



Sleep Health Advisory Committee

Recommendation for School Start/End Times

January 18, 2023

Objectives

- General review of work completed by the Sleep Health Advisory Committee (SHAC)
- Discussion of options and consensus opinion of the SHAC
- Presentation of recommended start/end times and adjustments to operations
- Discussion of benefits and considerations of recommendation
- Request for consideration and approval from School Committee

Sleep Health Advisory Committee

The Sleep Health Advisory Committee (SHAC) has convened throughout the fall to investigate, discuss, and recommend potential changes to school start times for the 2023-2024 school year to better align with adolescent health needs for adequate sleep.

Sleep Health Advisory Committee

- Studied research on sleep health and start times
- Reviewed consensus guidelines from expert medical societies
- Investigated the local child care landscape
- Examined practices in other districts
- Sought and reviewed feedback from stakeholders in our school community
- Carefully considered unique logistical issues in order to come to a consensus regarding a recommended start time schedule beginning Fall 2023

All reports and presentations can be viewed on the [Sleep Health Advisory Committee/School Start Times](#) web page.

Consensus Opinion

- Consensus was reached regarding a Modified Option A as the recommended course with 76% (19 of 25) of SHAC members favoring the Modified Option A
- 20% (5 of 25) of SHAC members expressed strong preference for Option B:
 - Delayed start times for all schools
 - Equalized each morning bus tier
 - Switched the order in which the high school and middle schools begin their day, aligning the high school start time with expert recommendations for adolescents not to begin school prior to 8:30am
- 4% (1 of 25) recommended no change

Consensus Opinion

The majority cited concerns with Option B regarding:

- Decreased likelihood of timely dismissal from the middle schools if they are in the first tier of afternoon busing
- Increased scheduling conflicts for high school after-school academic extra help, clubs, and athletics
- Reduced ability for high school student participation in afternoon co-curriculars and employment.

Consensus Opinion

The SHAC strongly considered an additional option, which involved starting the elementary schools in the first tier at 7:55am, followed by the middle and high schools.

Ultimately *not* deemed to be a viable alternative because:

- Stakeholder feedback received from the ThoughtExchange survey expressing concerns about this type of model
- Lessons considered from other districts who swapped elementary and high school start times
- Option with most significant impact to family/staff schedules and child care needs

Consensus Opinion

Swapping Elementary start time with high school start time was not deemed viable because (Continued):

- Greatest likelihood of negatively affecting high school student participation in after-school athletics, co-curriculars, employment, and sibling child care
- The likely need for the addition of a morning ESC program at Sherwood Middle School
- Need to lengthen afternoon elementary ESC programs, increasing their cost

Recommendation: Modified Option A

- Shifts all school start times later
- Maintains the current order of school start/end times
- Equalizes each morning busing tier at 40 minutes
- Shortens the middle school day by 10 minutes
- Modified end time for both elementary students and educators, due to feedback received from families and staff at the elementary level

Recommendation: Modified Option A

Tier	School(s)	Start/End Times for Students	Educator Time on Campus	Length of School Day	Time Between Tiers (AM/PM)
Tier 1	High School	7:55am – 2:20pm	7:40am – 2:50pm	6 hr 25 min	N/A
Tier 2	Middle Schools	8:35am – 3:00pm	8:20am – 3:30pm	6 hr 25 min	40 minutes/ 40 minutes
Tier 3	Elementary Schools	9:15am – 3:30pm	8:45am – 3:45pm	6 hr 15 min	40 minutes/ 30 minutes

Benefits of Modified Option A

- High school students will have a lengthened morning sleep opportunity by 20-35 minutes (20 minutes in delayed start time from current time of 7:35am, plus 15 minutes for decreased need for early bus pick-up due to insufficient route time allocation).
- Supports middle school students' biological sleep needs, many of whom have begun puberty and undergone the natural shift to a later circadian rhythm. Their sleep opportunity is lengthened by 35 minutes.
- Adequate length of sleep opportunity maintained for elementary school students.

Benefits of Modified Option A

- Preserves the order of the current school start time schedule. Due to the ability to load all buses at once for prompt dismissal from the high school, this benefits the afternoon busing timetable for all schools.
- High school students will be dismissed before middle and elementary school students, allowing high schoolers to provide child care at home for families who use older siblings for afternoon care.
- Staff may be less likely to require morning child care for their own children, and district families may require less child care in the afternoons.

Benefits of Modified Option A

- Compared with Option B, this plan has less impact on afternoon activities (i.e.: extra help, athletics, clubs, performing arts, and employment) at the high school level. Student and family feedback indicated concerns that students may lose the protective benefits reaped from participation in these activities should dismissal be too late.
- Most, if not all, morning bus pick-ups and afternoon drop-offs are likely to take place during adequate daylight, regardless of time of year.
- This option requires minimal to no increase in district transportation expenditures as it does not require use of additional buses/drivers and maintains the current three-tiered busing structure.

Other Considerations

- Addition of an Extended School Care (ESC) morning program will be considered at Sherwood Middle School given the later start time; any addition would depend on how much family interest there is and having sufficient enrollment for financial viability.
- Adjustments to existing ESC staff hours to accommodate longer morning ESC programs and shorter afternoon ESC programs will be required.
- With a change in the high school schedule, the Little Colonials schedule will need some adjustments due to the fact that SHS students who take child development classes are part of that program.

Other Considerations

- Similarly, there may be adjustments to preschool schedules at Parker Road or Beal depending on transportation requirements and scheduling for preschool students who qualify for busing due to their disabilities.
- SPS staff with children may need to adjust the timing of their own childcare, potentially needing less in the morning and more in the afternoon, depending on the grade level where the staff member works.

Conclusion

After thoroughly considering the ways Shrewsbury Public School district might be able to support our students' sleep health and further advance our strategic priorities and goals under the category of "enhanced well-being of all," we are proposing the modified Option A for your consideration and approval.



Questions and Comments