



**Community Engagement Session Questions and Answers: School Start Times
September 27, 2018**

1. Has the district considered a free or reduced cost for base camp for PSD employees who will no longer be able to care for their elementary students after school?

Base Camp is responsible for establishing their own costs. However, they do offer sliding costs and work with families as well. PSD has not discussed the possibility of offering discounted rates for employees with Base Camp at this point, but this is a discussion the district could have as we move forward with a specific scenario.

2. As we move into fall and there are fewer hours of daylight, is there any consideration for how PSD will handle practices or events that need lights?

The lack of lights on PSD fields and fields in Fort Collins in general does pose a challenge and it is a concern as PSD considers changing start and end times. There is a possibility that later end times will impact practice times. At this point, PSD is not considering adding additional lights to fields around the district.

3. Will high schools still have a later start one day a week if Scenario A or B is adopted.

It is unlikely that a later start on one day of the week will continue if PSD adopts any scenario other than the current start time scenario.

4. Would clubs still be available after school or would clubs and extracurriculars take place before school?

If start and end times move later, PSD will have more flexibility to offer clubs and extracurricular activities before school. Although no firm decision has been made on whether to have zero hour (before school) activities and clubs at this point, it is likely the district will consider and encourage this option should start times move later.

5. Where will the money come from for added busses and drivers?

There are costs to any of the scenarios under consideration, including the option to keep the current start times. At a minimum, there is always some cost associated with growth in the district. To accommodate this, PSD plans to add busses and drivers every year. In a scenario that would require additional staffing and bus purchases beyond those planned for growth, PSD would look to use one-time funding for the bus purchase. There could be many sources of this funding, including the Board of Education's reserve, which could be used to cover one-time costs. The ongoing cost of each scenario would have to become a budget priority for the Board, to be accommodated during the normal budget process each year.

6. We know by 2020, if Tabor doesn't change, our budget will already be strapped, why put another cost/expense on the budget that is not necessary?

Adding cost for transportation is a reality that PSD faces every year. Although we do not like to add additional costs, we acknowledge that this is something that will occur annually.

7. How much impact will survey results have on the decision the district makes? Is the community voting on a decision?

In responding to the survey, the community is not voting on a particular option. The Board of Education will make a decision about start times based on their processing of information and the dialogue that they have amongst themselves. The feedback and input that the community provides is an important consideration for the Board. Additionally, members of the Board have attended each of these community engagement sessions so that they can hear questions and comments directly from the community as well.



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8. Will moving to later start times affect independent school budgets? Will there be an impact on teacher/student ratios and class sizes as a result?

At this time, PSD has no intention of adjusting individual school budgets to accommodate changes in start times. That said, any time we target resources to one area of district operations, it impacts others. But, it is not anticipated that school budgets will be impacted at this time.

9. What does the research say? How effective is a later start for middle schools and high schools?

Some of the research that has come out of the University of Minnesota, for example, indicates slight improvements in attendance and significant improvements in tardiness for students as a result of later start times. This research notes that excused and unexcused absences drop, overall GPA in the first three periods of the day improves, though overall GPA does not change very much. Car accidents involving students dropped, particularly in the morning. The findings of Minnesota's research is similar to that of the AMA, which notes better academic outcomes, better test scores, students indicating that they are better prepared to start school, and improved social and emotional well-being. These findings are similar to the findings being reported by Cherry Creek School District through their partnership with National Jewish Health, which indicate that students are self-reporting improved mental health outcomes.

10. What is the difference between routes and runs?

Routes are made up of runs. One route typically includes three runs: one for high school, one for middle, and one for elementary school.

11. Comment: There has been very little information provided on the other impacts other than transportation costs. All of the impacts should be analyzed before you proposed scenarios and certainly before an official decision: Loss of class time for sports, sports – practice, games, lights, teacher schedule, after school activities, family transportation, childcare.

12. Comment: The American Academy of Sleep Medicine has published research showing the number of serious car crashes declined when high schoolers started later. Thanks for considering the research and student safety.

13. Comment: I am totally opposed to the change because so many PSD students play sports – particularly club sports. Quite a few actually play for clubs in Denver. I know many students would not be able to take a last period.

14. Comment: California recently passed a law prohibiting middle and high schools from starting earlier than 8:30am. Research often mentions that even a small change in start times has positive impacts. Research, however, also shows that benefits, particularly in academics and accident reduction, are proportionately greater the further start times go beyond 8:30 to 9. Scenario C is the only available option supported by research that is best for kids in all of our grade levels.

15. In keeping kids best interest at heart, elementary students, I have a hard time sending my kindergartener and 2nd grader to school at 7:30am, and then sending them to Base Camp until 5pm. Young children's development is benefitted by quality time spent with parents. Is this need being taken into consideration?



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Yes. PSD understands that the impact of a change to start times is wide-ranging and does impact family dynamics. This is a very family-centric community, and we acknowledge that changing start times will have a significant impact.

16. Is it possible to get one of these plans implemented for the second semester?

No. If PSD is to change start times, we want to do so in a way that gives our families time to adjust. We could not implement a change for second semester of this year.

17. How have hidden costs been accounted for or have they? Utilities, facilities use, staffing? Will this require reallocation of funding?

PSD is aware that there are costs beyond the cost of transportation that will impact the budget. Although transportation will be the majority of the cost, the cost of utilities is a concern, particularly given the new tiered cost system in Fort Collins. The lack of lighting on fields is a concern and there are concerns about the cost of staffing, should PSD change start and end times. The bulk of the cost, however, is the transportation cost.

18. Has PSD considered picking up middle and high school students on the same bus run to create efficiency? Are there any concerns with sharing busses?

PSD middle and high school students already share bussing in some areas of the district, particularly in the outlying areas. We have found in exploring these scenarios that there is efficiency in bussing middle and high school students separately. It can reduce ride times and reduce the cost of running the bus. Most scenarios, therefore, separate out bussing by level, though there will likely always be some combined bussing in the district and there has been for quite some time.

19. Is there a way to make busses more comfortable for high school students?

PSD is limited by efficiency to an extent when it comes to comfort. PSD purchases 77 passenger busses, though some of our busses are older and smaller, seating only 65 or so. PSD could move to 84 passenger busses, but these cost about \$40,000 more apiece.

20. Have you consulted with local businesses around the high schools about the impact of changing start times, especially given open campuses?

In any of these scenarios, it is likely that lunch times will remain largely unchanged or will shift only slightly. Therefore, it is unlikely that the change would have much impact on businesses around the lunch hour. However, as PSD moves forward with a scenario, we can certainly have more conversation with businesses in proximity to our high schools.

21. Thompson School District just changed their start times. Are you working with TSD to understand their experience or lessons learned?

We have received anecdotal information about how the change in start times is going in TSD. TSD made this change very quickly and did not extensively engage their community in a dialogue about the change before deciding to move to later start times. Our lesson learned from this experience is that it is very important for PSD to deliberately engage the community in this process before making a decision.

22. It is difficult for teachers to get daycare for their children to begin with and it is also difficult to get to appointments at the end of the day (i.e. medical appointments) if end



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times move later. Has PSD considered the impact to families with daycare and those trying to get to appointments after school?

We acknowledge that there will be adjustment necessary if a change to start/end times is implemented. We are considering this impact as we consider scenarios and the prospect of change. In Cherry Creek, we have heard that the elementary school teachers were very happy with their shift to earlier start times, while it has been more of an adjustment for middle and high school staff. For PSD, in any scenario, there is limited change to middle school schedules, many of the elementary schools are not dramatically changed, although some do change significantly, and high school teachers are likely to experience the most significant change to schedules.

23. *Comment:* Some of these options cost the same as 100 starting teachers!

24. *At what age does research say later start times is beneficial?*

Research does not specify a particular age. As a committee, the Scenario Committee discussed at length the impact to middle school aged students and the changes that occur in the adolescent brain, acknowledging that the need for a different sleep pattern may impact students at different times in their development.

25. *Comment:* Scenario B falls a bit short for middle schools but only requires 2 bus routes and financially makes the most sense. To the Board, congratulations on the bond issue and thank you for taking this on! Please choose anything but our current option, although option A seems very pricy for not as much start time movement.

26. *Comment:* Having athletic practices and club meetings before school seems to completely go against all research regarding student sleep.

Right now, we are asking every student to get to school at 7:35am. If we change start times, though there may be some morning offerings, these offerings do not impact every student. Further, if start times are shifted as late as 9am, zero hour/before school activities could occur at 8am, which is still half an hour later than our current start times.

27. *I see that all three levels have different length school days. Is there any talk about shortening or lengthening the school day at any level?*

There is a lot that goes into determining the length of a school day, much of which is dictated by the state. The state tells us how many minutes we have to have at each level. Transporting all three levels is a bit like solving a puzzle, so when designing bus routes, we have to be sure to accommodate the required length of day at each of our levels.

28. *Thompson School District employees have complained about traffic patterns. Will the City of Fort Collins be involved in the process of determining the flow of traffic in the mornings to help with keeping traffic moving? The amount of time from north to south Fort Collins takes approximately 45 minutes with school traffic now – will it get worse?*

We will work with City Traffic Ops as we move forward. Regardless of start time, there will be congested times around schools. This is always going to be the case. It is possible that shifting to a later start might mitigate some volume challenges, but the City is very amenable to working with us on stoplight timing and to address traffic patterns effectively around schools.



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- 29. Currently, PSD provides transportation to the Boys and Girls Clubs each day – about 200 youth. Would any scenario stop transportation to the Boys and Girls Club? Keep in mind that BGC only charges \$20 per year, per child, so losing access may affect disadvantaged youth.**

PSD has a good relationship with BGC. We do our best to get students to BGC, though we are not running a special route to do so. We do not know how such a change will impact transportation for BGC as we are focusing our study on transportation for our schools. However, we will continue to do what we can to support BGC.

- 30. Comment:** Thank you for your transparency and thorough process.

- 31. The RMHS graduating class of 2018 had an impressively large percent of honor and recognized students that also were valuable assets in the community and ready to continue their growth and paths in life. Are we concerned the late start may negatively affect this involvement and opportunity to experience adulthood?**

Preparing our students for life beyond PSD is always our goal. It seems embedded in this question is a question about students who have after school jobs. We want our students to have robust school experiences, including athletics, jobs, etc. and our goal is always to encourage these opportunities for students and we will continue to do so if start/end times change.

- 32. At Rocky with the block schedule, when student athletes leave early for games, they miss significant class time. How will this change to start and end times impact this?**

It is certainly possible that should end times move later, student athletes may miss more time to travel to games. PSD will make every effort to shift game times later to mitigate impacts to class time, but we cannot control the start times for all games.

- 33. Are student athletes going to be penalized for missing more class time?**

PSD teachers try to be accommodating of students and there is no intention to penalize student athletes for time missed due to travel for games.

- 34. Polaris, Mountain Sage, and Liberty do not appear on the scenarios schedule. How will this impact those schools?**

Mountain Sage and Liberty are charter schools and PSD does not provide bussing to charter schools. These schools may independently set their start and end times. Polaris may be affected by changes to start times, but Polaris is also not served by regular PSD bussing. Therefore, they will likely continue to have some flexibility to define their start and end time independent of the transportation system.

- 35. With the changes in routes, does PSD anticipate seeing an impact on the number of students using PSD transportation?**

We do not anticipate a significant change at this point, though it is possible that some students may rely on PSD transportation more if start times change.

- 36. Comment:** If you push the start time back, my high schooler will likely give up her sport because of the large amount of class time she would need to miss to go to games. This not a good scenario. She is very frustrated. It feels like you are telling kids to either pick sports or academics. You are making it very hard for them to do both well because of the amount of class that will be missed to go to games.



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- 37. Comment:** I have read all of the studies posted on the PSD website. While I understand and agree with the science related to teen development and need for sleep, none of the studies presented hard science data. 4 of them were the same authors and data restated. They also commented that student performance was not statistically significant. What is the data? Have the surveys analyzed what kids are doing prior to bed that affect cortisol levels and melatonin production and the effects of quality sleep?
- 38. Comment:** At Leshar, Honor Choir, Jazz Band and many other “specialities” meet at “zero hour” – 6:50am. So my kid rides her bike in the dark. For the majority of the school year. It’s crazy. My oldest went to Rocky on 4-5 hours of sleep on a regular basis. He was very grumpy and I felt sorry for his teachers. He also missed his 1st class a LOT.
- 39. I have 2 children that participate in club and school swimming (+500 children participate) with very limited facility that is controlled by the City since PSD doesn’t have a pool – will the City accommodate scheduling need?**
PSD will continue to work with the City on scheduling. Should start times move later, it is likely that sports that already practice in the morning, like swimming, will continue to do so.
- 40. Will staff non-student contact time shift to the morning?**
Yes, if PSD moves to later start times, it is likely that non-student contact time for staff will shift to the morning.
- 41. Were high school students on the committee?**
No, but high school students have been asked to participate in both surveys. And, we are currently meeting with groups of high school students to gather additional input related to start times.
- 42. Comment:** Thanks to the Board and Superintendent for seriously considering changing school start times that have been shown to greatly benefit adolescents in multiple ways.
- 43. Is the school Board concerned about the possible extreme budget cuts if proposition 112 passes in November?**
This question will be passed along to the Board as they are not responding to questions this evening.
- 44. Scenario C is the only scenario that fully meets the AMA recommendation, what are the most significant negative impacts of this scenario other than cost?**
Hiring bus drivers is a serious concern. PSD already has significant challenges in finding bus drivers, and any time we contemplate adding routes, this concern is increased. The end time of this scenario is also potentially a negative, with an end time around 4:30pm for high schools. This has a big impact on after school activities. This scenario also potentially impacts middle school athletics, particularly football, which the other scenarios do not. The lack of lighting on fields becomes a compounded issue in this scenario. Additionally, with an end time around 4:30, facility use by community partners will also be pushed back, potentially to after 7pm.
- 45. Comment:** Changes would cause my elementary student to arrive home before my middle and high schoolers. This would cause us to add daycare expense or change work schedules. Changes to work schedule would require us to leave earlier and cause our middle/high



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schooler to “lock up.” This is a safety concern! There is also a concern with moving sports to morning. They would have to get up early which defeats the purpose. They would need to shower at school. Thanks for sharing my utility bill, but would rather they shower at home.

46. The research shows that later start times help decrease absenteeism, which in turn boosts GPAs and increases health. Later start times could potentially help academically in all subject matters, how does the cost of moving start times compare to, say for example, purchasing new curriculum that would help one subject area (hopefully) improve academically?

The one time cost of curriculum is more than the cost of any of these scenarios. Adoptions can cost millions.

At this point in the Q&A, time ran short. The following questions/comments were submitted during the forum, but were not answered during the forum. Where available, response information has been provided.

47. Comment: Late start Wednesdays at Rocky has real value for students to interact with teachers outside the classroom. This will be lost under A, B, or C. In my opinion, more student is needed before doing this. There is no need to rush into this. Study this 1 to 2 more years.

48. Comment: Allowing before AND after school activities will impact facilities costs as well as potential athletic lighting costs. These are not included in the ongoing costs, which makes the numbers misleading. Rushing this change could have many unintended and unassessed consequences.

49. Comment: To clarify, no research was done on how to shuffle/handle extracurriculars/athletics? This seems like a highly significant impact and should not be glossed over.

50. Comment: My high school’s hours were 8:30-3:15 (Tulsa Public Schools, Oklahoma). I was on the swim team and had a job; it was fine. Before I drove myself, I took the bus. The morning bus was at 7:30/7:45 (but I didn’t have to think for an hour). I got home after 4. Again, it was fine.

51. Comment: B seems to make the most sense.

52. Comment: I am concerned that with a much later start time many activities (clubs, etc.) would shift before school. Effectively then start time would be same as now for many kids, or enrollment for those activities would drop significantly.

53. Specifically, how much later would the late start times affect athletics?

The impact to athletics will depend on the scenario that is chosen. If the district moves to later start/end times, it is possible that athletic practices will be run later in the day. It is also possible that some practices may be shifted to before school.

54. Comment: The AMA study speaks to the benefits of later start. How much did the AMA look into the negative effects such as kids that can’t do after school activities and are doing homework later when they are tired? There is a base assumption that the AMA study is



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perfect, but I question that. If some activities are moved to before school, doesn't that defeat the purpose for those kids?

55. If a high school is opened in Wellington would the cost of transportation decrease?

When PSD opens the middle school/high school in the Wellington area (anticipated in 2022), it will likely shorten bus routes for some students who reside in the northern region of the district. This may have an impact on transportation costs.

56. Comment: If kids do sports before school they will need to take a shower before school. What a pain, and some kids may not do it.

57. Is there an opportunity for early release days instead of late start?

At this time, PSD is not considering early release as an alternative to late start.

58. Dr. Smyser, what is the PSD mission statement and which scenario including the eliminated scenarios, best fits the mission statement?

59. What is the effect size of starting later?

60. Has there been follow up data/study on schools that have already made time changes? Has there been any long-term data?

61. Is this primarily related to teen health since data doesn't show performance improvement according to studies?

62. What does research indicate about earlier start times for elementary students?

Data about the impact of earlier start times on elementary students is not as robust as the data available on adolescents. Anecdotally, we are hearing from Cherry Creek that elementary school students are doing well with earlier start times.

63. Childcare for teachers is very hard to find in Larimer County. It is also expensive in Fort Collins, more so than the rest of the state. With the change are you planning to offer teachers childcare stipends or bonuses?

64. How do you deal with playing girls tennis starting at 4:30pm with no lights?

65. Can losing the late start may be allow the high school end time to not be as late? For example, 8:30am-3:35pm.

PSD is exploring options for starting later and ending a bit earlier if later start Wednesdays are eliminated from the schedule. Based on preliminary analysis of this possibility, the end times for high school would fall around 4:00pm.