



Newton Public Schools  
100 Walnut Street  
Newton, MA 02460

Telephone  
(617) 559-6100

Fax  
(617) 559-6101

David Fleishman  
Superintendent of Schools

March 6, 2017

Dear Newton Families,

Since Fall 2015, the district has been engaged in a thorough exploration of later start times for Newton high schools. This work was predicated on the significant research demonstrating the importance of adequate sleep for adolescents at appropriate times. Surveys of students, faculty, and families, as well as input from other stakeholders, led to the formulation of six potential scenarios. Feedback on those scenarios was gathered and analyzed this fall and shared over the past few months.

The feedback was clear. **There is support for a later start time, but that support is tempered by the impact to end times. End times after 3:00 p.m. create significant challenges as they encroach upon important student activities, as well as the schedules of families and faculty.**

Given that we feel it is important to continue to pursue later start times, we need to take the following next steps:

- **Create a shorter high school day:** Currently, Newton has one of the longest high school days in the state. To achieve a later start and end no later than 3:00 p.m., our high school principals will lead a process with faculty/staff and the community to revise the current high school schedules. This work will identify efficiencies, consider even end times, and seek to align the two high schools. The schedule is a key lever both to ensure a change is feasible and to meet the academic and social/emotional goals of the district.
- **Consider funding mechanism for later start times:** As we identify district priorities, we need to consider how a later high school start time fits into the larger budget picture. The most preferable options (start times approximately 8:30 a.m.) require additional funding for transportation.

Revising a high school schedule is no small task. It is an incredibly complex process that must be done thoughtfully and carefully in order to meet the needs of students and staff. This is especially complicated given the trade-offs that will need to be considered to shorten

the day. **To that end, we expect the process of revising our high school schedules to take two years.**

Start times are an important piece in our overall commitment to the social and emotional health of our students. The work conducted over the past year and a half has been invaluable in understanding the impact of later high school start times on the entire Newton community. We are committed to taking this next step and look forward to engaging with the community as we proceed.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "David Fleishman". The signature is written in a cursive style with a prominent initial "D".

David Fleishman  
Superintendent of Schools