

Fact Sheet on Later School Start Time for NJUHSD

Often in the school community, we are faced with the challenge of tough decisions that change the outcomes for student safety, health and learning. As educators, we commit ourselves to always try our very best to make those decisions and recommendations for the best interest of students individually and collectively. Of course, those decisions must be made within the constraints of school budgets, state law, federal law, collective bargaining agreements and contracts with other agencies. It is with this heart of the educator that your staff at the Nevada Joint Union High School District entered into serious consideration of adjusting our school schedules for a later start.

Process

- NJUHSD Education Summit – When our superintendent, Louise Johnson, arrived in the 2013-14 school year, she was tasked with the opportunity to deeply assess the condition of the district and develop a long range strategic plan to guide the district into the future. In January, 2014 the district held an Education Summit with representation from administration, teachers, classified staff, parents, students and community leaders not directly tied to the school district. The group met for 2 days and through a variety of activities within their stakeholder group and across stakeholder groups developed our 2020 Vision. After a first reading and discussion in February, the Board of Trustees adopted the 2020 Vision on March 12, 2014. The vision document is intended to clarify who we are, what we do and what we aspire to become!
- 2020 Vision Goal: Conditions of Learning
 - To reinforce our belief that everyone can learn, our district will:
 - implement schedules to meet the needs of each student
 - the complete 2020 Vision can be found at this link:<http://www.njuhsd.com/documents/board%20of%20trustees/strategic%20plan/strategic%20plan.pdf>
- Local Control Accountability Plan: Conditions of Learning
 - A change that has the potential to improve learning conditions for all students is central to our planning to expand and enhance our educational environment for all students and for students who are identified by the State of California as priority students including foster youth, English Language Learners and students on the federal free and reduced price meal program. As we develop our budget for the 2015-16 school year and beyond, the question for consideration at this time was whether or not to target fiscal and human resources towards moving the school start time to later in the morning as recommended by multiple studies on the effect of sleep deprivation on teenagers.
- Program Improvement (improving learning)

- The NJUHSD has been identified as a Program Improvement District by the federal “No Child Left Behind” legislation. Despite consistent outstanding performance on the California High School Exit Exam, we have failed the federal goal of all students proficient by 2014.
- Schedule Steering Committee
 - As a step towards the achievement of our goal of the implementation of school schedules to meet the needs of each student, the superintendent convened a schedule steering committee of professional educators in the Fall of 2014 to develop recommendations for the schools, administration, and Board of Trustees. The committee met often and developed 4 priority recommendations for an ideal school schedule based on student needs. Those 4 priorities are:
 - **See our students all year.** We believe that curricular areas that need frequent practice such as mathematics and foreign language are not well served by a school schedule that meets for only half of the year (eg. 4x4 block schedule)
 - **Later school start.** We believe that the research, including the recently released study from the American Academy of Pediatrics provides compelling evidence supporting a later school start. As high school educators, we have all experienced a first period class that appears to be still asleep and without the active engagement we see in our kids later in the day.
 - **Remediation, intervention, tutoring in the school day.** In our rural, geographically vast school district many students who need help with their school work or need to make up credits are tied to the bus schedule. We currently have after school tutoring but many students who need the help must get on the bus. We need to have opportunities for all students to access needed help within their school day.
 - **Some extended blocks of time for deeper instruction.** The new California State Standards call for richer, deeper learning across the curriculum. Students are asked to draw meaning from a variety of sources including fiction and non-fiction, digital media and everyday text in language arts. The new test of these standards debut this year in late April, early May. We need time in our classrooms to address this type of learning.

Upon review, the committee found its task complete and returned the work into the hands of the individual schools. The current Bear River schedule already meets 3 or the 4 priorities, the alternative schools (Ghidotti and North Point Academy) already have schedules aligned to their particular instructional programs and the entire school community of Nevada Union has been working diligently on developing a schedule to advance our priorities.
 - On December 2, 2014, a joint meeting was held with the Schedule Steering Committee and the LCAP parent advisory council. The meeting was open and attended by parents from throughout the district.

- Exploration
Presented with compelling scientific research, District Administration began an exploration process regarding a later school start time. The motivation was improved learning, improved student mental and physical health and greater safety of students and staff.
 - In late fall, 2014, district administration began meeting with Grass Valley School District administration and Durham Transportation Services representatives to assess the possibility of a later start time for NJUHSD.
 - NJUHSD recognized that both districts were going to incur additional costs for the later start time of NJUHSD. We worked with GVSD and Durham for months in an effort to mitigate the cost.

- Surveys
 - An on-line parent survey was done between February 13 and February 27, 2015.
 - The CA Healthy Kids Survey was completed by students, staff and parents in the fall of 2014.

- Board and Community Meetings
 - On April 8, 2015, The Board of Trustees formally discussed the possibility of a later start time.
 - A Town Hall meeting was held on April 30, 2015
 - The Board of Trustees voted to implement a later start time in school year 2016-2017 to give the feeder districts, Durham Transportation and our schools time to plan for the change.

Research and Findings

- Summary Findings
 - Schools starting before 8:30 ... "key modifiable contributor to insufficient sleep, as well as circadian rhythm disruption, in this [adolescent] population."

- Health and Safety
 - Obesity
 - Depression
 - Drowsy Driving
 - Quality of Life

- Academic Success
 - Increased attendance
 - Ability to learn

- Sources

- "School Start times for Adolescents," American Academy of Pediatrics: 8/15/14.
<http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/early/2014/08/19/peds.2014-1697.full.pdf+html>

abstract

The American Academy of Pediatrics recognizes insufficient sleep in adolescents as an important public health issue that significantly affects the health and safety, as well as the academic success, of our nation's middle and high school students. Although a number of factors, including biological changes in sleep associated with puberty, lifestyle choices, and academic demands, negatively affect middle and high school students' ability to obtain sufficient sleep, the evidence strongly implicates earlier school start times (ie, before 8:30 AM) as a key modifiable contributor to insufficient sleep, as well as circadian rhythm disruption, in this population. Furthermore, a substantial body of research has now demonstrated that delaying school start times is an effective countermeasure to chronic sleep loss and has a wide range of potential benefits to students with regard to physical and mental health, safety, and academic achievement. The American Academy of Pediatrics strongly supports the efforts of school districts to optimize sleep in students and urges high schools and middle schools to aim for start times that allow students the opportunity to achieve optimal levels of sleep (8.5–9.5 hours) and to improve physical (eg, reduced obesity risk) and mental (eg, lower rates of depression) health, safety (eg, drowsy driving crashes), academic performance, and quality of life. Pediatrics 2014;134:642–649

- "School Start time and Sleep," National Sleep Foundation:
<https://sleepfoundation.org/sleep-news/school-start-time-and-sleep>
- "Most US middle and high schools start the school day too early," Centers for Disease Control and Prevention:
<http://www.cdc.gov/media/releases/2015/p0806-school-sleep.html>
- "Doctors' Orders: Start School Days Later," Washington Post: 8/25/14.
http://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/pediatricians-group-wants-schools-to-push-back-the-start-of-classes/2014/08/25/380a4a0e-2c94-11e4-bb9b-997ae96fad33_story.html
- "Later school bells in high schools deserve an A+," The Sacramento Bee:
<http://www.sacbee.com/opinion/editorials/article10571237.html>
- "DJUSD Moving Toward a Later Start," Davis Joint Unified School District:

<http://www.djUSD.k12.ca.us/latestart>

- Scholarly articles:
http://scholar.google.com/scholar?q=late+school+start+times&hl=en&as_sdt=0&as_vis=1&oi=scholar&sa=X&ei=USALVdLZKYb1oASh04DwBw&sqi=2&ved=0CBsQgQMwAA

- *"Given that the primary focus of education is to maximize human potential, then a new task before us is to ensure that the conditions in which learning takes place address the very biology of our learners."*

Mary A. Carskadon, PhD, Director of E.P. Bradley Hospital Research Laboratory and professor in Department of Psychiatry and Human Behavior at Brown University School of Medicine

"Why We Need to Sleep Better," John Underwood: Athlete Committed

Sleep is a biological and powerful need, much like food and water. If totally deprived, humans ultimately perish. Sleep strengthens memory; sleep improves the heart; sleep decreases depression; sleep makes you strong and healthy; sleep supports weight loss; sleep increases creativity!

Financial Cost

- Home-to School Bus Transportation
 - A change in the school start and end times will result in an additional cost for home-to-school bus transportation.
 - Currently, NJUHSD shares bus routes, buses and drivers with the Grass Valley Elementary and Pleasant Ridge Elementary School Districts; consequently, NJUHSD also shares costs with these districts.
 - If NJUHSD moves to a later start time and the elementary districts keep the same start times, each district will need to facilitate its own bus routes and, therefore, will endure greatest costs.
 - The increased cost to NJUHSD is estimated at \$145,000 or \$52.00 per NJUHSD student.
- Possible Increase to Revenue
 - Each additional day of student attendance generates approximately \$67; increased attendance of 0.7% will generate over \$150,000.
 - Each student who achieves academic success and is retained in our schools will generate \$8,700+.

NJUHSD Later Start Q & A

Q If school starts at 8:30 AM at Bear River and Nevada Union, what would be the end time?

A 3:30; State law requires a certain number of instructional minutes per day and per year.

Q How early do students catch the bus now with the 7:30 AM start time?

A Morning stops for students begin at 5:55 AM and the last pick up is at 7:10 AM. The last drop off in the afternoon is at 4:08 PM. Some students in outlying areas also drive/ride for up to an hour before boarding the bus.

Q I recently read in the paper that NJUHSD presented layoff notices to some teachers. Was this action related to the expense associated with a later start?

A No. Any positions that are planned for reduction are simply to keep pace with declining enrollment. Less students require fewer teachers / staff.

Q I heard that NJUHSD was going to cancel summer school beginning in the summer of 2016. Is this a cost reduction in order to pay for late start?

A No, the administration is recommending that the funding for summer school and after school credit recovery be redirected to staffing for credit recovery during the school day. Students who are dependent on the bus and/or have after school or summer jobs will have an opportunity to more easily access credit recovery classes.

Q What would be the effect of a later start on athletics?

A On January 27, 2015 the NJUHSD committed to the "Athlete Committed" program with Olympic Training Center coach John Underwood. The research shows that with more sleep, athletes will perform better on the field and in the classroom. Given our rural location, there would be some distinct disadvantages to a later start time. Student athletes would miss more class time when traveling to competitions out of the area. Practice could end even later. There could be some options for morning practice, but, of course, that would be inconsistent with the objectives of making the change.