
Late start schedule and

1 message

Lindsay Manzo <pretiffwrs@hotmail.com>

Mon, Nov 14, 2022 at 6:37 PM

To: "publiccomment@mcpsmt.org" <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

Our current high school schedule (both the late start Thursday and the late start daily) means more time lost in the classroom for high school students who have jobs, pick up / watch younger siblings or need to attend school sponsored and other league sports (hockey, lacrosse, club sports, etc).

Studies show concerning declines in testing and learning at the high school level, with all educational staff focused on bridging gaps. An increase in missed hours of instruction (with an increase on make up instruction placed on the teacher) is not helping.

Last year, there was a push to go back to our earlier schedule from the district. Unfortunately, the board listened to a handful of people, did not seek further option and decided to stay with our later schedule, which affected a large swath of families and teachers.

My ask is that the board more thoughtfully consider the high school schedule and attempt to achieve feedback from all interested parties (Beach, all parents, teachers, coaches, etc). If the board is only concerned with parental input as they were before, then please create an intentional survey be sent to all HS parents before considering the schedule. Feedback from teachers is also important if you consider educators a reliable source of knowledge on systems, educational needs of students and attendance (which I do).

If you choose to use educational data and research to guide your decision, be transparent and share your sources. If parents drive your decision, be fair and transparent and share your survey data then too. Please make sure it is not too small and anecdotal either way. Make sure what you decide and rely on is best for a large district and a large community and the larger group of students and families we are fortunate enough to support.

Thank you for considering my request and thank you for serving the district in this important role.

Lindsay Manzo

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School start times

1 message

Daniel Lochridge <dclochridge@mcpsmt.org>

Mon, Nov 14, 2022 at 4:52 PM

To: "publiccomment@mcpsmt.org" <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

Dear Board of Trustees,

I am writing this letter as a parent, a teacher and a coach.

I have been working at MCPS since 2006 and have been teaching HS since 2002. In those 20 years, I have never been more unhappy with the schedule than I currently am. I understand that Covid changed a lot of things that we had no control over, but to leave the schedule as it currently is would be detrimental to the education, life experience and job satisfaction of so many of your educators.

Over the course of this soccer season (I coach the girls soccer team at Sentinel HS), I couldn't help but compare the number of hours our student athletes missed compared to what they would have missed on our old schedule (approximately 16 hours missed on the current schedule vs only about 7 hours missed on the old schedule). During a typical season we have numerous matches on Tuesday and Thursday afternoons. The students would miss a few minutes for a home game and only one class for out of town games on a Thursday early out. With the late start, our students are now missing the better part of an entire day of school for our out of town games and most of the afternoon classes just for our home games. The game times can not be moved any later than they already are due to daylight and teams not having lights on their fields. By moving our schedule back an hour we are making students miss a lot more school every time they have a match. As well many coaches are also teachers and with the shortage of substitutes we often don't have anyone to fill our missed class periods.

From a parent's perspective, I have a middle school student who now arrives home at about 3:00 on regular days and at 2:30 on early out Thursdays. She is home by herself for about 90 minutes before any of her siblings or parents can make it home and 2 whole hours on early out days. I feel rushed to run out of my classroom to get home to her to make sure she is utilizing her time wisely. She is a good kid all in all, but like many 11-13 year-olds, she has a tendency to not do exactly what she is supposed to when she gets home and has no one reminding her what to do (homework, mathia, science, reading, chores, etc). My wife or I often arrive home to a kid who has wasted 90 minutes of her day. Kids are extremely busy these days and honestly cannot spare those 90 minutes. If the HS kids were released at the same time or a little earlier than the MS kids, they could pick up their younger siblings. The HS students could also use the time to work or would have an extra hour after school to do homework. Kids sleep later in the morning because they can. They go to bed as late as their parents let them. I have a senior and a sophomore in HS and they both go to bed at a reasonable hour and wake up fresh and ready most mornings because we encourage them go to bed at a reasonable hour and we take away their phones at 10:00. What we have found is that they really could use an extra hour after school before they go to sleep to do homework or to participate in their sports and activities or work their part time jobs.

I have not seen an improvement in tardies over the last two years. In fact I have never had more kids come into first period late. I attribute this to the fact that the parents have already gone to work by the time their HS students have even woken up. The parents think their children will wake themselves up and drive themselves to school. This would be ideal, but I have some of my most responsible students tell me that they over slept their alarm and their parents had already left as the reason they are late.

Our entire society, activities, work schedules, and youth sports revolve around the old schedule. Middle school and High School students used to get out of school at 3:00 and 3:30 which would give parents time to get their kids to lessons, practices and other activities by 4:00. It also gave kids an hour to do homework before activities. It gave teachers a chance to check in with students after school and to maybe even have a social interaction with their colleagues. Now teachers at the HS level are at school an hour before the students, when they are busily preparing for the day and they have to cut their collegial social interactions short so they can make sure they are prepared for the day ahead. After work social engagements have all but disappeared because teachers have to get home to their middle school kids who have already been home for 90 minutes.

At a time when teachers are fleeing from the profession due to the fact that their salaries do not come close to keeping up with inflation, due to increased fear of school violence and of course the fact that being a good teacher is not an easy job, we add this to the mix. I understand that change is hard for people and often times people are quick to judge the change

as a bad thing when really it is just a change. I do feel that the full hour later is just too much. If there were a way to move the start of the day to 8:25 at the HS level then perhaps we would find a happy medium.

I know the studies show that later start times are better for the HS kids, but I honestly think that is a matter of habit and getting used to your body's sleeping habits. The problem is that not many HS kids are willing to go to bed any earlier than they have to and their body gets used to it. My two HS daughters go to bed at a fairly normal hour and wake up to make it to their zero period every day of the week without being too tired. Their bodies adjust to their own sleep and wake times just like all of the adults in this world.

The bottom line is that our society already revolves around the old schedule yet our school district is trying to make the rest of the city and state (most of the other schools in the state do not get out this late) conform to our schedule. Our PE teachers have to give up their "classroom" i.e., the gymnasium, every time there is a home volleyball or basketball game for the last hour plus of the day so the teams can come in and warm up. I have had so many of my colleagues tell me they agree with me on this point. The old schedule is better and if we can't go all the way back to the old schedule then we would prefer to find a compromise where we do not get out of class at 3:55 pm.

At a very minimum, please change the Thursday back to early out for our student athletes and coaches. That has been the worst part of the whole thing. The late start Thursdays have been the day when we see the most tardies because kids are waking up hours after their parents have left for work and they stay up way too late on Wednesday nights because they know they don't have to be to school until 9:40. One of the tenants of the sleep studies is that all people (kids and adults) benefit from consistent bed times and consistent wake times. Letting kids sleep in an hour later on Thursdays throws all of that off.

I appreciate you taking the time to read this. I also appreciate you taking the time to think about the fact that the HS kids will have to suffer through early wake times for 4 years, but as teachers who will hopefully stay in the profession for decades, our happiness should be taken into account just as much. The old adages of "the early bird gets the worm" and "early to bed early to rise makes you healthy wealthy and wise" have been lost on the MCPS high school population, and I believe there is some truth to those statement. When was the last time you heard an old proverb that talked about sleeping late being good for you. Instead of acquiescing to the whims of HS kids, we should teach them the value of learning how to "hit the hay" a little earlier when you have something important the next day, and every day of school is important.

I would be glad to chat or be part of any group that is working on this important topic before a final decision is made.

Thanks,

Dan Lochridge

Sentinel High School

Spanish Teacher

Soccer Coach

Sent from Mail for Windows

**MISSOULA COUNTY
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

Public Comment <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

Fired because of your teacher

vincelovato@yahoo.com <vincelovato@yahoo.com>
To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Thu, Nov 10, 2022 at 11:15 AM

I was just fired as editor of the Pathfinder because one teacher didn't like a photo headline I wrote.

Sent from Android device

**MISSOULA COUNTY
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

Public Comment <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

Coordinating days out of school

Jennifer Stephens <stephens.jenn@gmail.com>
To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Fri, Nov 11, 2022 at 8:40 AM

Hello!

This is the first year we have a student in high school and one in elementary at MCPS. When we had a student in middle school and elementary at MCPS, we were pleased that all of the vacation dates and teacher training out of school dates were the same for our kiddos. This year that is not the case.

Is there a way to work toward coordinating days out of school across elementary, middle, and high school so that families can't take time off together and don't have multiple schedules to juggle?

I look forward to hearing back on how days out of school can be fully coordinated.

Thank you!
Jenn

--
Jennifer Stephens
Missoula, MT

public comment

Gary and Nancy <nlee1946@live.com>

Sat, Oct 29, 2022 at 8:57 AM

To: "publiccomment@mcpsmt.org" <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

Ladies and Gentlemen:

A copy of a recent e-mail sent to a staff member as well as Pat McHugh. Some of you may not be aware of the practice of MCPS sending and Target Range School accepting out of district students without tuition, taxes, bonds or levies.

Melanie Matelich.

In today's Missoulian, I see an article titled "We Care". I read the following item. "Couple who lives outside area boundary is in need of a used car. Since they live outside of boundaries, parents must provide their own transportation to school. The mother is currently taking a child to and from school via city bus, which adds 2.5 hours to her day, causing her to be late to her day job. If anyone has a used vehicle that they would like to donate to this family, contact Melanie Matelich at mamatelich@mcps.org or 406-728-2400, ext. 4590."

Really? If you are referring to Target Range School, this out of district student is one of 165, many of which are students that live within MCPS boundaries but come to Target Range School free of tuition, taxes, bonds, and levies. The only thing they have to do is provide transportation.

We as district #23 taxpayers resent out of district students. They are not only a financial burden but change the character of our neighborhood school. We are over-staffed by about 20 positions (many they find difficult to fill) .

So, my recommendation to your needy parents, is to send their student to the MCPS school near their home. They wouldn't face the mother's bus problem. And, we as Target Range taxpayers would rejoice in one less out of district student.

Respectfully,

Nancy and Gary Botchek



Public Comment <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

sex ed in schools

mindy opper <montanamindy@hotmail.com>

Tue, Oct 25, 2022 at 4:58 AM

To: "publiccomment@mcpsmt.org" <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

As a primary care Physician Assistant with 30+ years of practice, I find the new policy re: restrictions of who can provide sexuality education to students reprehensible. There is a need for young people to be fully educated on this broad topic even more so today than in the past due to so much misinformation available on the internet and social media. I have been astounded at times when an adolescent patient knows nothing about their reproductive systems, STDs, contraception and sexuality. Health care providers are appropriate educators to discuss these topics with students whereas teachers have so many items on their plates, they may not be able to do the deep research into how to provide this information. In a state that wants to stop abortion, they also want our students to be uninformed on how to have the best and safest sexual lives. Without access to CORRECT contraceptive and STD information, how are these young people going to avoid unplanned and unwanted pregnancies and STDs? Parents and law makers should not put their heads in the sand and think that adolescents won't become sexually active before they are full adults. Teachers need the support of their community experts to handle specific areas of education such as this. I also find it sad that the law allows students to miss out on this necessary information as they grow. These are public schools who need to bring in experts; they are not private schools. I believe MCPS needs to stand its' ground and allow outside experts to educate our children correctly. Regarding abortion, if people truly looked at the statistics and spoke with providers of these services, they would learn that most women will face an unplanned pregnancy during their long reproductive lives. They would learn that most women are relieved to know they can have access to contraception and safe abortion services and go on to pursue their goals and choose when it is right for them to become parents or not.

Sincerely, Mindy Opper PA

Sent from Mail for Windows

Election Day Concerns

Erin Asay <elasay@mcpsmt.org>

Tue, Oct 25, 2022 at 2:45 PM

To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Hey there!

My name is Erin Asay, I teach first grade at Franklin Elementary and have been in our district for 11 years. Franklin Elementary is a polling place on November 8, Election Day. I appreciate using a school as a polling place because it allows easy access for voters, which is so important! On the other hand, it brings up a number of safety issues.

- Election Day can be a very tense day, emotionally and politically. Tempers are often high and fuses short.
- Montana is a state with low restrictions concerning gun ownership. School shootings are at an all-time high.
- Many Franklin students have difficult life experiences that create a mental health crisis. It's not uncommon to hear threats of violence from students, and sometimes parents as well. We have already had threats this year in my building and others. Franklin is also missing a CSCT team to serve our students with mental health needs.
- I think having a police presence will be necessary. But, for some of our students police are unsafe people, due to family trauma or events. It will be challenging for our students to spend the day at school being safe and calm while the building has a police presence. It is my personal view that if we perceive a need for police in a school, then we shouldn't be sending students to school that day.
- It's the beginning of cold and flu season, and Covid19 is still present in our community.
- Schools are very short staffed, and if staff members feel unsafe going to school or sending their own children, who will sub? Franklin does not currently have a building substitute.
- Mental health of staff has been a priority for the district this year. The stress of having the public in our building on such a tense day puts undue pressure and anxiety on school staff who are ultimately responsible for the safety of students.
- If the public is entering Franklin into the gym, there will be two access points for people to enter the school building from there. Those doors do not lock from the inside. This means community members could enter the building where staff and students are working.

We do everything we can within our buildings to keep students safe. It seems unwise to open our doors to the public on a very heated and tense day.

Here are some alternatives I see as possibilities.

- Choose an alternative polling place. There are a few buildings in the Franklin neighborhood that wouldn't be full of staff and students and are nearby. For example, the United Methodist church building might be able to host.
- Cancel school on November 8 for staff and students.
- Cancel school for students and schedule Nov 8 for PIR. Conference prep would be wonderful! :)
- Have polling hours run from 4pm-8pm at Franklin.
- Have voting be in the FRC, and people can vote one at a time due to the small space.

Though I don't wish to speak for other staff members, I do know that these sentiments aren't unique to me. I was able to speak with Greg Harrison, as well as Vinny Giammona and Pat McHugh. They were helpful and supportive, and encouraged me to continue to advocate, as well as submitting this public comment.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

--

Erin Asay

she/hers

Franklin Elementary MCPS

elasay@mcpsmt.org
