



**Proposed Changes to  
2023-2024 School Day Start and End Times  
Superintendent's Recommendation**

**January 25, 2023**



# Strategic Priority & Goal

- Strategic priority: *Enhanced well-being of all*
- Strategic goal: *Investigate, recommend, and plan for potential changes to school start times to better align with adolescent health needs for adequate sleep*



## **Sleep Health Advisory Committee**

The Sleep Health Advisory Committee (SHAC) met 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.



# Work Completed by the Sleep Health Advisory Committee

- 1) Studied research on sleep health and start times
- 2) Reviewed consensus guidelines from expert medical societies
- 3) Investigated the local child care landscape
- 4) Examined practices in other districts
- 5) Sought and reviewed feedback from stakeholders in our school community **and used this feedback when developing and modifying options**
- 6) 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.



**Work Completed by the  
Sleep Health Advisory Committee**

**Thank you!!!**



# Consensus Recommendation of the Sleep Health Advisory Committee

## “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



## Recommended Schedule for 2023-2024

- 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 from original proposal for both elementary students and educators, due to feedback received from families and staff at the elementary level



## Benefits of Proposed Schedule

- **SHS students** will have a lengthened morning sleep opportunity by **20 to 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).
- *Is a 20 to 35 minute later start time enough to provide benefits?*
  - While 8:30am is recommended by experts, research has shown that “even modest delays in high school start times (>10 minutes) are associated with increased sleep duration.” (Research Task Group Report, p. 6)
  - This recommendation provides the potential for at least 20 minutes more sleep for all SHS students and more than 30 minutes for those who take the bus



# School Start vs. Sleep Time: University of Minnesota Study

- 9,000+ high school students
- 3 states, 5 districts, 8 public high schools
- Later start times associated with more high school students getting 8+ hours of sleep

**Table 4.** Percent of High School Students Sleeping At Least 8 Hours Per School Night by School Start Time

School Start Time	7:30 AM	7:35 AM	8:00 AM	8:00 AM	8:05 AM	8:20 AM	8:35 AM	8:35 AM	8:35 AM	8:55 AM
School Year	2010-2011	2011-2012	2011-2012	2010-2011	2011-2012	2010-2011	2010-2011	2010-2011	2010-2011	2012-2013
District & State	Boulder Valley School District, CO	Teton County Schools, WY	Boulder Valley School District, CO	Mahtomedi School District, MN	Boulder Valley School District, CO	St. Louis Park High School, MN	South Washington Co., MN	South Washington Co., MN	South Washington Co., MN	Teton County Schools, WY
School	Fairview High School	Jackson Hole High School	Boulder High School	Mahtomedi High School	Fairview High School	St. Louis Park High School	Woodbury High School	East Ridge High School	Park High School	Jackson Hole High School
Sample Size	333	446	1,379	884	1,353	888	1,348	868	1,187	150
Sleep ≥ 8 hours/night	33.6%	44.2%	44.5%	49.7%	42.5%	49.8%	57.0%	58.9%	60.0%	60.2%

**Percentage of SHS students who report getting at least 8 hours of sleep = 20.1%**



# Considerations for High School

- Shift of 20 minutes at the end of the school day is not expected to have a significant impact on opportunities for getting extra academic help with teachers, participating in co-curricular activities, after school employment, etc.
- Participation and connections with other students and adults in after-school activities is also an important protective factor for students' mental health and well-being



# Benefits of Proposed Schedule

- Supports middle school students' biological sleep needs, many of whom have begun puberty and undergone the natural shift to a later circadian rhythm. **Middle school students' sleep opportunity is lengthened by 35 minutes by an 8:35am start time.**
- As of today, **480 of our Oak Middle School students are teenagers**, and many students at both Oak and Sherwood who are younger than 13 have already gone through puberty and have a biologically later sleep cycle
- Experts recommend an 8:30am or later start time for both middle and high schools – **the proposed schedule achieves this for middle school students**



# Logistical Benefits

- Preserves the order of the current school start time schedule **while fixing the current inadequate time difference between busing tiers.**
- 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 and middle school students will be dismissed before elementary school students, **allowing older students to provide child care at home for families who require afternoon care.**



# Financial Benefits

- **No additional financial resources** are required for this schedule adjustment



# Why Not Move the Elementary Schools to the Earliest Schedule Tier?

The SHAC strongly considered this 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
- Consideration of scheduling conflicts for afternoon co-curriculars for other levels; virtually no middle or high schools in Massachusetts begin after 8:30am and this model would require one of those levels to start at 9:15am, later than any at that level in the state



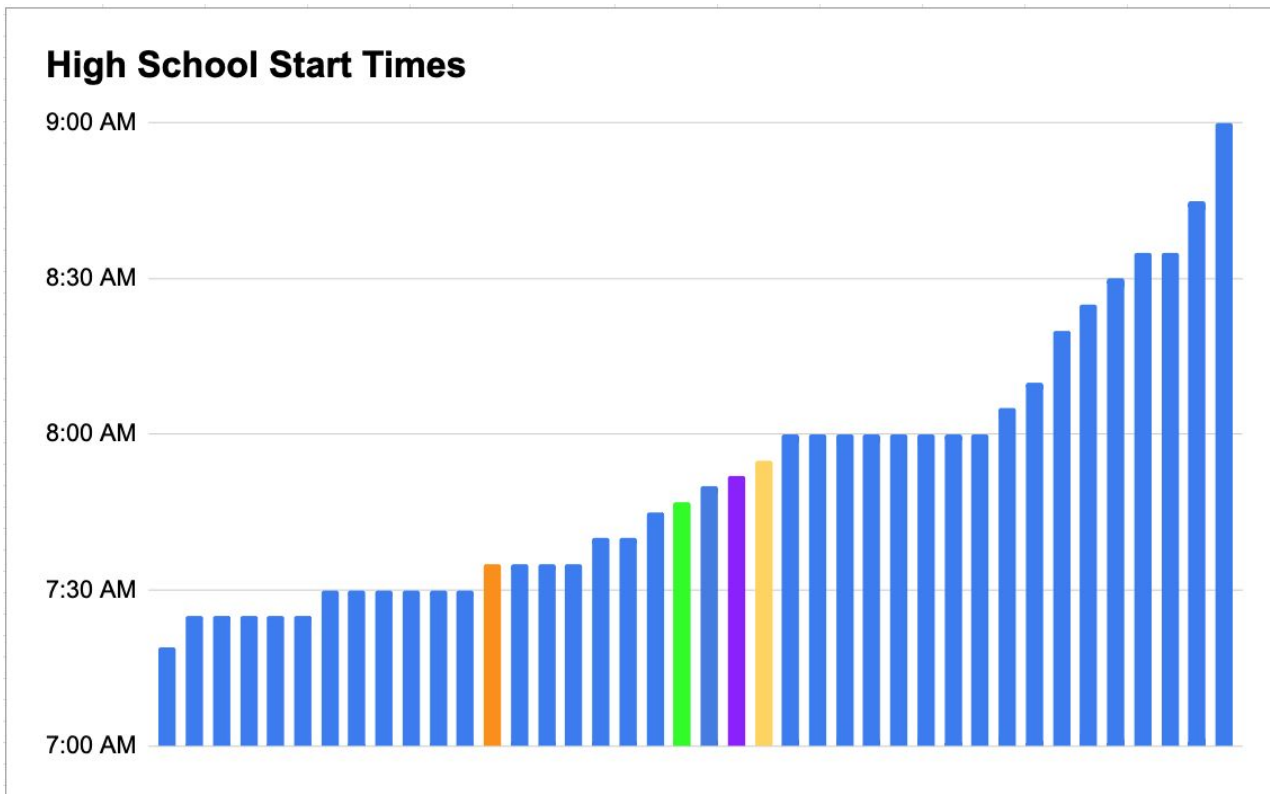
# Comparison to Other MA Districts: High Schools

Current SPS

Median

Average

Proposed SPS





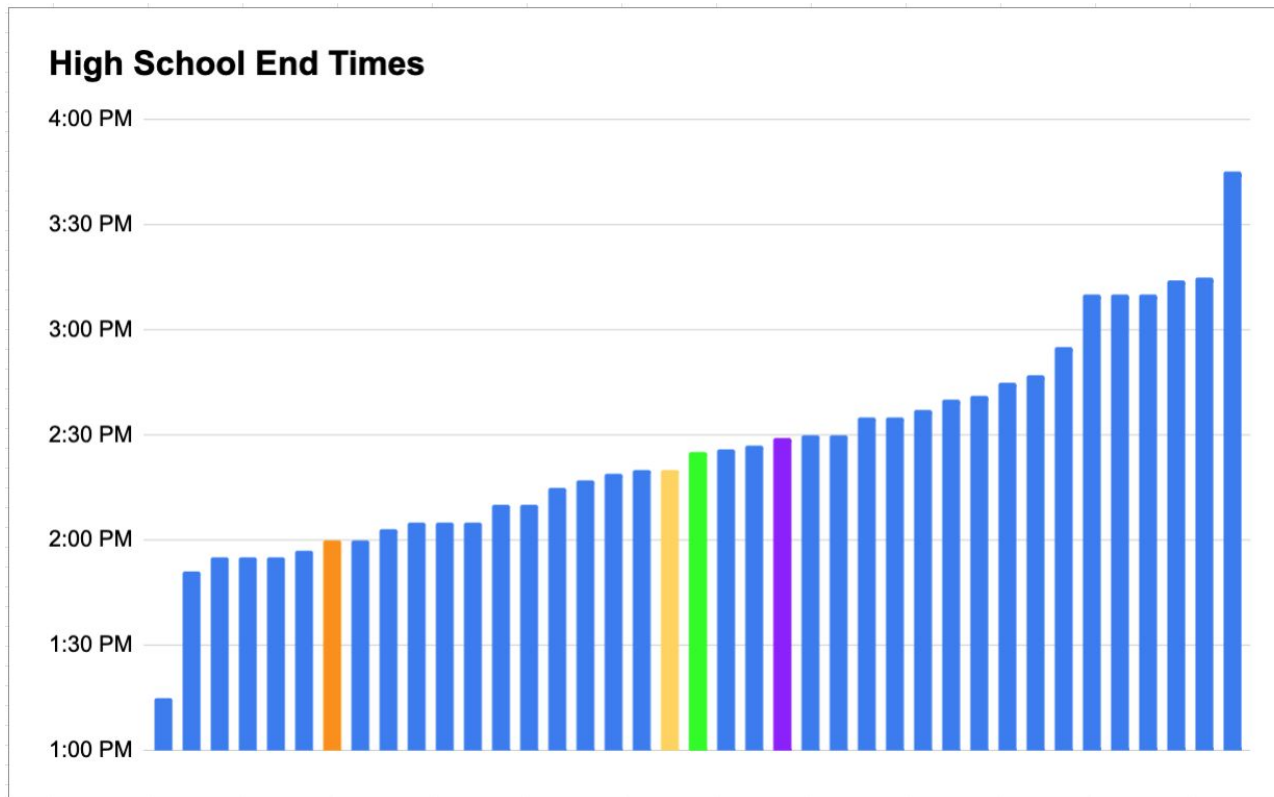
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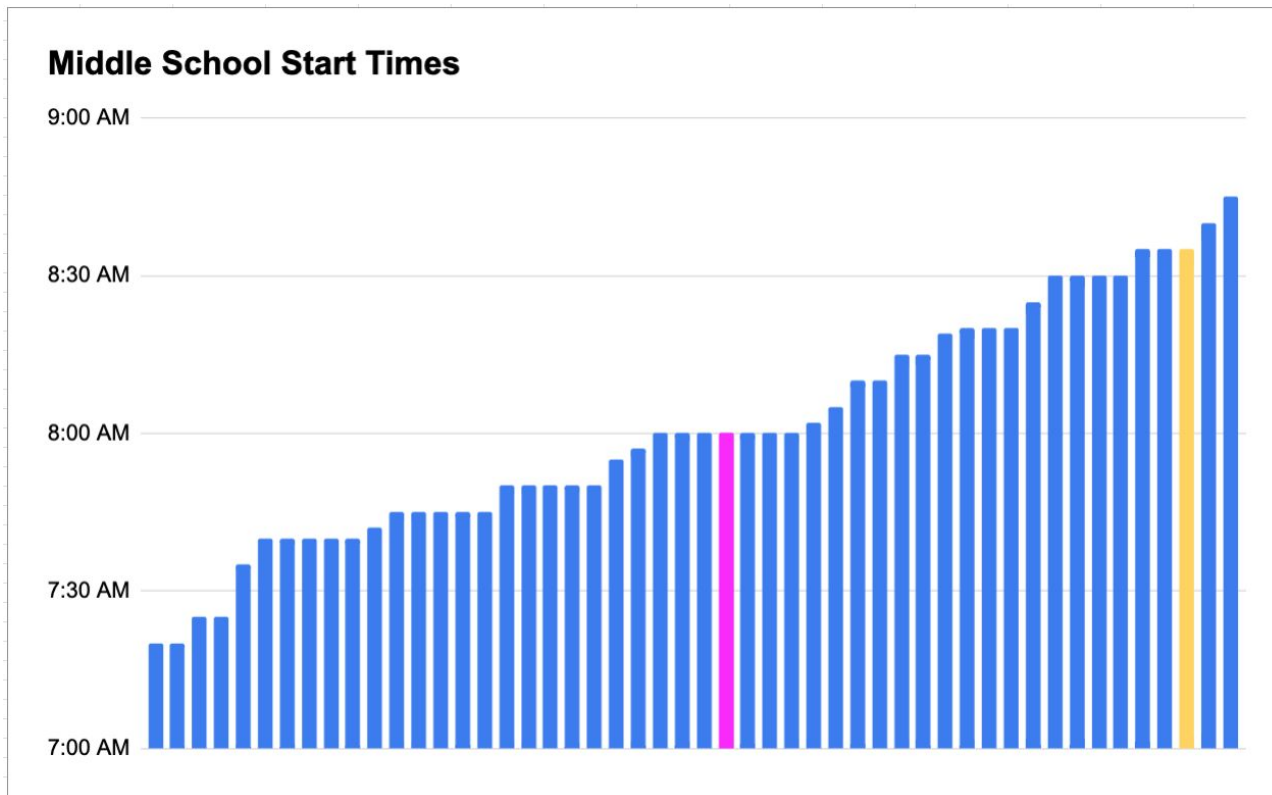
# Comparison to Other MA Districts: Middle Schools

Current SPS

Median

Average

Proposed SPS





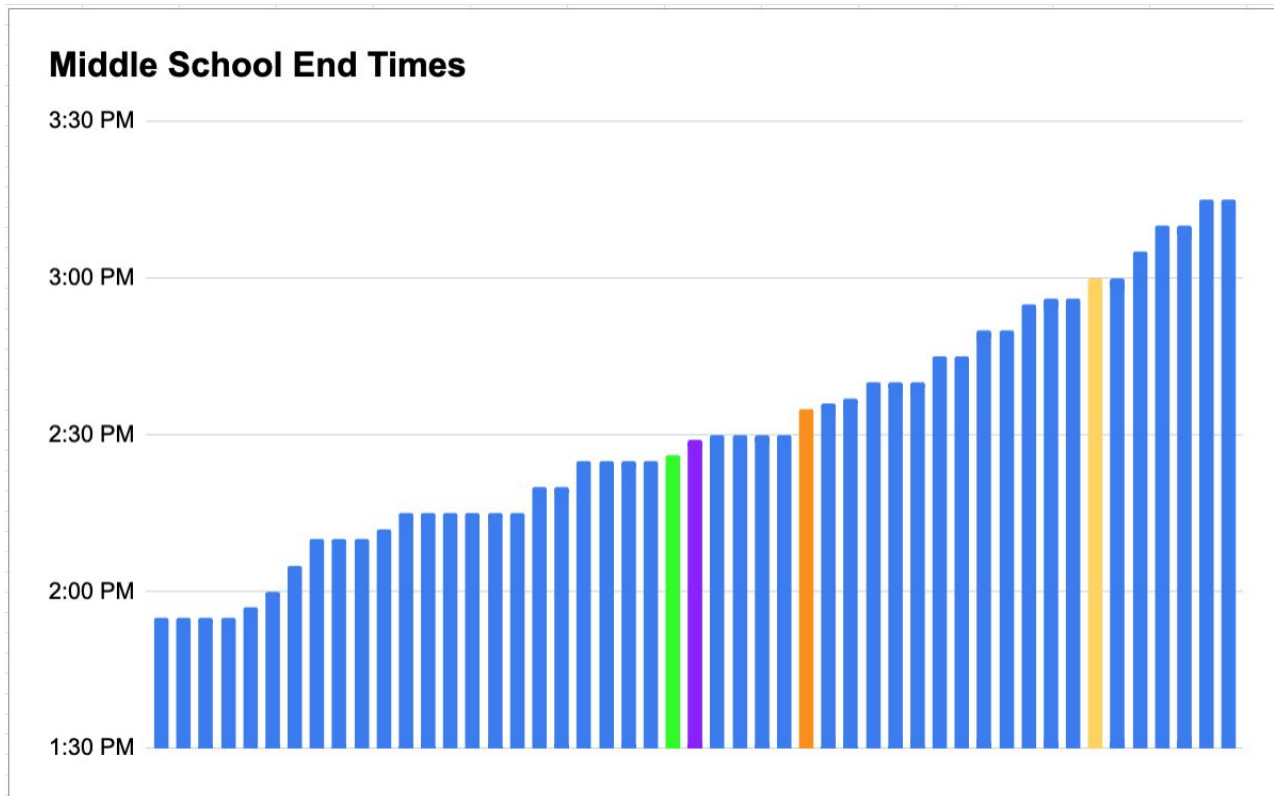
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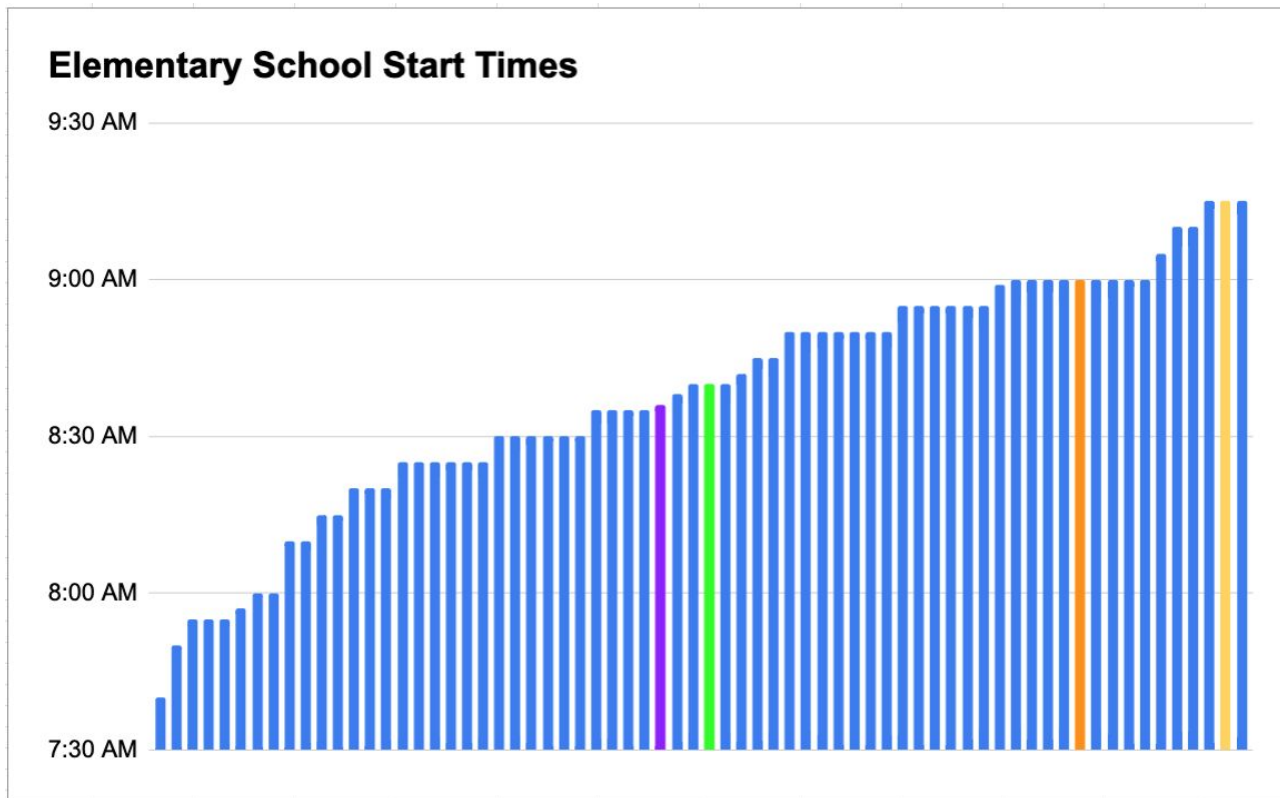
# Comparison to Other MA Districts: Elementary Schools

Current SPS

Median

Average

Proposed SPS





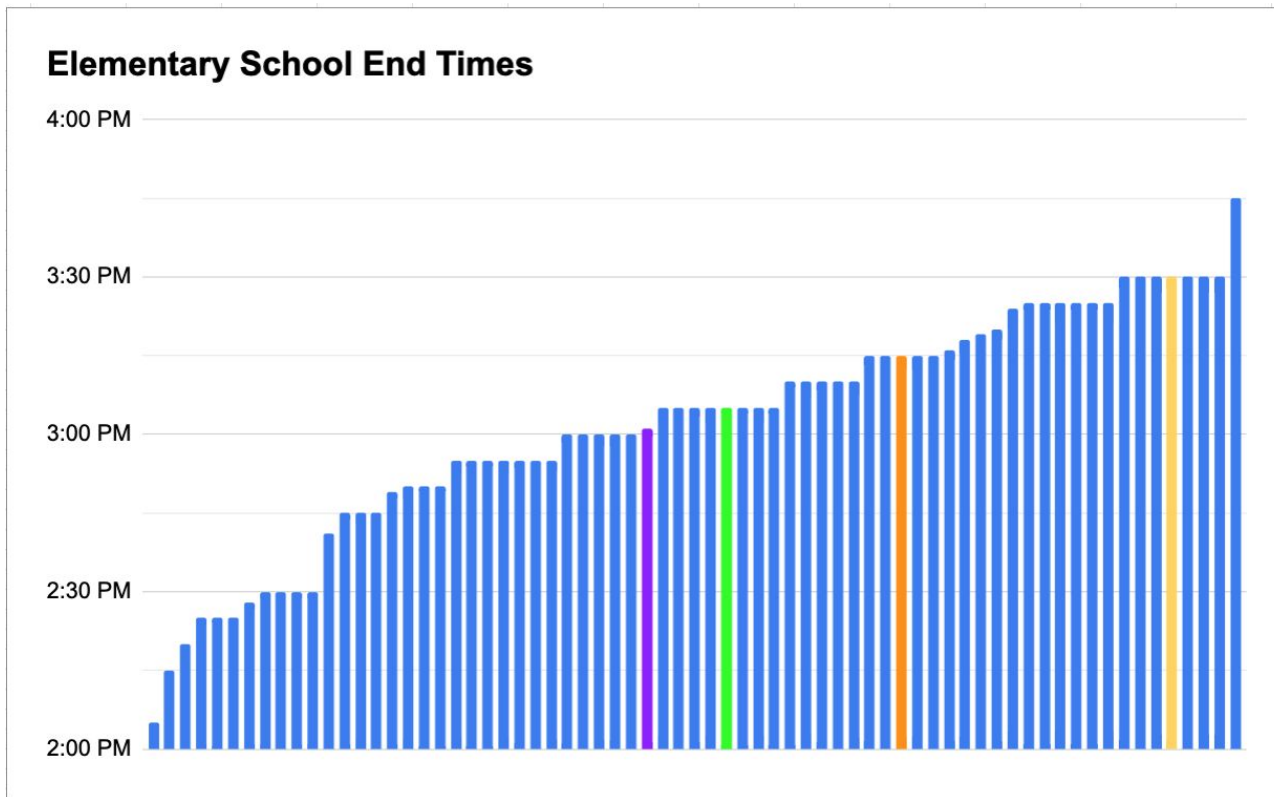
# Comparison to Other MA Districts: Elementary Schools

Current SPS

Median

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Proposed SPS





## Challenges/Drawbacks of Recommended Schedule

- Area of Shrewsbury and school locations require a significant time interval between each busing tier; unlike many other communities, we cannot condense these times unless we have significantly greater financial resources
- The last tier (elementary) starts and ends later than most school districts; however, the 9:15am-3:30pm schedule is one that is viable based on our experience with Beal, and represents the smallest adjustment of any level (15 minutes in the morning and afternoon)



## Challenges/Drawbacks of Recommended Schedule

- Some Sherwood families feel they would need child care before school if the start time is moved to 8:35am, which would be an additional expense; if the schedule is approved, the district will survey families to see if there is sufficient interest to add Extended School Care before-school programming for Grades 5 and 6



## **Challenges/Drawbacks of Recommended Schedule**

- Impact on staff who work in the Extended School Care program (shift in hours)
- Impact on staff who work an additional job after school
- Impact on both family and staff schedules



# Other Considerations

- In addition to adjusting school schedules, other elements of promoting sleep hygiene should be promoted by the school district, including:
  - Education regarding the benefits of adequate sleep
  - Reducing electronics use near bedtime
  - Promoting good time management skills for students
  - Dialogue regarding healthy expectations for approach to homework, co-curriculars, outside activities





# Other Considerations

- If the new schedule is adopted, the school district will need to monitor its impact, including:
  - Collecting and analyzing data regarding student sleep amounts, attendance and tardiness, student mental health and well-being, academic performance, etc.
  - Comparing SPS data with other districts and state/national norms
  - Seeking opportunities to be a partner for a research study



# Other Considerations

- There will never be unanimity in determining what school schedules should be
- Respect for those whose opinions are different from what is recommended, as well as for those who are advocating for this approach
- The process was extremely thorough, well-informed by data and research, provided multiple opportunities for all stakeholders' points of view to be considered, and used feedback to develop and adjust options



# Superintendent's Recommendation

That the School Committee vote to change the start and end times of the student academic day as presented in the “modified Option A” schedule recommended by the Sleep Health Advisory Committee.