

February 4, 2019

To: Jennifer Susse  
School Committee  
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Kathleen Bodie, Ed.D.  
Superintendent of Schools  
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As parents of current and future APS students, we want to extend our support for changing the school day start time for the Gibbs School, Ottoson Middle School and Arlington High School to 8:30 AM. This change reflects overwhelming research<sup>1</sup> on the positive effects of later start times on students' physical and mental health, as well as their learning, growth, and achievement, **which is the primary responsibility of our public school system.**

Placing start times for middle and high schools *after* elementary schools also allows working parents to accompany their younger children to school, while allowing older children who generally require less parental oversight to start school at a later time. A later dismissal also reduces the amount of after school time during which older students might be on their own.

We acknowledge that there will be challenges in shifting start and end times. The failed attempt to make a similar schedule change in Boston (albeit a very different district) provides some insight into potential challenges, and we strongly encourage you to take proactive steps to mitigate any unintended consequences.

First, continue your extensive outreach to parents *and* teachers and use the opportunities to communicate the learning benefits of this proposal as clearly as possible.

Second, be cognizant of the impact on families who rely on before- and after-school supports (such as early drop-off and early release times that allow students to work part-time jobs and/or care for younger siblings), as well as coordination with the METCO transportation needs. Consider programmatic solutions to address these concerns (e.g., providing early access to MS and HS buildings, scheduling core academic courses earlier in the day, creating options for flexibility later in the day, etc.).

Finally, consider reaching out to other Middlesex County superintendents and school committees to coordinate the adoption of similar policies. This not only allows Arlington to lead on this issue, but it may result in more coordinated after-school athletic programming that supports these later start and end times.

We are excited about the direction Arlington has taken in this area and believe it will result in marked benefits to the learning and well-being of our children. Several of us would also be interested in serving on a working group or similar stakeholder engagement opportunity should the need arise.

Thank you.

Claire and David Abbott (parents of 3, Brackett Elementary)  
Kara Baskin and Brian Lapsertis (parents of 2, Dallin Elementary)  
Caitlin Sweeney and David Della Bitta (parents of 2, Brackett Elementary)  
Katherine Gates (parent of 2, Brackett Elementary)  
Gemmae Fix and Eric Schiller (parents of 2, Stratton Elementary)  
Jennifer and Neal Anderson (parents of 2, Brackett Elementary)  
Laura and Bobby Leighton (parents of 3, Brackett Elementary)  
Mona and Carmine Granucci (parents of 1, Peirce Elementary)  
Amy and Jim Hampe (parents of 1, Brackett Elementary)  
Megan Burns and Frederik Heger (parents of 2, Brackett Elementary)  
Betsy and Peter Rice (parents of 3, Brackett Elementary)  
JoEllen and Jeff Komanetsky (parents of 2, Dallin Elementary)

Davin and Jennifer Beaumont Wilfrid (parents of 2, Dallin Elementary)  
Georgina and Michael Prager (parents of 1, Brackett Elementary)  
Heidi and Nick Rosenberg (parents of 2, Dallin Elementary)  
John Grant and Rekha Murthy (parents of 2, Brackett Elementary)  
Lauren and Pranay Sonalkar (parents of 2, Brackett Elementary)  
Adam Delmolino and Tracy Scatterday (parents of 2, Brackett & Menotomy)  
Natalie and Christian Wood (parents of 2, Brackett Elementary)  
Sasha Rose Oxnard (parent of 3 zoned for Dallin/Brackett Elementary)  
David Trillig and Natasha (Natalia) Yefimova-Trilling (parents of 1, Brackett Elementary)

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<sup>i</sup> Behavioral, health, and academic benefits (literature review): <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4824552/>.  
Economic benefits: [https://www.rand.org/pubs/research\\_reports/RR2109.html](https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR2109.html). American Academy of Pediatrics  
recommendation: <http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/134/3/642>.