

Memo

To: Melrose School Committee
From: Cyndy Taymore, Superintendent
Date: December 12, 2017
Re: Late Start Implementation 2018-2019 School Year

As voted by the Melrose School Committee and agreed upon with the Melrose Education Association (Memorandum of Agreement, March 13, 2017), the School Committee's decision to implement a change in start times shall be effective at the commencement of the 2018/2019 academic year, and shall be implemented on a permanent basis, unless the School Committee subsequently decides to rescind and/or modify such decision.

The new start and end times for students will be as follows:

- Franklin Early Childhood Center: 8:30 (end time dependent on program)
- Elementary Schools: 8:03 to 2:15
- Secondary Schools: 8:15 to 2:41

In order to ensure a smooth and orderly implementation, the Melrose School Committee (MSC) and the Melrose Education Association (MEA) agreed to create a "Start Time Oversight Committee" whose exclusive function shall be to identify and assess any concerns relative to the implementation of the School Committee's decision to change start times.

The Start Time Oversight Committee created was to begin its work no later than April 15, 2017, and remain in effect through the end of the 2018/2019 academic year. The Start Time Oversight Committee was comprised of the following administrators and teachers:

- Cyndy Taymore, Superintendent
- Marianne Farrell, Director of Finance and Administrative Affairs
- Jason Merrill, MHS Principal
- Jamie Parson, MVMMS Assistant Principal
- Carol Weldin, Interim Principal, Hoover Elementary School
- Adam Azia, MVMMS ELA
- Patrick Dayton, MHS Special Education
- Suzanne Fogarty, MHS Wellness
- Randi Murry, MVMMS Special Education
- Nancy Naslas, MHS Science

- Alex Pennachio, MHS History and Social Studies

Lisa Donovan, MEA President, and I held an initial planning meeting on May 12, 2017. Subsequently, the Oversight Committee met four times between September and December of this school year. Discussions at the meetings were frank, thorough, and systematic. Each issue was analyzed for pros, cons, potential mitigation, and action steps. A working document charted the concerns and proposed solutions in each category. In early December the chart was shared with secondary staff and feedback was solicited.

In the agreement, MSC and MEA agreed to discuss union concerns that included, but were not limited to those listed below. As of today's meeting, the "Start Time Oversight Committee" has either resolved specific issues or created action plans for others to be completed by June, 2018. We believe we will be ready for the change in start times for August, 2018.

The mitigation/action step to each concern is in italics.

- Access to extra help for students: *New schedule with flex blocks provides time during the day for extra help, makeup, retesting, etc. Secondary schools scheduling committee exploring expanding flex from twice a week to everyday.*
- Extracurricular activities (clubs, sports, etc.): *Most academic clubs now meet before school and will continue to do so; athletic practices with the exception of hockey and swim will be limited to afterschool. Hockey and swim will occur before school only if it is a necessity determined by renting ice or pool time.*
- Supervision of students who arrive prior to start time: *Will be less of an issue than currently is at elementary schools; add expanded breakfast option to middle and high schools; middle school will need to add a morning monitor either through duty assignment or stipend.*
- AP exams: *Not an issue; proctors are paid and exams can begin at 8:00 per College Board requirement.*
- Parent/Teacher Conferences: *No changes to current contract language or school schedules.*
- Department/Faculty Meetings: *Provide staff with 18-19 meeting schedule this spring so staff can plan accordingly. Middle and high school committee members are interested in surveying staff to see if adjustments can be made to number of meetings and length of meetings. Any significant changes to meeting times/schedule will need to be negotiated in next contract.*
- Flexible schedules: *Contract language to support flexible schedule currently exists; would be on an individual case basis as determined by the need of the program of studies.*
- Professional Development, including graduate degree programs: *Multiple options now exist for graduate work (online, Saturdays, summers, etc.). Checked with Salem State University regarding start time of most courses (4:30). District would accommodate individual teacher's needs.*

- Education Stations: *Revise schedule to meet later end time; adjust transition activities for students to have “down time” immediately and then move into activities. We will also be revisiting the Education Stations schedule overall, given the changes in leadership that recently took place.*

Additionally, the Oversight Committee discussed the following concerns:

- Building Based Professional Development: *The district will continue to provide the same extensive level of optional professional development opportunities.*
- METCO Bus: *Ms. Ward now thinks that adjusting the bus schedule will be possible. The elementary students will benefit from the earlier start time and the secondary students will have less time between arrival and the start of school than originally thought. We will provide high school students with more MBTA passes if needed.*
- Bell Schedules and Contract Start Times: *MVMMS has addressed this concern and is piloting a new schedule for the “first bell” of the day.*
- Time on Learning: *The high school is interested in exploring ways to add time on learning either through revisiting the midyear and finals schedule and/or through creative scheduling for some courses.*
- Elementary Schools: *The Elementary Schools will add a “wrap around” service to complement Early Bird so that students waiting for an older sibling can be supervised until the secondary campus dismisses.*

In accordance with our memorandum of understanding, a joint letter from the district and Melrose Education Association will be sent to the parents/guardians of all students outlining the potential changes that might impact students including those outlined above. The agreement states that the joint letter shall be sent no later than the end of the 2017/2018 academic year; however, our intent is to send it as soon as possible following the holidays.