

To: BPS Principals, Superintendent's Cabinet
From: Donna E. Muncey
Date: November 9, 2016
Re: Start and End Times for 2016-2017

Several of you have reached out to request a change in your school's start time for next year. While these requests have been considered previously, we are taking a different approach, outlined below, to planning for start and end times and their impact on transportation routing for the 2017-2018 school year. We approach this work with our focus on creating equity, coherence and innovation within our system to better serve students and families.

The status quo has created an imbalanced system and unnecessary, additional cost:

- We would like for our buses to serve three schools in the morning and the afternoon, but the imbalanced system makes this impossible as more buses are needed during peak times.
- In the past, schools have been assigned different bell times based on several factors, including individual school input, which has resulted in an uneven distribution of schools across our three bell times, with the highest number of schools at 8:30, many more at 7:30, and a small number at 9:30.
- This leads to extra cost as a school bus in the current system can only serve up to two schools, creating a drain on resources that could otherwise benefit schools.

An analysis is underway to reassign schools across bell times and produce a more cost-effective system:

- The vendor that provides our routing software is conducting an analysis of our bus routing to produce the lowest-cost system possible by redistributing schools across the 3 bell times.
- The analysis will include all schools served by BPS Transportation and will factor in the current plan for nearly 40 new schools to be part of Schedule A/Extended Learning Time next year.
- The analysis will account for the interdependence of our transportation system, as a change to any one school's start time invariably impacts other schools as well.
- We are choosing to begin this process with an outside analysis in order to have a starting point that is as open and unbounded as possible.

The timeline is not ideal and may extend beyond the school open house timeframe:

- Until we have these results in hand, we will not be making any official changes to start and end times for the upcoming school year.
- We will likely launch the High School Showcase (at Bolling on December 1 st) and begin open houses at our school sites with your current start time schedules, adjusted to reflect new end times for the Schedule A/ELT schools.



- We will share start-and- end-times with all schools as soon as possible, at which time we will invite all of you to an optional meeting at Bolling to discuss the process to date and the benefits that this approach will have produced for the district.
- We will also present the new distribution of schools across bell times to the School Committee, either in November or early December.
- We anticipate that this will be a complex but a more efficient process, although current negotiations with the Boston Teachers Union regarding ELT could impact the overall plan.
- We expect to have finalized this process well ahead of the opening of the first round of registration in January.

While we recognize that new start times can cause unfortunate disruptions to school communities, we expect that the requested analysis will help us continue our on-going efforts to improve our transportation system, to uncover potentially millions of dollars in savings that will not need to be found in other district reductions, and to efficiently incorporate a significant change in the length of the school day for a large number of our schools. In order to honor the process above, we will not be accepting any requests for specific start times, although we are certainly hearing the feedback we receive. We will reach out again once we have a clearer idea of when we will have the new start and end times for next year.

