

Sleep Health Advisory Committee

School Start Time Options

December 14, 2022

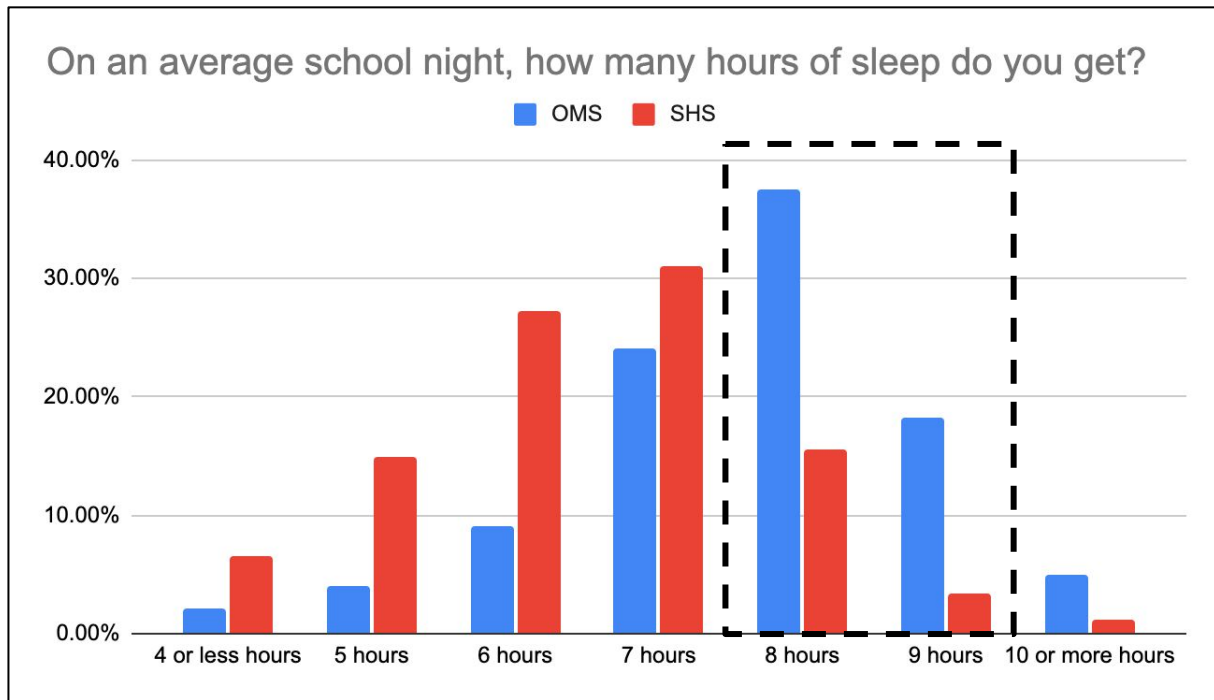
Objectives

- Purpose for researching and discussing a change in school start times
- Considerations of the Sleep Health Advisory Committee
- Review of the options
- Next steps and timeline

Why consider changing school start times?

- Expert physicians on the American Academy for Sleep Medicine, the National Sleep Foundation, and the American Academy for Pediatrics support youth age 13-18 years old need 8-10 hours of sleep each night.
- Most teenagers do not get the recommended amount of sleep and early school start times are a contributor to that.
- Decreased sleep impacts health, mental health, safety, and academic achievement.
- Neighboring districts including Westborough and Northborough have successfully changed school start times.

Sleep for SHS and Oak Middle Students



With the current high school start time of 7:35am, only 20% of high school students report getting the recommended 8 to 10 hours of sleep per night, approximately 30% report getting 7 hours of sleep per night, and 50% report getting 6 or fewer hours of sleep per night.

Data from SPS student responses on the [December 2021 Regional Youth Health Survey](#)

Sleep Health Advisory Committee

- Formed to work on ways to improve student sleep health as part of the Shrewsbury Public School (SPS) district's 2018-2022 strategic priorities and goals under the category of "enhanced well-being of all."
- Due to Covid-19, the committee was reorganized in September of 2022.
- The committee is made up of of five task groups:
 - Research Task Group, Feedback Task Group, Practices in Other Districts Task Group, Child Care Task Group, and Logistics Task Group
- Each task group has done extensive research, considered many variables, and developed in-depth reports which were presented to the School Committee on November 9, 2022 and November 30, 2022. The work of each task group has been used to develop what this committee regards as viable options for adjustments to school start times and scheduling operations.

Current School Start and End Times

School(s)	Start/End Times	Length of School Day	Time Between Tiers (Morning/Afternoon)
High School	7:35 am-2:00 pm	6hr 25 min	Morning bus pick-up begins at 6:19am
Middle Schools	8:00am-2:35pm	6hr 35 min	(25 min/35 min)
Elementary Schools	9:00am-3:15pm	6hr 15 min	(60 min/40 min)

Start time is when the instructional day begins and the end time is when the instructional day ends. Currently, students may arrive up to 30 minutes prior to the start of the instructional day at the middle and elementary levels.

Time on Campus for Educators

School(s)	Start/End Times	Length of School Day
High School	7:20am-2:30pm	7hr 10 min
Middle Schools	7:45am-2:55pm	7hr 10 min
Elementary Schools	8:30am-3:30pm	7hr

- This requirement for professional educators (teachers, counselors, nurses, specialists, etc.) is governed by the collective bargaining agreement (i.e., contract). While educators work many hours beyond this time, these are the hours they must be present at school.
- High school educators are required to arrive on campus at least 15 minutes prior to the start of the school day and remain at least 30 minutes after student dismissal.
- Middle school educators also are required to arrive 15 minutes prior to the student start time; because the middle school instructional day is 10 minutes longer, middle school educators remain at least 20 minutes after student dismissal.
- Elementary educators arrive at least 30 minutes prior to the start of the student day and remain at least 15 minutes after student dismissal.

Transportation

- There are 4,128 registered bus riders across the various schools in the SPS district.
- SPS contracts with AA Transportation to operate a three-tiered busing system comprised of 48 buses that complete a total of 247 bus routes per day.
- Each additional bus would cost \$87,000 annually to add to the system.
- There is insufficient time between the busing tiers to allow the buses to complete their routes, especially between high school and middle school routes.
- As a result, the first high school student bus pick-up is as early as 6:19am, more than one hour before the school start time of 7:35 am.

Guiding Principles for Developing Options

1. Provide a longer, biologically necessary and well-timed sleep opportunity for high school students.
2. Maintain or increase the length of sleep opportunities afforded to students at the middle and elementary school levels.
3. Maintain general pattern of busing tiers
4. Equalize time between all busing tiers of 40 minutes

Guiding Principles for Developing Options (continued)

5. Standardize length of school day across all schools
6. Recognize and consider changes in schedule on family and staff childcare
7. Avoid having the high school end their school day so late that it significantly impacts co-curricular activities, after school employment, or sibling care
8. Avoid having students wait or get dropped off from the bus in the dark.

This Advisory Committee is not recommending any particular option at this time, but is rather bringing forward highly feasible possibilities and presenting their forecasted benefits and challenges.

Option A

Tier	School(s)	Start/ End Times for Students	Educator Time on Campus
Tier 1	High School	7:55am – 2:20pm	7:40am – 2:50pm
Tier 2	Middle Schools	8:35am – 3:00pm	8:20am – 3:30pm
Tier 3	Elementary Schools	9:15am – 3:40pm	8:45am – 3:55pm

Option A: Benefits and Challenges

Benefits:

- High school students will increase their sleep by 35 minutes if they ride the bus and 20 minutes if they arrive by car
- 35 minute delayed start time at middle school
- High school and middle school students home before elementary students to help with childcare
- Staff less likely to need care before school
- Minimal impact to afternoon activities for all grade spans
- Most bus pick-ups and drop-offs likely to occur during adequate daylight

Challenges:

- Other than no change, this option provides the smallest increase of sleep
- SPS staff with younger children, will likely incur a greater need for childcare in the afternoon
- Middle school may need extended school care in the morning
- Elementary teachers' required time on campus increases from 7 hours to 7 hours and 10 minutes

Option B

Tier	School(s)	Start/End Times for Students	Educator Time on Campus
Tier 1	Middle Schools	7:55am-2:20pm	7:40am – 2:50pm
Tier 2	High School	8:35am-3:00pm	8:20am – 3:30pm
Tier 3	Elementary Schools	9:15am-3:40pm	8:45am – 3:55pm

Option B: Benefits and Challenges

Benefits:

- High school students will increase their sleep by 1 hour and 15 minutes if they ride the bus and 60 minutes if they arrive by car
- 5 minute earlier start time for middle school generally maintains current sleep cycle
- High school students home before elementary students to help with childcare
- Staff less likely to need care before school
- Minimal impact to afternoon activities and mild impact for elementary students
- Most pick-ups and drop-offs likely to occur during adequate daylight

Challenges:

- Changes the order of school start times among grade spans, which challenges busing timetables
- May need to reconfigure dismissal traffic at the middle school to ensure buses leave in a timely manner
- Increased impact of potential impact to afternoon activities for high school students
- SPS staff at the high school and elementary schools with younger children, will likely incur a greater need for childcare in the afternoon
- Middle school may need extended school care in the morning
- Elementary teachers' required time on campus increases from 7 hours to 7 hours and 10 minutes

Comparison of All Options

Orange=High School

Green=Sherwood/ Oak

Purple=Elementary

Tier	Current Student	Current Staff	Option A Student	Option A Staff	Option B Student	Option B Staff
Tier 1	7:35 am – 2:00 pm	7:20 am – 2:30 pm	7:55 am – 2:20 pm	7:40 am – 2:50 pm	7:55 am – 2:20 pm	7:40 am – 2:50 pm
	6hr 25min	7hr 10min	6hr 25min	7hr 10min	6hr 25min	7hr 10min
Tier 2	8:00 am – 2:35 pm	7:45 am – 2:55pm	8:35 am – 3:00 pm	8:20 am – 3:30 pm	8:35 am – 3:00 pm	8:20 am – 3:30 pm
	6hr 35min	7hr 10min	6hr 25min	7hr 10min	6hr 25min	7hr 10min
Tier 3	9:00 am – 3:15 pm	8:30 am – 3:30 pm	9:15 am – 3:40 pm	8:45 am – 3:55 pm	9:15 am – 3:40 pm	8:45 am – 3:55 pm
	6hr 15min	7hr	6hr 25min	7hr 10min	6hr 25min	7hr 10min

Additional Considerations

The Sleep Health Advisory Committee 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. While this option aligned well with biological sleep needs and rhythms for all student age groups, it was ultimately not deemed to be a viable alternative based on the following:

- Feedback received from the ThoughtExchange survey.
- Lessons considered from other districts who swapped elementary and high school start times.
- Posed the most significant impact to family and staff schedules and child care needs.
- Had the greatest likelihood of negatively affecting high school student participation in after-school athletics, co-curriculars, employment, and sibling child care.
- Necessitated the addition of a morning ESC program at Sherwood Middle School.
- Would have required lengthening the afternoon elementary ESC programs, increasing their cost.

Preschool Schedules

- The schedules for preschool classes currently housed at Parker Road Preschool, Beal School, and Shrewsbury High School (Little Colonials) have not been part of the work of the Sleep Health Advisory Committee.
- If the high school schedule changes, 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.
- Similarly, there could possibly be slight adjustments to Parker Road and Beal preschool schedules if changes are made at the other levels, but it is not anticipated that schedule adjustments would be substantial at the preschool level.
- This is a topic that the Advisory Committee will review as it continues its work in the coming weeks.

Next Steps

- The Feedback Task Group will send out a survey via SurveyMonkey to get stakeholder feedback regarding the proposed options.
- This committee will convene in January to review feedback received from the school community, and will shortly thereafter recommend a favored option to the School Committee. Practices that can support improvements in sleep hygiene for students will also be recommended at that time.

Timeline

December 15, 2022: Survey of stakeholder groups initiated to get feedback on options

January 4, 2023: Public hearing at the School Committee meeting to listen to feedback from stakeholders

January 18, 2023: Discussion of options by the School Committee and potential vote

January 25, 2023: Potential additional School Committee meeting for discussion/vote (if necessary)

February 1, 2023: Last recommended School Committee meeting for discussion/vote to implement any change for the start of the 2023-2024 school year (if necessary)

Comments and Questions

