

GREENWICH PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Greenwich, CT

September 29, 2017

Dear Greenwich Public School Families:

Thank you for your support as the District has transitioned its school start and dismissal times in order to improve the health and well-being of our students. The decision to make a change of this significance was made with considerable public discourse and planning, and was based on research and recommendations made by the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), the American Medical Association (AMA), and the Center for Disease Control (CDC), and included a review of the research and recommendations made.

Community Feedback

As anticipated, this has been a challenging transition, and we are making every effort to address the concerns that have arisen. We are interested in your experiences with the change and encourage you to continue to share your comments and concerns.

- **For transportation-related issues:** please submit your comments online at: www.greenwickschools.org/transportation or call 203-625-7443.
- **For all other comments, including related to after-school commitments** (extra-curricular, athletics, etc.): please email Elizabeth-ann_carabillo@greenwich.k12.ct.us

Since the [School Start Time \(SST\) Update](#) submitted to the Board of Education on September 14, further updates are available with regard to transportation and athletics:

Transportation Update

While significant planning was completed in anticipation of the new start times, including consideration of traffic patterns and volume, increased ridership, and construction, a number of unanticipated challenges resulted in late arrivals at school in the morning and home in the afternoon (detailed in the September 14 SST Update.) The Transportation Department continues to work diligently to address these issues with short and long term solutions. Updates since September 14 include:

- The standard arrival time at school is 15 minutes before start time; this has been standard practice for years. Morning bus service aggregated for all schools is averaging a 96% on-time average arrival.
- Three buses remain challenged to arrive 15 minutes before school start time. Additional buses will be added to address the overcrowding and timeliness of pick up and drop off. This is targeted for implementation on October 16th. Parents will be notified of any change in bus number, stop and/or time during the week of October 9th.
- Afternoon bus service continues to experience late arrival for pick up to at least three schools – Glenville School and two independent schools. Re-routing is set to go into effect next week, which will shorten trips on first tier service in order to ensure arrival at the second tier schools on time (re-routing next week will not mean a change in bus stop or time)
- Completion of the Dingtletown Road bridge is anticipated for some time next week, which should provide additional relief to the timing issues.
- Bus ridership counts reflect a significant increase in student riders. For the short-term, 'Overload Buses' have been put in place to alleviate the overcrowding. We are in the process of securing at least two additional buses, which will require new routes and schedules to permanently address the issue.
- Additional required Special Education buses have been secured and service has been implemented.
- We continue to consider feedback from school administration and families and to collect and analyze data on timing/delays, and ridership in order to monitor the implementation of the new bus routes and schedules.

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Athletics

Shifting dismissal time to one hour later at the high school necessitated a commensurate shift of one hour in all after school commitments. In order to attempt to reduce the impact of extending the day for students' after school commitments, particularly athletics, the Board of Education and District and high school administration considered a number of impacts on student-athletes resulting from a later dismissal time, including:

General – Concerns about not being able to offer all athletic opportunities were addressed and all Greenwich High School athletic teams at all sub-varsity and varsity levels have been maintained.

Practices – With later dismissal and waning daylight hours in the fall, plans have been developed to secure additional fields and bussing in order to move the practices that are scheduled to start later in the afternoon. These plans will be implemented now as the shorter October days approach.

Contests – It was anticipated that contest timing would be a challenge, particularly for away games. Fairfield county coaches have largely accommodated requests to push back contest start times to 4:30 p.m. from 4:00 p.m., but this still requires increased early dismissals for a greater amount of class time for student-athletes. In order to mitigate this issue, the high school revised the block schedule to minimize the number of times that an individual student-athlete would be dismissed early from a particular subject.

We are actively pursuing additional short term adjustments and long term solutions. The Athletic Director and the coaches will update the team parents as those adjustments are made and confirmed.

We continue to gather data and information collected from staff and families' experiences, to include:

- Conducting a follow up sleep survey in October with high school students,
- Conducting a teacher survey on the level of student engagement in the first block and impact on commuting times,
- Conducting a parents/family survey on benefits/challenges of the new times,
- Reviewing quarter and semester academic grades,
- Maintaining daily/weekly athletic practice/game logs,
- Reviewing all materials that were provided this past year of study, planning and communication,
- Preparing interim status reports for the BOE, as well as parent communication updates

We continue to work to ensure that students are able to fully participate in academic, athletic and extracurricular programs by supporting a healthy lifestyle that includes sufficient sleep and outstanding educational opportunities.

Our collective community will continue to gather information, metrics and monitor the implementation of School Start Time throughout this 2017/2018 academic year with periodic written updates, both administrative and SST ad hoc committee meetings, and working toward successful resolution of concerns linked to traffic, field usage, and compression of time at the end of the day. With 18 school days completed as of this time, we remain focused on the logistical implementation. It will take additional time to analyze and assess impact across multiple measures.