

## Federal Hocking Community Conversations On School Start Times

The next meeting for our continuing community conversation on school start times will be on **Monday, February 12<sup>th</sup>** starting at 6 p.m. at the Middle/High School Library. At this meeting we will hear from Federal Hocking students about their survey and research results about start times. We will also discuss what thoughts people have on the *ideal* start and end times for secondary and elementary schools would be and what problems moving to such times could create.

Resources for this meeting can be accessed below or picked up/sent home to you from your school principal.

A Ted Talk on high school start times and student sleep needs:

[https://www.ted.com/talks/wendy\\_troxel\\_why\\_school\\_should\\_start\\_later\\_for\\_teens](https://www.ted.com/talks/wendy_troxel_why_school_should_start_later_for_teens)

A research report on what happens when start times for teens is moved back:

<https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2017/12/171201091030.htm>

Some fast facts on school start times and teens:

<http://www.startschoolater.net/wake-up-calls-fast-facts.html>

A simple pros and cons piece on changing start times:

<https://www.verywell.com/the-pros-and-cons-of-starting-school-later-2609565>

A short research report on one school district's moving elementary start times:

[https://www.spps.org/cms/lib/MN01910242/Centricity/Domain/7352/elementary\\_feedback\\_on\\_changed\\_start\\_times.pdf](https://www.spps.org/cms/lib/MN01910242/Centricity/Domain/7352/elementary_feedback_on_changed_start_times.pdf)

A very technical research report from a project in Kentucky that suggest a danger in moving start times too early for elementary school children:

<http://www.apa.org/pubs/journals/releases/edu-a0037195.pdf>

Here is a summary of this report:

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/child-sleep-zzzs/201406/how-do-earlier-school-times-affect-young-students>

A nice summary from Children's Hospital, Columbus, on how parents can help adolescents get enough sleep:

<http://www.nationwidechildrens.org/sleep-in-adolescents>

I have also included in this announcement a review of our conversations and actions to date. It follows this announcement. I look forward to seeing you on Feb. 12.

Doc Wood

## **Federal Hocking Local Schools**

### **School Start Time Discussion**

#### *Overview*

In the spring of 2017 a district committee made three recommendations to the Superintendent about school start times. These recommendations came from a study of the research on adolescents and sleep as well as research on faculty collaboration. The recommendations were as follows:

1. Create one bus route for students who attend Tri-County Career Center so that FH students attending there attend for a full school day.
2. Consider 'flipping' school start times with the elementary schools beginning at 8:30 and the middle and high school beginning at 9:30.
3. Work to shorten all bus routes so that no student is on a bus for longer than one hour each way.
4. Consider shortening the school day so that teachers would have 30 minutes of collaboration time daily.

#### *Actions on Recommendations*

1. One bus route for TCCC was created for the 2017/18 school year and FH students attending TCCC are now there for a full school day. This will continue in the future.
2. Meetings are being held with parents and teachers to discuss start times looking at how to start the middle and high school later (currently they start at 7:40) while not inordinately disrupting our elementary times or after school activities.
3. The transportation department and superintendent are designing routes that will shorten rides for the 2018/19 school year. These will require additional buses.
4. The superintendent has decided not to pursue shortening the school day at this time. Buildings are being encouraged to find other ways to provide collaborative planning for staff.

### Hopes and Concerns

During the meetings that have been held on school start times parents, teachers and students have expressed both support and opposition to changing school start times. Various positions have been stated, with pros and cons being outlined. A short summary of both follows:

#### *Pros to starting the middle and high school later*

- 1. Later start times are in keeping with the research on adolescent sleep needs. The research on this is extensive and has been shared with those attending the meetings.*
- 2. Many secondary school students are involved in athletics, drama, and other school activities that go late into the evening. A later start time would honor their commitment to the school by letting them get more sleep after activity nights*
- 3. Research has indicated that later middle and high school start times leads to adolescents getting more sleep, vital to their physical, emotional, and intellectual health.*
- 4. Changing the start times to where the elementary schools open first would help parents with young children that have to arrange child care in the morning due to work schedules (older children would be home to get younger children on the bus).*

#### *Cons to starting the middle and high school later*

- 1. Later start times for the middle and high school could lead to much earlier or later start times for the elementary schools.*
- 2. Changing the schedule where the elementary schools get out first in the afternoon can lead to child care problems for families that depend upon older siblings to be at home when younger children get there.*
- 3. If the middle and high school start later they will end later, potentially causing problems for such things as sports, band, and after school jobs.*
- 4. Parents who have to leave for work before the secondary school bus arrives voiced concerns about making sure their children actually get up and get on the bus.*

Certainly there are other issues being raised, but the above lists provides the general outline of issues being discussed.

### Steps Going Forward

The issue of start times is connected to a wide range of factors in our district. We have opted to keep our elementary schools open which means we will always run two bus routes—one for elementary and one for secondary.<sup>1</sup> We have families dependent upon siblings for childcare. Many of our students are involved in after school activities that keep them up late at night. Our bus routes can, in some cases, be very long.

The FH Administration is committed to finding a way to respond to the growing body of research that recommends latter start school start time for adolescents while causing a minimum of disruption to the rest of the school day. To that end, two things will happen in February:

1. New bus routing, including the use of two new bus routes, we be done with the target of reducing all rides to under one hour. This will also reduce the ride time for all students. This change alone will push back the time that students have to get up in the morning to catch the bus.
2. We will meet with parents, teachers, and students on Feb. 12 to hear from students about how they see start times and continue our discussion on what could and should be done in our district.

During these discussions we will be also exploring a number of additional topics related to student sleep and health. Topics that have been raised include:

- What else, other than move start times back, could the schools do to make sure families are provided the ability to get their children to bed on time? (For example, due to these discussions we have already decided there will be no more varsity football games on Thursday nights.)
- What information can we provide to families about the importance of sleep? Especially how to combat the impact electronic devices have upon disturbing sleep patterns.
- What can the district do about before and after school programs to help working parents with child care?

It is the intention of the district administration to make a decision about school start times and bus routes in March.

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<sup>1</sup> As part of the start time discussions the administration and transportation department did explore single routing of our buses. This option has been discarded as it would take at least six to eight new bus routes and would actually increase the time students are on the bus.