

September 21, 2020

Bell Times Advisory Committee Meeting Notes

Remote Meeting

6:00 pm – 7:00 pm

15 members attended

### Welcome and Introductions

Assistant Superintendent, Monty Sabin welcomed everyone to the meeting at 6:00 pm. Members in attendance introduced themselves and shared their role on the committee.

### Purpose and Leading with Equity

Monty Sabin shared the purpose of the advisory committee was to determine if changing to a later start time for the high schools is feasible for the district and beneficial for our students.

He also asked the group to assess all options through an equity lens and to ask the following questions about the proposals: How does this issue connect with our strategic plan and the goals of the district? Will this decision ignore/worsen existing disparities or produce unintended consequences? If so, how? Finally, does this proposal support the message of inclusion? He referred the group to the district's Equity Resolution and EL-11 Policy, Race and Equity for guidance.

### Transportation Presentation

Deanna Maddux shared data regarding the district's current General Education and Special Needs Fleet and routes. She provided the committee information on routes and ridership in a typical school year based on the current bell schedule. Deanna then presented a proposed adjustment to the current Bell Times that would move from a four tier elementary start to a two tier elementary start that would keep all four pre-school sites on tier 1 to not change any of the pre-school bell times. The proposed bell schedule would have Elementary Schools begin at either 7:15 or 8:00 am and the High Schools begin at 8:40. Middle Schools would still begin the latest with a proposed 9:40 start time. The time intervals for Envision and Aspire would remain the same amount of time as the current bell schedule.

Deanna explained that the transportation department ran several scenarios for a later start time and the one she brought forward to the committee for review allowed for a later High School start time at the least amount of increase in cost of the models reviewed. The estimated increase from the current schedule would be approximately \$800,000. With COVID cleaning time built in the change could require an increase of 12 additional routes and a cost increase of \$2.4 Million.

Deanna then reviewed other scenarios that were considered and provided information to show why the proposal she presented was the most feasible. Deanna also shared additional items to be considered beyond cost if the district modifies the current bell schedule: New Market times will no longer match NTPS for transport of students in that program, HS Sports may require athletes to lose more class time to leave earlier for events; field availability for HS and MS sports may be an issue, busses may have more limited availability for field trips. One bright spot was that there would be more availability for transport to B&G Club from all schools, another advantage was that more drivers would be able to have an 8 hour day which translates into less turnover and a reduction in cost for Driver Training & Recruitment.

Questions and comments from the committee followed:

- What about Tag?  
Tag would be in elementary first tier.
- Is there any way to make a cost neutral change?  
Only if Intercity Transit was utilized for HS students that live within the bus lines. In our district we have many areas that are not currently served by IT.
- What is the earliest pick-up time for Elementary Students?

6:20 – 6:30 am (excluding the McKinney Vento students who are transported outside of the district and have pick up times as early as 5:15 am).

- Adjusting the Bell Schedule may impact families who use teen drivers to pick-up younger students from school or have older siblings provide after school care.
- Did the district look at the implications of stretching out the end of the day instead of beginning earlier?  
Middle Schools are already late in the day and staff may not want to be pushed later in the day. Middle School after school activities being later in the day would also pose a problem for students being at school until very late.
- Elementary students out at bus stops so early in the morning especially in the winter is a concern.
- HS Students with jobs have limited work hours available with a later start.
- Is it worth the cost to exchange the benefit for one group over another? It's not a win/win across the board.
- Studies show it is worth it for HS students but there is a significant cost to make the change.
- Studies have shown that student performance goes up with a later start time but is it a big enough benefit. Biologically teens are on a different clock - up late and sleep later.
- What do studies show about an early start for elementary age students?
- Would like to look further at pick-up times being as early as 6:15 am.  
Most would start closer to 6:40 am for elementary students.
- Out of district sports seem to be an issue with a later start time for High School students.
- Why was Middle School chosen to go the latest?  
Budget driven – it is a cost savings to decrease the number of busses and drivers needed. It will also maintain the model for Aspire Middle School students to be transported in shuttles from the Elementary Schools.
- Are all of the models Elementary, High School and then Middle School?  
In reviewing all scenarios, the most cost effective was to move to Elem, HS, MS. It also allows for the transport of the Aspire students and addresses concerns regarding the availability of field lighting.
- It would be helpful to see the financial impact of each scenario – with cost analysis in one slide.
- It would also be good to add current budget for model comparison. (Comparison in a typical year not accounting for COVID Impacts).
- How many hours do most drivers get now? Is there a lot of turnover?  
Currently about 45% get 8 hours. It depends on the economy.
- Would the proposal add to the challenge of having busses available for after school activities?  
Yes, it would likely make it more difficult to have district busses available.
- Would it be possible to create a spreadsheet that captures all of the advantages/disadvantages of the bell time changes moving forward?  
Yes

### Future Topics / Meeting Schedule

Monty Sabin shared that future topics would include:

- Follow-up presentation by Transportation / District and Community Activities
- Community Survey
- Food and Nutrition
- Academic Research

Meetings are scheduled for:

- October 19<sup>th</sup>
- November 11<sup>th</sup>
- December 14<sup>th</sup>

- January 18<sup>th</sup>
- February 23<sup>rd</sup> – Board Meeting

Closing

Monty shared that he would be emailing materials for review before the next BTAC meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 6:40 pm.