



The Lower Merion School District is Recommending New Schedules

Beginning Fall 2020

Why new schedules?

With the onset of puberty, changes occur in the biological systems that regulate the sleep/wake cycle. Teens' natural urge to sleep is delayed until later in the evening than younger children or adults. This shift, when coupled with early start times for middle and high school, makes the prospect of getting a good night's sleep challenging for many teenagers. Major medical and health organizations, recognizing the toll that sleep deprivation takes on student health and wellness, recommend beginning middle school and high school classes no earlier than 8:30 AM...

to give adolescents the best opportunity to get the sleep they need and to start the school day alert and ready to learn.

Did you know?

According to the survey conducted in LMSD

by *Challenge Success* in Spring 2018:

- 66%** of secondary students reported getting less than the recommended 8 to 10 hours of sleep on a typical school night.
- 50%** of high school students reported a typical bedtime of 11 PM or later on school nights, followed by a rise time between 6:00 & 6:30 AM.
- 59%** of high school students said changing the time that school begins and ends would be quite or very effective in addressing students' stress, health, & well-being.

Current Schedule

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

*2 hours, 50 minutes for Kindergarten (Morning K 9:00-11:50; Afternoon K 12:45-3:35)



Adjusts Times to Support Student Health & Wellness

- Aligns with the medical and health communities' recommendations for middle and high schools to begin at 8:30 AM or later.
- Reflects the natural tendency for elementary-aged students to be alert and ready to learn early in the day.
- Designates additional time in the elementary and middle school days for health, wellness, instructional, and/or transition activities.



Affects Extracurricular Activities

- Delays & reduces time that secondary students have after school to participate in activities.
- Impacts community-based scheduling of activities (e.g. religious education, club sports, performing arts), that serve students from LMSD and other communities with different dismissal times.
- Decreases availability of afternoon light for outdoor activities, which creates a need for lighting on athletic fields.
- Increases the amount of instructional time that students may miss due to early dismissals for competition.
- Increases need for partial-day substitutes for teachers/staff who coach teams and may need early dismissal due to competition.
- Impacts scheduling for middle school athletics with schools that maintain traditional game times.
- Affects scheduling for athletic teams that require specialized venues (e.g. crew, squash, golf).



Creates New Traffic Patterns & Commute Times

- Creates an unknown affect on commute times for students on buses and those commuting by car.
- Pushes student drivers, while perhaps more rested, into morning rush hour with heavier traffic volume.
- Changes traffic patterns regionally for those commuting within and through the township.

Sleep & Start Time Work

by the numbers



3+ Years

of due diligence on the issues to form a viable recommendation that responds to the school start time recommendations of the medical and health community.

6 External Partners

provided empirical research, transportation evaluation, traffic impact studies, lighting estimates, and group facilitation.

4 Committees

conducted research, gathered and analyzed logistics data, and evaluated scheduling models for best fit within the LMSD context.

35+ Contributors

shaped the recommendation, including administrators, teachers, students, parents, small-business owners, civic association leaders, extracurricular providers, & more.

15+ Presentations

delivered to the Board of School Directors, faculty, and administrators to share updates and gather input.

6 Transportation Scenarios

routed and evaluated by LMSD transportation department, representing hundreds of hours spent routing hypothetical schedules.

Recommended Schedule

Elementary*	7:45 AM - 2:35 PM	6 hours, 50 mins.
High	8:25 AM - 3:25 PM	7 hours
Middle	9:05 AM - 4:05 PM	7 hours

*3 hours for Kindergarten (Morning K 7:45-10:45; Afternoon K 11:35-2:35)



Solves Several Transportation Challenges

- Creates efficiencies as a result of more consistent school day lengths.
- Supports schedules that prevent public school students from being picked up earlier than 7 AM.
- Creates less wait time for buses at dismissal.



Shifts Childcare Needs for Families

- Eliminates the availability of older students to care for younger siblings in the afternoon. In Spring 2018, 20% of secondary students reported caring for a younger sibling on a typical weekday for an hour or more when a parent or guardian was not home.
- The needs of these families would change, as may the need for morning supervision of secondary students, soon to include Grade Five. As of October 2019, 13% of elementary students attend the *Right at School* care program before and/or after school, and an unknown percentage of families use childcare services not located in LMSD schools.

Learn More

Visit www.lmsd.org/sleep

For a list of upcoming presentations and community input opportunities, please visit www.lmsd.org/sleep.

Update January 2020
**Board Action Expected
Spring 2020**