

TO: KITTERY SCHOOL COMMITTEE

FROM: ERIC WADDELL

DATE: MAY 1, 2018

RE: EXPLORING LATER SCHOOL START TIMES UPDATE

The final meeting of the **Ad Hoc Committee to Explore Later School Start Times** met on April 10th in the Library at Traip Academy. The group has been working hard to consider all possibilities related to this important (and at times difficult) topic of school start times. The science behind delaying the start of the school day for older adolescents for whom a 7:30 AM school start time does not jibe with their developing brains and the corresponding sleep patterns is indisputable.

At our last meeting, the group (comprised of administration, School Committee members, parents, and students) reviewed survey results from three separate surveys to families, staff, and students. After carefully examining the results, the group is recommending **no changes to school start times for the 2018-19 school year**. As the Ad Hoc Committee resumes its work in the fall, they will be leaning toward a recommendation for 2019-20 that will have Mitchell Primary School and Shapleigh School start times unchanged. Furthermore, the group is honing in on a recommended 8:15 AM start time for Traip Academy (for 2019-20). The good news about such a format is that it likely can be done without adding additional bus runs. However, it may require Mitchell Primary School students and Traip Academy students to ride on the same bus which I know from history has been a concern for some in the past. I will note, however, that I have worked in districts where K-12 students rode the bus together with remarkably successful results.

At any rate, the Ad Hoc Committee will pursue that model further when it resumes its work in the fall. Among the questions that the Ad Hoc Committee must answer are:

- Will more high school students ride the bus with the later start? Currently, very few students ride the bus (at least in the morning) likely due to the extremely early pick-up times (those two buses currently arrive at Traip Academy between 6:45 -6:50 AM).
- Can we configure the bus routes so that high school-aged students and primary school-aged students are picked up together, dropped off between 8:00 - 8:10 AM at Mitchell Primary School and then at Traip Academy by 8:15 AM?
- Will our families support a recommendation to have K-3 and 9-12 students bus-pool?
- Can Principal Drisko and Assistant Principal Roberge make adjustments to the students' schedule so that some of the 45 minutes are absorbed within the students' school day (so that student dismissal would be 2:35 PM, for example, rather than 2:50 PM). The current student dismissal at Traip Academy is 2:05 PM.
- Will the delayed start be acceptable in the athletics arena, particularly in the fall and spring, with limited daylight and without lighted fields?

- Can we be assured that a 2:35 - 2:50 PM dismissal will not negatively impact students and their part-time after school jobs?
- Can we be assured that a later end-of-workday time for our employees will not negatively impact other employment arrangements, child pick-up times at other neighboring schools, and the ability to support students after school, to name only a few.
- Would it be possible for some traditionally after school meetings to be held before the 8:15 AM start time?
- Given the fact that the middle level student would also benefit physiologically from a later school start time, could we consider, in future years, 'splitting' Shapleigh School so that grades 4 and 5 begin at 7:30 AM while the middle level grades begin at 8:15 AM? And could we afford the potential added expense of transportation?

The Ad Hoc Committee to Explore Later School Start Times will resume its work in the fall and will report out again in early winter. I recognize that this is especially important if, in fact, the recommendation is to move forward with a later school start time for Traip Academy in the 2019-20 school year.