



# SCHEDULE CHANGE EMAIL ANALYSIS

Prepare for Lower Merion School District

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# INTRODUCTION

Lower Merion School District (LMSD) has examined a potential change in school start times to align with research trends in sleep science that recommend later high school start times to adapt to adolescent sleep patterns.<sup>1</sup> In fall 2019, the district shared a proposed change to school schedules, which would move middle and high school start times later in the morning, while shifting the elementary school day to start and end earlier than before. As one component of a multifaceted strategy to gather the community’s feedback on the proposed change, LMSD created an email account to allow community members to share their opinions with district leaders. In support of this initiative, Hanover Research (Hanover) analyzed the email content to provide an objective, third-party analysis. In this report, Hanover presents findings from an open-ended coding analysis of 249 emails, including two emails summarizing voice messages, that community members sent to the account sleep@lmsd.org from October 19, 2019, through December 20, 2019.

This report comprises two main sections: Email Response Themes in Favor of Changing School Start Times and Email Response Themes Against Changing School Start Times.

## METHODOLOGY

Hanover’s analysts read all 249 emails sent to the sleep@lowermerion account and established a rigorous open-ended coding methodology to analyze the results. When initially reviewing the emails, Hanover identified that some respondents sent multiple emails and that some respondents forwarded the same email message. For the same individual who sent several emails, Hanover coded each email and aggregated the codes to count duplicate emails as one respondent overall to ensure one response per person. When encountering the same email from different senders, Hanover coded each sender as a unique respondent.

Hanover then used two coding levels to analyze the email content: the first to determine the respondent’s overall perception of the change, including whether their email is in favor of (e.g., “For”), is against (e.g., “Against”), or is neutral (e.g., “Neutral) to the change.

Additionally, some respondents indicated both support for an overall change, but a lack of support for a specific component of the change. For example, 29 respondents supported the change in high school start times but questioned the decision to move elementary school start times to 7:45 AM. In these instances, to most accurately represent the email content, Hanover assigned codes to both “For” and “Against,” as exemplified in Figure A.

**Figure A: Sample Email Text Coded as Both “For” and “Against” Schedule Change**

# Email	For	Against	Select Quotes
#10	1	1	“I am a proponent of starting school later for adolescents in the district. However, I feel the proposed plan puts an unfair burden on youngest children, elementary-aged school children. I urge you to consider alternatives so that no student has to go to school before 8:15 AM or 8:30 AM.”

<sup>1</sup> [1] Wheaton, A.G. “Short Sleep Duration Among Middle School and High School Students — United States, 2015.” *MMWR. Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*, 67, 2018. <https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/67/wr/mm6703a1.htm> [2] Owens, J., ADOLESCENT SLEEP WORKING GROUP, and COMMITTEE ON ADOLESCENCE. “Insufficient Sleep in Adolescents and Young Adults: An Update on Causes and Consequences.” *PEDIATRICS*, 134:3, September 1, 2014. [3] Kelley, P. and C. Lee. “Later Education Start Times in Adolescence: Time for Change.” [4] Hirshkowitz, M. et al. “National Sleep Foundation’s Sleep Time Duration Recommendations: Methodology and Results Summary.” *Sleep Health*, 1:1, March 1, 2015. [4] Keller, P.S. et al. “Earlier School Start Times as a Risk Factor for Poor School Performance: An Examination of Public Elementary Schools in the Commonwealth of Kentucky.” *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 107:1, 2015.

# Email	For	Against	Select Quotes
#23	1	1	"While I believe that high school needs to start at the later time, I am not sure it should come at the sacrifice of the youngest children in our district. "

All select quotes are taken verbatim from the emails sent to sleep@lmsd.org between October 19-December 20, 2019.

Additionally, Hanover coded 17 emails as "Neutral" because they did not express any opinion on the scheduled change, or they were not relevant to changing school start times. In this report, Hanover did not include data from the emails coded as "Neutral," as they were not pertinent for the analysis. For example, in these emails, community members inquired about notes from meetings or commented on the marketing materials developed for the campaign.

The second coding phase identified recurrent themes in the emails. Hanover developed more specific themes within the "For" and "Against" categories, and assigned one code to each occurrence. Finally, after coding all emails, Hanover grouped all themes into major categories (e.g., "Benefits for Parents") within the "For" and "Against" categories. Below, Figure B illustrates the categories and themes within the "For" section, while Figure C lists the categories and themes within the "Against" category.

**Figure B: Categories and Themes in Favor of Changing School Start Times**

Category	Themes
Improved Student Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increased Student Sleep</li> <li>Wellness</li> <li>Improved Academic Performance</li> <li>Agrees with Scientific Reasoning</li> <li>Positive Learning Environment</li> <li>Decrease of Drowsy Driving in High School Student Population</li> </ul>
Benefits for Parents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Positive Impact on Parents' Schedules</li> </ul>
Supports the New Proposed Change but has Suggestions or Concerns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Suggest Alterations (e.g., Bus Schedules, School Start Times)</li> <li>Concerned about the Need for Additional Child Care Coverage</li> <li>Concerned about Pick Up Times and Bus Schedules</li> <li>Concerned about After School Athletic Activities</li> <li>Concerned about Elementary School Students' Homework</li> </ul>
No Reasons Provided	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No Reasons Provided</li> </ul>

All data are taken from the emails sent to sleep@lmsd.org between October 19-December 20, 2019.

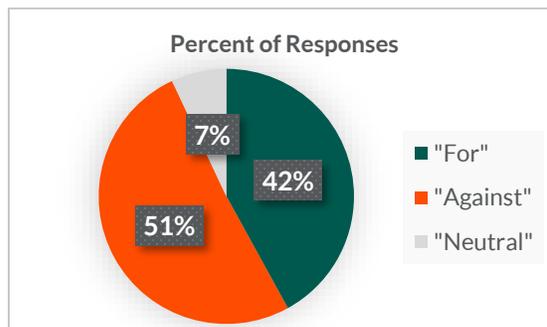
Figure C: Categories and Themes Against Changing School Start Times

Category	Themes
Negative Impact on Students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Elementary School Students' Wellness</li> <li>• Negative Impact on Elementary Academic Performance</li> <li>• Special Needs Students' Difficulty to Adjust to the Time Change</li> <li>• Change in Student Start Times will Delay Bed Times for High and Middle School Students</li> <li>• Difficult for Secondary Students to Find Jobs</li> </ul>
Negative Impact on Students' Schedule and Extracurricular Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Elementary Students' Schedule</li> <li>• Middle School Students Afterschool Activities</li> <li>• Extracurricular Activities Schedule</li> <li>• Kindergarten Students' Schedules</li> <li>• Negative Impact on High School Athletics</li> <li>• Concerned about Availability of Outside Space for After Care</li> </ul>
Negative Impact on Parents' Schedules, Childcare, and Family Time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Additional Child Care</li> <li>• Impact on Parents' Work Schedule</li> <li>• Unavailability of High and Middle School Students as Babysitters</li> <li>• Negative Impact on Family Time</li> <li>• Impact on Right at School Program</li> </ul>
Negative Impact on Transportation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Elementary School Students Wait for the Morning Bus in Dark</li> <li>• New Bus Schedules Aggravates Traffic Congestion</li> <li>• Additional Dangers if HS Students Drive During Rush Hour</li> <li>• Conflict with Bus Schedules for Non-Public School Students</li> <li>• Concerned with Elementary Pick up Times</li> <li>• Longer Bus Commutes</li> </ul>
Does not Support the New Proposed Schedule and Has Comments or Suggestions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Suggests Alternative School Start Times</li> <li>• Suggests a Different Model for Bus Systems</li> <li>• Concerned about the Amount of Homework</li> <li>• School Start Times Should Reflect College and Career Expectations</li> <li>• Concerned about Lights on Athletic Fields</li> </ul>
Negative Impact on Staff Schedule	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Negative Impact on Staff Schedule</li> </ul>

All data are taken from the emails sent to [sleep@lmsd.org](mailto:sleep@lmsd.org) between October 19-December 20, 2019.

## KEY FINDINGS

**Of the 249 emails that Hanover coded, 42 percent expressed their favorable support to the proposed change, 51 percent disapproved of the schedule changes, and 7 percent were coded as “Neutral.”** As previously discussed, Hanover assigned both “For” and “Against” codes to **29 respondents** who supported the change in high school start times but questioned the decision to move elementary school start times to 7:45 AM.



**Of the 42 percent of emails that express their favorable support to changing school start times, respondents most frequently reference the positive impacts of the new schedules on student outcomes such as sleep and wellness.** A small number of respondents also reference that additional sleep will result in improved academic performance for students and that the changes will have positive impacts for parents’ work schedules.

Some respondents indicate that they support the schedule changes but offer suggestions or express concerns as well. While this represents a small sample of emails, some respondents express concern related to the need for additional childcare, the early pick-up times for elementary students, and challenges for after-school activities.

Figure D: Themes and Percentages for “For” Categories outlines the percent of all analyzed emails that included each of the most common themes.

Figure D: Themes and Percentages for “For” Categories

Themes	% Total Emails
Improved Student Outcomes	22%
Support the New Proposed Change but has Suggestions or Changes	9%
Benefits for Parents	2%
No Reasons Provided	4%

**Slightly more than half of email participants (51 percent) voice their opposition to the proposed schedule change, frequently citing negative impacts on student wellness, extracurricular activities, parent and family schedules, and transportation.** Specifically, at least 40 emails reference concern over the sleep patterns and wellness of elementary and middle school students, challenges to the elementary school schedule and morning routines, and the need for additional childcare in the afternoons coupled with a lack of secondary student babysitters to meet this need. Other common concerns include the impact on parents’ work schedules, challenges for after-school athletics and extracurricular activities, rushed family time with young children, and elementary bus pick-up in the dark.

Figure E: Themes and Percentages for “Against” Categories summarizes the most common themes expressed by emails in opposition to the proposed schedule changes.

**Figure E: Themes and Percentages for “Against\_ Categories**

Themes	% Total Emails
Negative Impact on Parents’ Schedules, ,Childcare, and Family Time	59%
Negative Impact on Students’ Schedule and Extracurricular Activities	44%
Negative Impact on Students	30%
Negative Impact on Transportation	18%
Does not Support the New Proposed Schedule and Has Comments or Suggestions	14%
Negative Impact on Staff Schedule	6%

\*Please note that this percentage is greater than the overall “against” percentage (51%) because some parents who indicate they support the schedule change still voice concerns as well.

# SECTION I: EMAIL RESPONSE THEMES IN FAVOR OF CHANGING SCHOOL START TIMES

In this section, Hanover presents findings from our analysis of emails that are in favor of the proposed schedule change. We identified four major thematic categories that best summarize respondents’ reasons for supporting the change:

- Improved Student Outcomes
- Benefits for Parents
- Support the New Proposed Schedule but has Suggestions or Concerns.
- No Reasons Provided

## IMPROVED STUDENT OUTCOMES

The majority of the respondents in this category cite increased student sleep as a potentially positive outcome of the change. Numerous respondents are parents of high school students from LMSD or parents of individuals that recently graduated from high school. They claim that their children are sleep-deprived and include examples about their children’s routines, noting that the delay start times would be beneficial for their sleep patterns. Some of the respondents also mention increased wellness as a positive benefit of a delay in school start times for high school students. Respondents say that the increase in the amount and quality of sleep might have a positive impact on students’ well-being, included their happiness, alertness, and decreased stress and anxiety levels.

Similarly, parents also mention improvements in academic performance as a result of changing school start times, especially for high school students with additional sleep. A small number of respondents also support the proposed schedule change because they believe it aligns with extensive research on adolescents’ sleep patterns or that additional sleep for adolescents could foster a more positive learning environment in LMSD high schools.

**Figure 1.1: Themes and Sample Responses for Improved Student Outcomes**

Theme	Count	Frequency	Select Quotes
Increased Student Sleep	27	12%	-“Good sleep is critical to success and health. Experts agree that we shouldn’t sabotage teenagers by mandating an unhealthy wake up time.” -“I support the new schedule...Getting enough sleep is crucial and we are ready to adjust to the new schedule!”
Wellness	11	5%	“The habit of having to abide by hours unnatural to his own rhythm and endure disrupted sleep in high school was exceedingly stressful for my son.”
Improved Academic Performance	6	3%	“My daughter in high school has so much homework that she typically gets 6 hours or less of sleep and I believe it’s negatively impacting her academic achievement and health.”
Agrees with Scientific Reasons Behind the Decision	4	2%	-“In my opinion LMSD has to be on the side of the science and the health of the students, and therefore a later high school start time.” -“The research leaves no question that this is better for students’ health.”

Theme	Count	Frequency	Select Quotes
Positive Learning Environment	2	1%	"It has been painful to see our 11 <sup>th</sup> grader suffer in high school as he can not fall asleep and his bus arrives at 6:45 AM so we drive him daily so he can sleep an extra 30 minutes. Even then he is exhausted and it has affected his learning.
Decrease of Drowsy Driving In High School Student Population	2	1%	"Car crashes are the first cause of injury death for school-aged children, and unintentional injury is the first cause of death for school-aged children...That all becomes significantly more dangerous when they are chronically sleep-deprived."

All select quotes are taken verbatim from the emails sent to sleep@lmsd.org

## BENEFITS FOR PARENTS

Some respondents noted that the new proposed school start time change could have a positive impact on parents' schedules. These emails cite more sleep to accommodate their teenage children's schedule, improvements in family time, and changes in childcare need as benefits.

Figure 1.2: Themes and Sample Responses for Benefits for Parents

Theme	Count	Frequency	Select Quotes
Positive Impact on Parents' Schedule	4	2%	"I am writing to express my support for this work. It will also help me, a working parent, tremendously. The school district requires a caregiver to be present at the bus stop and this makes it complicated to cover childcare at both ends of the day."

All select quotes are taken verbatim from the emails sent to sleep@lmsd.org

## SUPPORT THE NEW PROPOSED SCHEDULE BUT HAS SUGGESTIONS OR CONCERNS

A small number of the respondents support the new proposed schedule but also voice concerns, often regarding the changes in elementary and middle school start times. For example, community members suggest delaying elementary school start times to 9 AM or later, or to flip high school with middle school start times to avoid the risk of having elementary school students waiting for their bus in the dark. Moreover, community members propose alternative solutions to the current bus models, and suggest that the district investigate a two-tier busing system to limit the district's additional cost in purchasing new buses as well as to avoid increased traffic congestion during rush hour.

Other mentioned concerns include the issue of childcare coverage due to the earlier dismissal of elementary school students at 2:45 PM when many working parents are still at work, as well as issues related to scheduling and coaching for extracurricular activities.

Figure 1.3: Themes and Sample Responses for Support the New Proposed Schedule but has Suggestions and Concerns

Theme	Count	Frequency	Select Quotes
Suggest Alterations	8	3%	"I am in favor of changing school start times. [...] I wonder what would be needed to shorten the time between bus runs from 40 minutes to, say, 30 minutes. I imagine this could be achieved

Theme	Count	Frequency	Select Quotes
			from some combination of optimizing logistics and having fewer bus stops per route. “ “We support the Sleep Committee’s recommendation to have the High School start time be at 8:25 AM [...]. We strongly urge you to keep the Elementary School start time of 9:00 A.M.”
Concerned about the Need for Additional Child Care Coverage	4	2%	“While I support a change that allows for later start times for the middle school and high school students...with the proposed 2:45 PM dismissal I will be forced to pay for additional after school childcare and have my kids ultimately spend less time together as a family and more time out with third party care providers.”
Concerned about Pick Up Times and Bus Schedules	4	2%	“I am in favor of changing school start times. [...] However, I also appreciate the concern expressed by many about elementary-school-aged children going to their bus stops at times of low outdoor light for some parts of the year.”
Concerned about After School Activities	3	1%	“I support the idea of pushing back high school start times...7:45 AM isn’t a realistic or healthy option for elementary age children. Many activities rely on parent volunteers and therefore typically start at 6:00 or 6:30 PM and run until 7:30 or 8:00 PM. These activities would become entirely untenable if we’re trying to get kids on an earlier sleep schedule.”
Concerned about Elementary School Students’ Homework	1	0.4%	“I am all for the changes. I do wonder if there is any wiggle room for the elementary school start time. Currently, I struggle to get enough sleep for my seven years old who has a lot of homework to complete.”

All select quotes are taken verbatim from the emails sent to sleep@lmsd.org

## NO REASONS PROVIDED

Ten respondents did not include any reasoning to explain their support of the proposed new schedule. In these instances, respondents briefly state their support for the scheduled change or congratulate LMSD for the initiative, but provide no further reasoning or context.

**Figure 1.4: Themes and Sample Responses for No Reasons Provided**

Theme	Count	Frequency	Select Quotes
No Reasons Provided	10	4%	“Way to go and congratulations on all your hard work. I strongly support this initiative and look forward to the upcoming meeting this week.”

All select quotes are taken verbatim from the emails sent to sleep@lmsd.org

## SECTION II: EMAIL RESPONSE THEMES AGAINST CHANGING SCHOOL START TIMES

In this section, Hanover examines emails that do not support the proposed schedule change. It then identified six major thematic categories that best summarize the motivations behind this opposition:

- Negative Impact on Students
- Negative Impact on Student Schedules and Extracurricular Initiatives
- Negative Impact on Parents' Schedules, Childcare, and Family Time
- Negative Impact on Transportation
- Negative Impact on Staff Schedule
- Does not Support the Proposed Schedule and Has Comments or Suggestions

### NEGATIVE IMPACT ON STUDENTS

With the proposed change, middle and high school start times would be delayed, while elementary and middle schools would start earlier. The consequences of the earlier start on elementary and middle school students are discussed extensively in the emails, and community members fear the change would negatively impact children's sleep patterns and, consequently, their well-being. Respondents believe that the change in sleep patterns would lead to the development of a wide range of issues, including sleep deprivation, mental health problems (i.e., depression, stress, and anxiety), and cognitive and behavioral issues. Further, community members mention the negative impact earlier start times for elementary and middle school students would have on children's academic performance, including their alertness at school, their grades, and the quality of their homework.

Some community members discuss the negative impact the proposed new schedule would have on middle and high school students. Some believe that the delayed school start times for secondary students would delay bedtimes, as students would stay up later to complete school assignments, participate in extracurricular activities, and to spend time with their families. Moreover, the change would affect high school students' ability to find afterschool employment because they would be available to work for shorter periods each evening. Additionally, because of the proposed early dismissal of elementary school students at 2:45 PM, there would be no baby-sitting jobs available for them.

Finally, a small number of respondents argue that the earlier start times would be detrimental to special needs students and their families. Specifically, emails express concern that the earlier start time may prevent this population from participating in extracurricular activities, which are essential to their cognitive and behavioral development. Moreover, they claim that the change would be disruptive to their families, and that special needs students need additional time to transition into new schedules.

Figure 2.1: Themes and Sample Responses for Negative Impact on Students

Theme	Count	Frequency	Select Quotes
Elementary School Students' Wellness	41	18%	<p>-“A variety of research papers prove the relation between children’s sleep and cognitive performance and behavioral problems (including depression and anxiety) The problems caused by the too early start time for the elementary students today can evolve into much more serious ones, affecting the entire LMSD community.”</p> <p>-“Growth and development happens during sleep and inadequate sleep in elementary school aged children can lead to a host of problems for them, such as behavioral issues and mood swings.”</p>
Negative Impact on Elementary Student Academic Performance	9	4%	<p>-“Children who need to be woken up earlier (mine will need to be woken up a full hour early), will not be at their peak attentiveness in the morning and I worry will struggle with the important learning that takes place in the early elementary grades.”</p> <p>-“There is no doubt in my mind that my son's sleep schedule is not conducive to an earlier start, and this change will have a negative impact on his academic and home life.”</p>
Change in Start Times will Delay Bed Time for High and Middle School Students	9	4%	<p>-“How do we know that we won’t change the schedule just to have students staying later at school for extracurriculars and going to bed later because they stay up later to do homework? Thus, no real increase in sleep.”</p> <p>-“Many kids are not getting home before 8 PM after all their sports and activities. With dinner and homework they have to go to bed at 11 PM. Moving the school start time by an hour will not add any time to the 24 day. It will simply make after school activities go later and kids will shift their bedtime to midnight.”</p>
Difficult for High School Students to Find Jobs	6	3%	<p>“High school students who require jobs and an income will be handicapped in their hire-ability with shorter available hours (and clearly no available school babysitting jobs).”</p>
Special Needs Students' Difficulty to Adjust to Time Change	5	2%	<p>“As a parent of a child with special needs it is particularly important for my daughter not only have her 11-12 hours of sleep, but also to have a meaningful share of extracurricular activities to support her brain growth and development as her teachers and experts in the field recommend.”</p>

All select quotes are taken verbatim from the emails sent to [sleep@lmsd.org](mailto:sleep@lmsd.org)

## NEGATIVE IMPACT ON STUDENTS' SCHEDULES AND EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Most respondents argue that the earlier start times would disrupt elementary school students' schedule and morning routines. Parents mention that children as young as five would be rushed out of their homes every morning to get to their bus stop on time, and they would also spend a significant portion of their day outside their homes. Some respondents also note that the change would negatively impact kindergarten students' schedules, with their eating routines being particularly disrupted by the change.

Community members have numerous concerns about students' extracurricular activities, including athletics, religious classes, and other activities. Some respondents worry that middle and high school students would have to miss instructional time to accommodate the schedule of athletics activities, or that the earlier bedtime for younger students would prevent many children from participating in numerous afterschool activities. Others fear that the new proposed schedule would impact parents' and school staff's availability to volunteer for extracurricular activities.

**Figure 2.2: Themes and Sample Responses for Negative Impact on Students' Schedules and Extracurricular Activities**

Theme	Count	Frequency	Select Quotes
Elementary Students' Schedule	47	20%	"Some, and maybe a lot, of elementary students will come to school [...] without having eaten breakfast."
Secondary Students' After School Athletics	22	9%	- "Middle school sports: Students now leave at 2:15 PM for away games, missing only about 15 minutes of instructional time. With the new proposed schedule, they would miss closer to 2 hours." - "If student athletes' dismissal times remain at 2:15 PM when playing schools that have the more traditional start times, student-athletes could be missing a significant amount of instructional time."
Extracurricular Activities Schedule	16	7%	- "Some kids do have activities (sports, clubs, Religious classes) outside of school - now that will be affected by the time change." - "This wake up time would mean a bed time of 6:00 to 16 7% 8:00 PM. These bed times are next to impossible for children who do extracurricular activities, want to spend time with their families, or have any life outside of school involving anything other than school and aftercare."
Kindergarten Students' Schedule	13	6%	- "The PM kindergarten will now run from 11:35 AM to 2:35 PM meaning that these kids will have to have lunch at 10:30 AM or at 3:30 PM. This is an unacceptable disruption of eating routines of a very sensitive age group." "Realistically, this means the five year old child may be boarding the bus at 7:15 AM, and not picked up until 6 PM from aftercare. You are asking children a young as age five to have nearly ten hours at school. Five year olds (and even older elementary students) do not have the emotional restraint or other necessary coping skills to have days away from home this long."

Theme	Count	Frequency	Select Quotes
Negative Impact on High School Athletics	4	2%	"If student athletes' dismissal times remain at 2:15 PM when playing schools that have the more traditional start times, student-athletes could be missing a significant amount of instructional time."
Concerned about Outside Space for After Care	1	0.4%	"I also know that for Cynwyd in particular - there is a concern about outside space since. RAS used the field between the middle school and Cynwyd for outdoor space. Will that field be available if the middle school is in session until 4pm?"

All select quotes are taken verbatim from the emails sent to sleep@lmsd.org

## NEGATIVE IMPACT ON PARENTS' SCHEDULES, CHILDCARE, AND FAMILY TIME

Numerous community members express their concerns with the need for additional childcare options and, consequentially, with the added financial burden for working families. Many mention that the new proposed schedule would prevent families from relying on older siblings for childcare duties and from hiring middle and high school students as babysitters because older students finish school later. A few respondents question how the program Right at School would respond to the changing childcare needs of the community.

Over 35 respondents mention the new time change would affect parents' family and job schedules. They argue that the earlier elementary start times would create challenges for many working families who would have fewer hours during the day to organize logistics for their children, or that later start times for older students would be challenging for parents with work demands at early hours. Additionally, some believe that the time change would ultimately alter the quality of family time: they say rushed morning routines would lead to arguments, and earlier bedtimes would prevent children from spending quality time in the evening with their parents, especially for those children who participate in extracurricular activities.

**Figure 2.3: Themes and Sample Responses for Negative Impact on Parents' Schedules, Childcare, and Family Time**

Theme	Count	Frequency	Select Quotes
Additional Child Care	46	20%	- "Earlier dismissal for elementary school: These students would be more likely to be coming home to an empty house or would need to have childcare arranged, a financial difficulty for some families." - "This change would create a significant financial burden on my family by needing additional childcare help for many more years as I won't be able to rely on my older children to watch the younger ones."
Impact on Parents' Work Schedule	37	16%	- "Work schedules in families with two working parents create huge logistical challenges to implementing earlier bed times so that younger children can get the sleep they need." - "The late 9 AM start time made it difficult for me to be at work at a reasonable hour, causing some damage to my career."

Theme	Count	Frequency	Select Quotes
Unavailability of HS and MS Students as Babysitters	26	11%	-“This change would create a significant financial burden on my family by needing additional childcare help for many more years as I won’t be able to rely on my older children to watch the younger ones.” -“High school students should get out at an earlier time than elementary students to allow older siblings to babysit their younger siblings.”
Negative Impact on Family Time	23	10%	-“Morning routines will be rushed, leading to increased complaints and arguments, and leaving no time for a healthy breakfast and family quality time.” -“LMSD will need to consider family time and logistics of walking families with younger children. Parents who work jobs 9-5 might only get a couple of hours with their child at night. With the change, they will not be able to spend time with their young child in the morning either.”
Impact on Right at School	5	2%	“Changing elementary start times would change the staffing needs for Right At School.”

All select quotes are taken verbatim from the emails sent to [sleep@lmsd.org](mailto:sleep@lmsd.org)

## NEGATIVE IMPACT ON TRANSPORTATION

Numerous respondents cite transportation as their main concern for the new proposed schedule. Specifically, respondents worry about elementary school students waiting in the dark for their bus during the winter months and they believe the school district should prioritize safety for young children. Others are concerned that the new proposed bus system would increase traffic congestion during rush hour. Additionally, some community members worry about high school students’ safety and express concern that the delayed school start time would put students in danger as they would have to drive to school during rush hour.

A small number of respondents are concerned about potential conflicts with the private school bus systems, earlier school pickup times, and longer bus commutes during rush hour traffic.

Figure 2.4: Themes and Sample Responses for Negative Impact on Transportation

Theme	Count	Frequency	Select Quotes
Elementary School Students Wait for the Morning Bus in the Dark	25	11%	“Young children would be waiting for the bus in the dark. These children are not independent enough to go to the bus stop while it is still dark. High school students are more than capable to wait for the bus early and even drive themselves to school later on in high school. It would be scary and unsafe for young children as other cars might not see them either. We are putting them in harm's way.” “Safety is a top priority and this time change increases the safety risks and creates a negative impact on child safety. For example, waiting for a school bus in the dark and coming home early to find nobody home.”
New Bus Schedules Aggravates Traffic Congestion	6	3%	“We will pay for more buses and we will deal with traffic.”

Theme	Count	Frequency	Select Quotes
Additional Dangers if High School Students Drive During Rush Hour	4	2%	“Placing new high school drivers on the road at work rush hour traffic feels extremely dangerous to the students and fellow commuters on the road. We need our future drivers to be confident before school in the morning, not concerned over the latest traffic delays during rush hour.”
Conflict with Bus Schedule for Private School Students	3	1%	“Are private schools considering changing their start times? If so, how would that impact busing? Are there ways we could partner with neighboring districts or Colleges that have buses in terms of staffing or bus use? I would imagine for Colleges the morning times are not as popular for their drivers or fleets.”
Concerned with Pick Up Times	3	1%	“My schedule allows that most days I can be home by 4 or 4:30 PM, but rarely in time for the 3:30 pick, and most definitely not for the proposed 2:30 elementary pick up.”
Longer Bus Commutes	3	1%	“Additionally my children will go to the new middle school from PWES and given the current schedule they will ride to the new middle school in Villanova during rush hour, thus lengthening their already very long commute.”

All select quotes are taken verbatim from the emails sent to sleep@lmsd.org

## NEGATIVE IMPACT ON STAFF SCHEDULES

Fifteen respondents are concerned about the impact the new proposed schedule would have on teachers and staff members. In their comments, they worry about the need for additional childcare for educators to accommodate the new time change, and they fear that the new schedule would prevent numerous staff members from participating in extracurricular activities, thus endangering students’ learning environment.

Figure 2.5: Themes and Sample Responses on Negative Impact on Staff Schedule

Theme	Count	Frequency	Select Quotes
Negative Impact on Staff Schedule	15	6%	“These teachers will now be commuting during rush hour and will be much less likely to volunteer to stay at school to monitor and sponsor extra-curricular activities. To many teachers, staying later at school will likely not be worth the cost of a much longer commute home and less time with their own families and children.” “I wonder how current elementary school teachers will figure out their own childcare needs since they would need to be at work much earlier. Most daycares open at 7 AM. If a teacher needs to leave home at 6:30 to be at work at 7:15, how would they manage dropping off their own child?”

All select quotes are taken verbatim from the emails sent to sleep@lmsd.org

## DOES NOT SUPPORT THE NEW PROPOSED SCHEDULE AND HAS COMMENTS OR SUGGESTIONS

Some respondents who do not support the change include suggestions to implement a more efficient time change. Specifically, 12 community members suggest flipping middle and high school start times and leaving elementary school unchanged, while seven respondents ask LMSD to investigate different busing systems. Some respondents believe school start times should not be changed because schools should reflect college and workforce expectations, meaning that all students will someday be expected to start work by or before 9 AM.

**Figure 2.6: Themes and Sample Responses for Does Not Support the New Proposed Schedule and Has Comments or Suggestions**

Theme	Count	Frequency	Select Quotes
Suggests Alternative School Start Times	12	5%	"I am against the change in time. The proposed schedule time of the elementary school starting so early is a bad idea. If anything middle and high school so switch but the start and end time of elementary school has such a large impact on a family that I cannot support it. Again- flip middle and high school start times as Radnor Township has done."
Suggests a Different Model for Bus Systems	7	3%	- "My initial thought [...] is that we have worked on the assumption that our transportation requires three distinct trips into each neighborhood - high school, middle school and elementary. But what happens if, instead, you had a smaller footprint (to reduce total student load) for each bus, but have them have dual locations." - "We can rent or buy a place to park more busses. We can pay bus drivers more so that we have enough drivers. We can use vans instead of full size busses to transport to Private Schools where there are just a few kids on the bus at a time."
Concerned about the Amount of Homework	7	3%	"Teachers should limit homework assignments to 20-30 minutes per class." "What is being discussed to address homework for 7 3% middle schoolers with them now getting home later- they should not be expected to do the amount of homework they currently have each night with the later dismissal time."
School Start Times Should Reflect College and Career Expectations	3	1%	"Once the high school kids get to college or work they have to be up early to get to class or to the job. Allowing the high school kids to sleep in sets laziness and they always will never want to get up earlier and in the long run will affect their work and set them up for failure."
Concerned about Lights on Athletic Fields	1	0.4%	"If lighting fields - who pays for the lights and when would they go in?"

All select quotes are taken verbatim from the emails sent to [sleep@lmsd.org](mailto:sleep@lmsd.org)

# ABOUT HANOVER RESEARCH

Hanover Research provides high-quality, custom research and analytics through a cost-effective model that helps clients make informed decisions, identify and seize opportunities, and heighten their effectiveness.

## OUR SOLUTIONS

### ACADEMIC SOLUTIONS

- **College & Career Readiness:**  
Support on-time student graduation and prepare all students for post-secondary education and careers.
- **Program Evaluation:**  
Measure program impact to support informed, evidence-based investments in resources that maximize student outcomes and manage costs.
- **Safe & Supportive Environments:**  
Create an environment that supports the academic, cultural, and social-emotional needs of students, parents, and staff through a comprehensive annual assessment of climate and culture.

### ADMINISTRATIVE SOLUTIONS

- **Family and Community Engagement:**  
Expand and strengthen family and community relationships and identify community partnerships that support student success.
- **Talent Recruitment, Retention & Development:**  
Attract and retain the best staff through an enhanced understanding of the teacher experience and staff professional development needs.
- **Operations Improvement:**  
Proactively address changes in demographics, enrollment levels, and community expectations in your budgeting decisions.

## LEADERSHIP SOLUTION

Build a high-performing administration that is the first choice for students, parents, and staff.

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### EXPERT

200+ analysts with multiple methodology research expertise



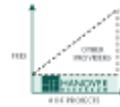
### FLEXIBLE

Ongoing custom research agenda adapts with organizations' needs



### DEDICATED

Exclusive account and research teams ensure strategic partnership



### EFFICIENT

Annual, fixed-fee model shares costs and benefits



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