing operating window.

School Start-End Time/ Travel Study

Updated 11/1/19

Coaches who are also teachers in our district

Fall – 11 (8 teachers, 3 paras)

Winter – 6 (5 teachers 1 para)

Spring – 11 (9 teachers, 1 guidance counselor, 1 para)

Total – 28 out of 71 paid coaching positions or 39%

Average number of athletes traveling to away games

(does not include varsity football as they always play on Friday Night or Saturday)

September 12 – September 30 (beginning of game schedule – end of month)

12 total school days between 9/12 and 9/30

4 school days where no teams travel

18 teams traveling on 8 school days ~ 2.25 per day

~ 430 athletes traveling ~ 36 per school day

October 1 – October 30 (beginning of month – end of regular seasons)

20 total school days between 10/1 and 10/30

5 school days where no teams travel

56 teams traveling ~ 2.8 per day

~ 1300 athletes traveling ~ 65 per school day

Total for fall regular season

32 total weekdays between 9/12 and 10/30

74 teams traveling ~ 2.4 per day

~1730 athletes traveling ~ 54 per school day

Travel Time to Conference Away Games

Bethel – 15 miles approximately 45 minutes

Brookfield – 26 miles approximately 60 minutes

Bunnell – 24 miles approximately 60 minutes

Immaculate – 15 miles approximately 45 minutes

Joel Barlow – 10 miles approximately 30 minutes

Kolbe – 17 miles approximately 60 minutes

Masuk – 20 miles approximately 60 minutes

New Fairfield – 22 miles approximately 60 minutes

New Milford – 27 miles approximately 60 minutes

Newtown – 20 miles approximately 60 minutes

Notre Dame – 13 miles approximately 45 minutes

Pomperaug – 30 miles approximately 70 minutes

Stratford – 21 miles approximately 45 minutes

2019-20 School Start/End Times
SWC Schools

updated 11-1-19

School	Start	End	School Day	Discussion	Changes to start/end times	Lights
Bethel	7:35	2:15	6:40	Yes		Stadium and baseball, no turf
Brookfield	7:15	2:00	6:45	Yes	End time of 1:50 in 2008-9	Stadium and 2nd turf field
Bunnell	7:30	2:00	6:39	Yes	Start 7:25, end 1:55 in 2008-9, start 7:40 end 2:10 in 2017-18	Stadium
Immaculate	7:40	2:00	6:20	No	Start time of 7:30 with an end time still of 2pm in 2008-9	no lights
Joel Barlow	7:30	2:08	6:38	Yes		Stadium
Kolbe Cathedral	8:15	2:15	6 hrs	No		no lights (Univ. of Bridgeport)
Masuk	7:25	2:00	6:35	No	End time of 1:55 in 2008-9, start time still 7:25	Stadium and tennis courts
New Fairfield	7:19	1:58	6:39	Yes		Stadium and 2nd turf field
New Milford	7:35	2:15	6:40	No	Start time of 7:40, end time of 2:10 in 2008-9	Stadium and 2nd turf field
Newtown	8:00	2:32	6:32	No	Start time of 7:25, end time of 1:52 in 2008-9	Stadium, Treadwell and Baseball
Notre Dame Fairfield	8:00	2:00	6 hrs	No	Start time of 7:40, end time of 1:45 in 2008-9	no lights
Pomperaug	7:20	2:05	6:45	No		Stadium
Stratford	7:30	2:00	6:30	No	Start 7:25, end 1:55 in 2008-9, start 7:40 end 2:10 in 2017-18	Stadium and softball
Weston	7:45	2:30	6:45	Yes		Stadium and 2nd turf field