

General Transportation Implications

How would later start times affect athletics and activity buses?

A later high school start time would impact athletics. Additional information will be provided at a future meeting of the districtwide site-based team.

Do the 12 extra buses that would have to be added under Option 4 cover high school and DMS athletic events when students have to leave during school hours?

Yes. All athletic events will continue to be covered by our current fleet.

Would later start times impact more athletes than are currently affected?

Yes, because of issues including practice times, practice locations, and activity buses. That will be discussed further during a future meeting of the site-based team.

How will YMCA programs be adjusted?

Hours may need to be adjusted to accommodate student needs and programming. YMCA representatives will need to offer input once a plan is in place.

Will trained aides be placed at bus stops that have both elementary and high school students?

No, there are no plans to place trained aides at the bus stops.

What if ABC Transit cannot meet the demands of this change?

Every effort will be made to ensure that ABC Transit can meet the demands. ABC is fully committed to its partnership with the Fox Chapel Area School District.

If we use the same bus routes, why do we need more buses?

We currently operate on a three-tier busing system for efficiency. The proposed plan operates on a two-tier system because there would be less time between the high school, middle school, and elementary start times.

Can we consider combining K-12 students on the same bus to improve efficiency?

If that is recommended, it could be considered.

Is it developmentally appropriate to have K-12 students on the same bus?

Pennsylvania Department of Education guidelines do not restrict K-12 students from riding on the same bus.

Will a cost-benefit analysis be done?

That is uncertain at this time. If insight into completing that type of analysis is provided, the committee is open to examining the return on investment.

How will the benefits be measured, such as what is the measured benefit of the later start times, which come at an added cost?

That is uncertain at this time. If insight into completing that type of analysis is provided, the committee is open to examining the return on investment.

Where will the money come from to pay the higher costs associated with later start times?

The additional cost will come from our current tax base.

How many O'Hara students will be picked up before 7 a.m.?

None.

If school arrival started after 7:30 a.m., would any students be at their bus stops in the dark?

Under Option 4, it appears that some students will be picked up prior to 7 a.m.

Will elementary students' time on the bus be extended?

In the current model, the time that students spend on the bus will remain the same.

Did Transfinder consider all potential efficiencies with private schools or only keep routes as is?

Transfinder did minimal work regarding private schools.

Do private school students need to be picked up close to their homes, or can there be a drop-off point to improve efficiency?

All elementary students (public, private, and parochial) can walk up to 1.5 miles to their bus stops by law. All secondary students (public, private, and parochial) can walk up to 2 miles to their bus stops by law. There are some caveats to this, such as hazardous roads.

Potential Challenges

Can you imagine a 6-year-old in Rural Ridge outside in the dark before 7 a.m.?

That is a possibility under the scenario that was studied.

What will be the impact on students attending A.W. Beattie Career Center?

It will be a challenge to make this scenario work with Beattie. Most likely, students will have to switch to Beattie's morning session.

How will these changes affect DMS? It seems positive for high school students, but middle school students also are adolescents.

DMS will have an earlier start and an earlier dismissal time as a result of the proposed changes in Option 4. As stated, middle school students also are adolescents. It is difficult to say if this will

be positive or negative for DMS students, as it is likely to have a mixed impact on the student body.

Will morning activities at DMS, such as orchestra, no longer happen? They usually start at 7:20 a.m.

If the DMS start time is changed to an earlier time as has been proposed in Option 4, it is likely that there will need to be adjustments to morning activities, including music rehearsals. It is unclear at this time whether the rehearsals would take place before school or if they would be moved to after school.

Students at DMS would start sooner. What are the benefits to this age group?

We will continue to examine the research on the effects of an earlier start time for preteens and young teenagers.

What about the potential increase of truancy at Hartwood?

That is something that cannot be determined or predicted at this time.

What about the anxiety that later start times may cause students with after-school commitments?

That is something that, unfortunately, that the school district cannot control.

Has ABC Transit asked employees if a change would impact their willingness to work?

There would be challenges with securing enough drivers, as shared by ABC Transit.

In districts that pushed back start times, did a lack of drivers cost the district more money?

ABC Transit honored their contracted rates.

If we move from three tiers to two tiers, won't drivers work a third less hours and therefore make a third less money? Why would they drive for us?

ABC Transit would keep the driver rates and school district daily rates the same. The drivers may work less, but ABC Transit's fixed costs would not be reduced.

Will taxes be raised to pay for the higher costs associated with pushing back the high school start time?

The model that was studied, Option 4, would come at a cost of approximately \$700,000. That expense will be added to the district's operational costs for transportation.

Would a bus driver shortage result in double runs?

It could; however, ABC Transit makes every effort to provide the level of service that the Fox Chapel Area School District expects.

How would ABC be able to transport students home as well as cover extracurricular events and be on time for both?

It would be worked out just as it is today.

How will athletics (both practices and games) be affected by change in schedules?

This will be discussed at a future site-based meeting, but, for example:

- Currently, there are only two lighted practice fields. As many as five teams compete for turf time. If there is a home game, that leaves only one field for practices, whether it is an after-school game, or an evening game. If practices run as late as 8 p.m., that would create a conflict. Also, many teams have their junior varsity teams compete prior to the start of varsity games, which also requires, and thus restricts, field space.
- Later practices will be restrictive for fall sports teams. The high school only has two turf fields, and only the stadium field is lighted. As the days shorten and there are fewer hours of natural light, that leaves less time to practice before dark.
- The lack of practice space would require practices and games to be altered and then coordinated with other schools that are on different time schedules.
- Less practice time or practicing without proper lighting creates a safety issue. Additionally, in order to get the necessary drills and skills training in, coaches may have to eliminate or lessen the time for warmups, which are essential to help reduce the likelihood of injuries.
- Practice space for indoor sports will be more limited if practices are moved inside due to darkness, meaning some athletes could practice as late as 10 p.m.

What about the effect on families with elementary students home alone without supervision/child care?

Under Option 4, about 1,600 elementary students would arrive home before high school students.

What about the cost of child care for elementary parents who used to rely on an older sibling to watch a younger child/children?

That cost will have to be determined by the affected parents based on the services they need and/or choose.

Does the district have data on the number of high school children who provide child care for their younger siblings?

No, the district does not compile that data.

Is the added cost of approximately \$700,000 worth it if students aren't necessarily going to get that extra hour of sleep?

That will be a discussion for the district's site-based team during the next several months, and that will weigh into the final recommendation made to the administration and School Board.

How will we keep Kerr children safe when they are at bus stops with high school students?

Parents already accompany their children at many stops.

Doesn't the potential number of grade school students gathered with high school students in the Sharpsburg area seem alarming?

Unfortunately, that is a possibility under Option 4, as well as under some other scenarios.

Do elementary bus stops typically have parents there to monitor interactions with high school students?

Parents accompany their children at many stops.

Potential Benefits

Could this change be an opportunity to improve walkability, i.e. partner with townships to install sidewalks?

It would be a costly endeavor, but it's a decision that the individual communities would have to make. Other factors are involved, such as excavation, removal of material, accessibility, curbs, etc.

How will the later start time for the high school affect other district's bus runs if other school districts are not changing?

Our buses are used primarily for our district.

Will a later start time possibly result in fewer two-hour delays in the winter?

Possibly, because crews will have more time to treat the roads.

Other

How will Beattie students participate in after-school activities? Will a bus bring them back at 2:30 p.m.? Where will they go until 3:40 p.m.?

Beattie students would participate in after-school activities the same way they do currently. We have a bus that brings them back to the high school. With the potential time change, our students who attend Beattie will most likely have to be moved to the morning program.

What percentage of our students are involved in after-school activities? How many 80-minute periods will students miss with a later start time at the high school?

During the 2018-2019 school year, about 62% of middle school and high school students participated in a sport in at least one of the seasons. The second part is difficult to answer. Most likely, there would be more instructional time lost based on the fact that other schools may not be accommodating to our school having a later end time.

What is this going to cost the 75% of the people who do not have kids in the district?

Proportionately, it will cost those who do not have children in the district the same as those who do have children in the district.

It's possible that taxes will be raised to pay for the added cost associated with pushing back the high school start time. How will those in the community who have no students in school react?

A quality school system increases property values. All property owners benefit from the high-caliber school district.

How would professional development days for elementary staff be affected?

No changes are expected, meaning the district will continue to conduct professional development between the hours of 7:30 a.m. and 3:30 p.m.

Has a needs assessment been completed? Are we supporting this change or investigating the change?

We are currently investigating the possible change based on a group of residents (parents/taxpayers) who requested that the administration consider the change.

Can start times be later so that no kids wait at bus stops before dawn?

We have looked at a total of nine scenarios, and none of our recommended options had us starting much later than Option 4.

Why can't individual students utilize flex time already in place instead of the district implementing this big change?

We certainly offer that flexibility. With flex time and Fox Chapel Area Online (FCAO) offerings, schedules can be personalized in myriad ways, should the site-based team recommend not pushing back the high school start time.

At what point will the district engage the 75 percent of district residents who don't have kids in school and tell them we are going to spend approximately \$700,000 more annually to fund this move? When will we inform elementary parents, too?

That has yet to be determined.

Can minutes be trimmed from the high school schedule per day so that high school students can start later yet still arrive home before elementary students?

We are able to trim some time, theoretically. However, we would be sacrificing minutes of instruction and QRT, during which students meet with teachers for assistance or participate in clubs. We are mandated by the state to meet the 990 instructional hours per year.

The high school will arrive 1½ hours earlier but will depart an hour later, so where will the half-hour be absorbed?

The high school will be arriving approximately 50 minutes later than the current program. The proposed school day has the same number of minutes per day.

Have we asked students what they think on the topic?

Yes. The high school principals have been conducting focus group meetings with dozens of students to get some feedback on the current schedule and on potentially pushing back the start time. More focus group meetings are planned.

If the focus is primarily on more sleep for high school students, and they can already flex their schedules, why would the taxpayers want to incur such financial burdens?

The district site-based team will take that into consideration when making its recommendation to the administration and School Board.

What is the percentage of kids with jobs who will be impacted?

We need to do some additional research to determine that.

Will the district consider any other proposed schedule change other than Option 4?

We certainly can explore additional possibilities if asked. However, that likely will come at an additional cost, and School Board approval will be needed.