

September 5, 2018

Dear Parents/Guardians:

As you may be aware, the district has been asked to consider a later start time for high school students. In response to the request and the research shared below, the district has put together this fact sheet so that stakeholders can consider the potential implications. By Sept. 19, 2018, we would like you to complete the brief survey found at the end of this fact sheet. The district will take all of this information into consideration prior to making a final decision pertaining to the schedule.

FACT SHEET

- **Current research supporting later start times for high school students is shared in this fact sheet under “Support for a Later Start Time.”**
- **Creating a later start time for high school students will require that younger students start earlier.**
- **The district has identified 3 key areas of impact from a later start time for high school students: convenience/safety, fiscal, and extracurricular activities/athletics.**

–Convenience/Safety–

- ***Elementary students will be catching their school buses earlier in the morning.***
 - This will cause our youngest students to wait in the dark during the winter months.
- ***Older children will not be home when younger children arrive home and won't be available for child care.***
- ***The same amount of bus pickups and drop-offs that were done in about 3 hours will now need to be compressed into approximately 1½ hours.***
 - Bus stops would need to be narrowed down from 1,380 current stops to 350-500 future stops.
 - Currently, the district operates the buses on a 3-tier system with approximately 60 minutes between each tier. A later high school start time would require a 2-tier busing system with only about 45 minutes between each tier.
 - Due to the reduction of bus stops, kindergarten-6th grade students could be walking up to 1½ miles to their bus stops, and 7th-12th graders could be walking up to 2 miles to their stops. These distances are allowable by law.
 - Buses would no longer have the time to enter housing developments.
- ***Districtwide bus runs take more time.***
 - Our district encompasses a fairly large area of approximately 36 square miles. With a change in start times, our high school and middle school buses would have even less time to travel to the farthest regions of the district.
- ***Our high school students may not be available for late afternoon part-time jobs.***
- ***There would be less time in the evening for high school students to do homework.***

–Fiscal–

- ***Cost of transportation will increase by roughly \$850,000.00 per year with a change in start times.***
 - Additional buses would be needed because there would not be enough time to pick up all the students with the same amount of buses we currently operate.
 - We currently transport about 1,300 students per tier with 3 tiers. A later start time for high school students would require the district to go to a 2-tier system, requiring more buses. Part of the reason for this is the disproportionate number of elementary students to secondary students. There are 1,785 elementary students and 2,232 secondary students.
 - Additional costs are not one-time costs and would be occurring yearly.
- ***Later athletic practice times would require additional fields/lights.***

- This occurs because outdoor practices could not be staggered since there is not enough light in the evening. Additional lights and fields would come at a significant cost to the district's taxpayers.

–Extracurricular Activities/Athletics–

- *High school after-school extracurriculars, including performing arts- and music-related activities and athletics, would not be able to start until approximately 4 p.m. or even later.*
- *Athletes would miss significant amounts of class time for afternoon home and away games and contests.*
- *Practice times for athletic teams would be drastically impacted due to the fact that, in the fall and spring seasons, there is not nearly as much time left at the end of the school day to safely practice in the light.*
- *There will be less fields and facilities available for resident/community league use as our scholastic athletes will be using them for the majority of the evening due to the later practice times.*

Support for a Later Start Time

• *Many professional groups support a later start time, including the American Academy of Pediatrics and the American Medical Association (AMA).*

- According to the National Sleep Foundation, sleep deprivation is considered a “chronic health problem” and “research shows that getting enough sleep is a biological necessity.”
- The group says that “teens need on average 9¼ hours of sleep per night for optimal performance, health and brain development,” yet “they average fewer than seven hours per school night by the end of high school.”
- The group also states that biological changes also “put more teens on a later sleep-wake clock,” and goes on to state “that sleep deprivation impairs their ability to be alert, pay attention, solve problems, cope with stress and retain information.”
- Additionally, lack of sleep can also contribute to emotional and behavioral problems, depression, poor impulse control and violence, alcohol and tobacco use, impaired cognitive function and decision-making, and lower overall performance in many areas, according to the group.

Additional information supporting later school start times can be found on the Internet, as well as at the following websites:

- <https://sleepfoundation.org/sleep-news/background-later-school-start-times>
- <http://www.kaplanonline.org/later-start-time-for-teens/>
- <https://www.startschoollater.net/why-change.html>
- <https://www.cdc.gov/features/school-start-times/index.html>

For years, the residents of our community have demanded that the district educate the whole child and provide the total educational package – and rightfully so. Academics and extracurricular activities also go hand-in-hand in educating our children. Additionally, our School Board and administration work very hard to be fiscally responsible to all taxpayers of the district. We ask that you thoughtfully consider the shared information and please complete the short survey (by September 19, 2018) at: www.bit.ly/starttimeFCASD.

We thank you for your partnership as we continue to study this very important issue.