

# Should the Lower Merion School District Change School Start & End Times?

New school schedules may be recommended by a community advisory committee in September 2019.  
Here's what you need to know.

## Why is LMSD considering this?

Drawing from scientific evidence that sleep/wake cycles are delayed with the onset of puberty, as well as public health statistics highlighting that the majority of teenagers are not getting the recommended hours of sleep, leading health organizations have issued position papers recommending that middle and high schools should begin the day no earlier than 8:30 AM.



### Recommended by:

American Academy of Pediatrics (2014)  
American Psychological Association (2014)  
American Medical Association (2016)  
National Assoc. of School Nurses & Society of Pediatric Nurses (2016)  
American Academy of Sleep Medicine (2017)  
Society of Behavioral Medicine (2017)

## Current LMSD School Schedules

Tier 1. High School	7:30 AM - 2:40 PM	7 hours, 10 mins.
Tier 2. Middle School	8:15 AM - 3:05 PM	6 hours, 50 mins.
Tier 3. Elementary	9:00 AM - 3:35 PM	6 hours, 35 mins.

## Our Process

The District has been formally engaged in the topic of student sleep health and school start times since 2015, when the LMSD Interschool Council produced findings from their study of sleep and later start times for high schoolers. Through *All Forward*, the District's strategic plan, the topic was designated for further in-depth exploration on the issues and the feasibility of adjusting start times. Superintendent Copeland has charged the *All Forward* team with forming a committee of representative stakeholders to develop recommendations for action. The committee's decision-making process will be facilitated by a third party, TregoEd, and is expected to deliver recommendations in September 2019. Community input on the recommendations will be gathered in Fall 2019, and the Board of School Directors is expected to take action in Winter 2019/2020.

## Schedule Change Options to Consider

The Flip	Flip high school and elementary school start times, so the youngest students start school the earliest (elementary-middle-high)
Re-Order	Re-arrange the start order so that adolescents start later and disruption to extracurriculars are minimized (elementary-high-middle)
The Push	Maintain current start order and delay all schedules
Two Tiers	Increase the bus fleet size to allow schools to operate on two different schedules instead of three
Shorten Days, Extend Year	Start school later, but maintain current dismissal times. Add days to the calendar to make up for lost instructional time.

## Key Logistical Considerations



LMSD is responsible for transporting about 7,750 public and 1,950 non-public students to 127 schools each day. We currently use a three-tiered schedule and non-public transfer system, which maximizes the efficiency of our system with our current fleet of vehicles. **Changed schedules require changes to the transportation system.** Key points to consider:

- the timespan between tiers needed to maximize each vehicle's use for all school levels
- site-based limitations to the space available to stage buses for efficient drop-off and pick-up
- transportation of non-public riders on arrival and departure schedules set by other institutions
- ensuring arrival times that allow students to access breakfast programs
- the safety of riders getting on or off the bus before or after civil twilight
- commute times that will fluctuate from estimates depending on the volume of traffic at different points in the day
- limited parking for additional fleet vehicles

**When schools start later, they also dismiss later; Later dismissal times affect the timing of afterschool activities.**

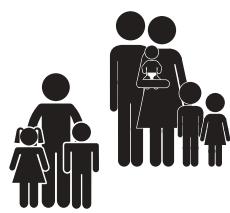
**Key considerations for school-sponsored activities and out-of-school expectations include:**

- ensuring outdoor lighting for activities pushed further into the evening, particularly near or after daylight saving ends
- out-of-district competitions that require early dismissals and lost instructional time for athletes and coaches who teach
- consideration of policies around the length of time that out-of-school meetings or practices should take place and limits on how long into the evening they should go
- critical reflection on, and communication of, homework expectations



**Families, staff members, and community members have organized their lives around the current school schedules. Schedule changes will require adjustments to:**

- childcare arrangements for LMSD families who use out-of-school services or who count on siblings, extended family, neighbors, or friends for childcare
- childcare arrangements for staff commuting on new schedules; changes in the length of commutes for staff
- traffic patterns for those commuting through the District
- student and staff members' out-of-school work schedules



## Learn

Review district presentations and reports on sleep and school start times on the All Forward website by typing "sleep" in the search box at [www.lmsd.org](http://www.lmsd.org).

Scan actions taken by other school districts in the region by reviewing materials posted by the Regional Adolescent Sleep Needs Coalition at <https://www.startschoollater.net/pa--southeastern.html>

## Connect

Connect with your Home and School Association and the Interschool Council to learn about opportunities to connect with other LMSD families on this topic.

## Engage

Monitor school communications for forthcoming opportunities to participate in surveys and public forums to solicit feedback on recommendations.

Submit your comments and concerns to [communitycomments@lmsd.org](mailto:communitycomments@lmsd.org) for distribution to the All Forward Sleep and Start Times Focus Exploration Team.