

School Start/End Time Task Force Meeting

October 29, 2019 8:00 AM

Weston High School Main Office Conference Room

Task Force Attendance:

William McKersie
Kenneth Crow
Phillip Cross
Lisa Wolak
Laura Kaddis
Mark Berkowitz
Stacy Slater
Erin Merrifield
Kim Spangler
Matt Brodacki
Joe Parciasepe
Jenny Walsh
Kristen Ancker

1. Review of Task Force Purpose and Workflow Chart-William McKersie

Discussion:

Dr. McKersie reviewed the Task Force Purpose and Workflow Chart with the Task Force. As a shared Google Doc, all Task Force members can update as they have additional information. Jenny Walsh, PTO Representative for upper schools, handed out the agenda she will be using for the parent roundtable she is holding on November 6. Kristen Ancker, PTO Representative for lower schools, will schedule a roundtable to occur before the Thanksgiving break.

2. Implications for Athletics Part One-Mark Berkowitz

Discussion:

Mark Berkowitz, Director of Athletics, reviewed SWC school start and end times for the current year and also reviewed number of WHS athletes that participate in the fall season. Most team sports are able to travel together. If there were a change in times, busing options may change and the need for additional buses may be required.

Mr. Berkowitz mentioned that games during late fall and early spring may be difficult to play because of schools that may not have fields equipped with lighting. It was asked if we could also review the DRG-A School Start/End Times and review what are the anticipated driving distances to all SWC schools we play. On average, Mr. Berkowitz plans for an hour each way for travel. With most teams, both the JV/V teams play. When this occurs, he must factor approximately four hours of play.

The high school needs to review what period 7 & 8 and period 1 & 2 classes are consistently missed and what coaches are leaving early in order to travel to games. Mr. Berkowitz will speak to the athletic directors in both Norwalk and Greenwich to see how the changes they have made are working within athletics.

3. Implications for Afterschool Activities Part One-Joe Parciasepe

Discussion:

Joe Parciasepe, Program Director for Weston Parks & Recreation, schedules and manages all WOW programs, WMS afterschool programs and activities at the Senior

Center. This equates to approximately 150 sessions per year, with more than three-quarters of them after school.

With the numbers of Parks and Recreation staff that work within WMS/WHS and teach the programs at HES/WIS, flipping school start/end times would dramatically affect these programs. A change in later dismissal times would also impact the Ski Club, which runs most Thursdays in January, and would affect not only ski lessons but would have students returning to Weston later in the evening. Any changes in WMS end times would impact Parks and Recreation programs after school, and in turn, affect other programs like basketball (WBA) teams, which would push start times even later. Similar timing issues would occur with the use of the Weston Middle School pool.

The Senior center MOU states that it operates for seniors during school hours. Parks and Recreation run programs in the Senior Center after school and its hours may be affected. Mr. Parciasepe is concerned that later end times may affect students who not only participate in athletics but music and arts, leaving them to choose which activities they have time to participate in. Mr. Parciasepe will create a chart similar to Mr. Berkowitz's chart, regarding program offerings and start/end times.

Ms. Wolak asked what would happen in the evenings for practices such as jazz groups, mock trial teams, music related activities, and other co-curricular groups. When are they currently meeting and how often are they meeting? She will work on obtaining this data.

Dr. Craw will begin to look at the individual school schedules and how they might look given changes in school start times.

4. Traffic Study Review-Captain Brodacki

Discussion:

Captain Matt Brodacki of Weston Police Department, noted that any changes in start and end times will greatly affect the drop off lines and ultimately the traffic patterns within town. He noted that in a 24-hour period, 12,000 automobiles travel on Weston Road every day within the stretch of road near the Weston Historical Society.

Captain Brodacki spoke about the future work that is in process regarding reconfiguring the intersection of Weston Road and School Road and the plans to improve the safety between School Road and Weston center. The timing for new sidewalks is scheduled to be a two-year plan to implement. He noted that between School Road and Norfield Road there have been 50 crashes in the past three years. With apps that are pushing commuters to "fastest" routes, some additional travel on Weston roads may affect our traffic patterns and timing, and therefore affect traffic during school times.

A question was asked as to how many students take the buses versus being driven to/from school daily. Phil Cross, Director of Finance and Operations, will look to see if there is a way to increase students riding buses with a change in start/end times. Mr. Cross met with First Student and they will be conducting bus runs at different times to see what the impact will look like with changes in start/end times.

Chief Henion and Captain Brodacki were asked if they could speak with Norwalk and Greenwich police to obtain their reflections and insights on changes in school start/end times.

5. Topics for Next Meeting

Discussion:

Teachers Stacy Slater and Erin Merrifield will be attending the Weston Teachers' Association Board Meeting to discuss school start/end times. They created a survey regarding commute times and how many teachers also have an additional job outside of their commitments in Weston.

Kim Spangler, representative for AFSCME, will be working on creating a survey for all members.

For the next meeting on November 14, the Task Force will discuss the Norwalk Study and talk about which groups we aren't hearing from yet.

6. Public Comment (3 Minutes Per Speaker)

Discussion:

Meeting adjourned at 9:29 a.m.

Chairperson

Superintendent