

As a reminder, the Public Comment form is available on the District web page under the [Board of Education Public Comment tab](#) for community members to download and submit during a Board of Education meeting. In addition, anyone having a question can email the question directly to wcsd.comments@wcsdny.org.

Question: Since WJHS and RCK are 2 miles apart on the same high traffic road, how much has the impact of the additional 60+ buses been studied?

Response:

When this work began in October 2015, the District reached out to local town/village Departments of Transportation. We shared the idea of a change in start time and a two tier system. We shared a range in vehicles that would be needed to meet the potential scenarios. We were assured the impact would be negligible since we are speaking of several miles of roads. We did indicate that if something were to change within the District's start times that we would share with local municipalities. It is important to note, the number of vehicles to be added in any area is not 60 plus since a tier already exists (e.g.: High Schools). Nothing has changed since the initial discussions so we have not reached out to the Towns again.

Question: Have we reviewed a most recent traffic study for 9D and Middlebush and 9 and Myers Corners Road as well as the impact if any for RCK/Myers/ Wapp Jr main roads? Is there a study? Who did you speak to at Town of Wappingers? Since Oct 2015 there is a new Town Supervisor and Highway Supervisor. There should be an update provided in writing from the Towns.

Response:

The District is in possession of the 2011 study of CR 93. This study indicates that the road will be improved by making it wider and providing sidewalks. It is a busy corridor but it is not dangerous. The District spoke with the then Supervisor of the highways for the Town of Wappingers in November 2015. We have subsequently spoken to Mr. Vincent Bettina of the Town of Wappingers Highway Department. Mr. Bettina provided insight into the road and indicated that he would not be attending the October 5th forum as he had nothing to add. The lights on all non-major throughways (e.g. CR 93 as an example) are regulated by traffic flow. The lights will adapt to the flow of traffic IF the District were to implement this proposed plan. Mr. Bettina indicated that besides inconvenience to people there are no safety concerns with CR-93.

In addition to Mr. Bettina, the District has reached out to Mr. McClellan of the Town of East Fishkill Highway, Mr. Pfeiffer of the Town of Poughkeepsie Highway, Mr. Scofield

from the Town of Fishkill Highway as well as Town of Wappingers Supervisor Jiava to the October 5th forum.

Question: Could it be that pick-up times will remain relatively the same to compensate for increased traffic so the later start for high schools has no impact on either sleep or safety concerns?

Response:

The change in start time for High School students is 13 minutes. Some would say that this is not enough time to make either a positive or negative. However, due to the manner in which we build bus routes to maintain efficiency, we are starting the tier one routes approximately 10 minutes later. We do not feel that traffic will have that much of an impact as to negate the 10 minutes based on the information from #1 above.

Question: Also there is congested traffic on the village side streets from WJHS drop off and pick up; what will the impact be for parents who need to pick up at both schools at dismissal?

Response:

It will have the same impact as it does for parents who currently have students at Myers and at WJHS or VWJHS.

Question: What is the impact for parents who have to pick up or drop off at both VW and JJ, which are over 5 miles apart?

Response:

It will have the same impact as it does for parents who currently have students at Myers and/or VWJHS.

Question: What will the 9th period in their high school children's schedules will be used for, since the WCT contract calls for teachers to teach 5 periods/day?

Response:

A nine period day is not part of this presentation. If there is a recommendation to be made for a nine period day, the Administration that will share that with the Board.

Question: Will lunch periods now be mandatory for all students?

Response:

This is not relevant to this presentation. Although, I don't think so.

Question: How will high school teachers be utilizing the additional class period since they cannot be asked to teach another class or have another "duty" and they do not have the same "team" organization with a common period for team planning that junior high teachers have.

Response:

The nine period day question, is again a question that is not related to this presentation.

Question: What is the impact to bus drivers? Is it true that part-time drivers will lose hours (and pay) as a result? If we currently have trouble finding and keeping qualified drivers, what will the long term impact be on the district?

Response:

The goal every year is to have drivers assigned a five hour packet. This is in line with the Union and the existing contract. Part-time drivers drive five hours per day. Part-time drivers who drive in excess of five hours receive overtime. This is not optimal and we will continue to do the best that we can to continue this practice of five hour packets.

Question: Have we spoken to local day care/after school businesses to see if there is any impact with them? (e.g. Tots n Us)

Response:

Yes, in October/November 2015 the District reached out to several local daycare providers. They were not concerned with our change in start time. We did indicate that IF this was to be approved we would share this information as early as possible.

Question: Did the district reach out to all the providers? Why only a few? There are many large and small provides that service the parents of the district. An update in writing should also be provided from day care providers.

Response:

The District has approximately 67 licensed and regulated day cares. We placed calls to a sampling of day cares and shared that WCSD may be changing start times for elementary schools. We shared that Myers Corners may be moving to the same time as the other elementary schools and that the times could be altered as well. No concerns were noted.

The District does not contract with the day care providers. This is an arrangement between families and the providers. At this time the District will not be putting anything in writing to the providers.

Question: Have we spoken to HS students to see what they think since many have after school jobs besides extra after school activities – Sports, etc?

Response:

We surveyed parents. We did not survey students. We are hopeful that any changes to be made will allow for plenty of time for students to make arrangements with their employers.

Question: Why are we assuming that students can make arrangements with their employers? If a student has to be at work at 3PM to take over a shift for example, this may cause an issue with the employer? I hope the HS survey was detailed in questions asked.

Response:

We have surveyed High School students using District email accounts. These students have been asked to complete the surveys via email as well as from building administration and announcements starting last Friday and students have continued to be reminded. As of 4:00 p.m. on 10/5/16 147 students have responded. The majority of the responses have been from 10th and 11th grade students who indicate that 82% would prefer a start time of 7:30am over 7:17am. It is a 50% 50% split from responders as to the end time impacting after school responsibilities. Just over 50% of those who responded have indicated that a 2:10pm dismissal would have a negative impact for them, with 36% having no impact and 11% positive impact.

We will continue to monitor this survey.

Question: What are the distances the buses travel in the other districts mentioned? School to School. How many miles are each school from each other compared to us. ES – JHS – HS.

Response:

This question needs clarification to ensure we are clear we understand what is being asked.

Question: Has there been further conversations with parents of students who attend private schools in our district?

Response:

At this time there has not been direct conversation with parochial parents beyond the survey completed in January 2016. Parochial parents were asked to review the information provided. Many of their concerns were answered and clarified in the existing

presentations. We did speak to the Regional Superintendent of the NYS Archdiocese in June 2016. She was very receptive and was willing to share information with principals of the five WCSD parochial schools.

Question: Has the district spoken to all private schools that we transport students to and from? Do we have written confirmation from all schools that they in agreement to this change. Do they have any concerns? Receptive and willing to share information does not mean they are in agreement. Have we confirmed that all schools have notified parents of this change? Is there feedback? Positive or negative from the heads of all these schools?

Response:

The District has not spoken to every private and parochial school. Twice the District has shared information about the possible change in start times and the flyer as well as a survey for private and parochial parents to complete via the Parochial and Private school Principals. Supervisor Catalano received a few phone calls from these principals confirming the information being shared so that they had accurate information to share out. We cannot dictate how this information is shared by these Principals.

The District has also spoken with Ms. MaryAnn Daley, Regional Superintendent of the NYS Archdiocese on numerous occasions. Again, we shared that the District may change the start times of public schools. We shared that we may have K-12 students on the same vehicles and what if any concerns that she had. (Remember these schools have transportation through several districts as well as WCSD. Please remember that the start times of WCSD do not affect the private and parochial start times. Their approval of the WCSD plan is not necessary. We are proactively sharing information so that accurate information can be shared among parties.

Question: Tier 1 schedule for HS and JHS are at the same time, will they have the same routes when traveling?

Response:

There will be buses that travel the same routes in the same tier. There is no way to not have this be the case since the four schools will not be sharing vehicles due to the distance between schools.

Question: Under two-tier there are less buses being used – New Tier 1 - 106 buses to 121 buses under old 3 Tier - how are all students going to fit?

Response:

To compare vehicles between Tier 1 and Tier 3 is not feasible. Transportation has re-routed all students. This has been done in accordance with bus loads as stipulated by the vehicles' make, model and ride times per BOE policy. The number of morning and afternoon routes have been determined for both tiers using Scenario 4 and the students fit. This has been confirmed.

Question: How many buses will there be on the road during the first run?

Response:

Currently there are 106 used for HS/MS runs (JJ, RCK, OV, WJHS & VW) in the morning and afternoon. The same will be true under Scenario 4. This is something that the administration will maintain through future bus propositions as well.

Question: Should a bus break down, do we have replacement buses and will this affect the second run?

Response:

Currently when a vehicle breaks down we send a mechanic and a replacement bus. Any given day we shuffle vehicles as needed. This would continue to be true in a two tier system.

Question: Is there adequate time between runs in inclement weather? Y

Response:

Yes.

Question: Will there be enough seats for students during both runs?

Response:

To compare vehicles between Tier 1 and Tier 3 is not feasible. Transportation has re-routed all students. This has been done in accordance with bus loads as stipulated by the vehicles' make, model and ride times per BOE policy. The number of morning and afternoon routes have been determined for both tiers using Scenario 4 and the students fit. This has been confirmed.

Question: Will riding times be same or longer?

Response:

The average ride time will remain the same. This was discussed in November 2015 and January 2016. We addressed the ride times and District policy 8410 and this has been the subject of much discussion. Nothing has been changed in this regard.

Question: (Does) the proposed plan shave 35 minutes off of each day in junior high, which (would) equate to 117 hours of lost teacher contact time a year? Do elementary students stand to lose 20 minutes daily, at an annual loss of 67 hours?

Response:

The instructional school day for all grade levels will be six hours and 40 minutes. This is uniform across the District. The District confirmed all start and end times with building administration over the summer to ensure that no student would be losing instructional time.

Question: (Is) the proposed plan pretending that the safety of the children and their quality family time is important? (This appears to be) flawed reasoning since the hundreds of Myers children will be getting home LATER than they currently do!

Response:

The safety of all of our students is paramount. By changing the schools start time we can add a few moments of daylight in the morning while not affecting the afternoon dismissal. We have prepared a sunrise and sunset chart on page 13 of this presentation which supports this data.

Question: I have attempted to follow the District's information regarding the effects the new start times would have on private/parochial school busing. I understand our assistant superintendent Mrs. Daley was contacted and that our times will not change. I also understand that high school & elementary students share bus rides on the private/parochial school runs. I also thought I heard that specific buses that singularly service St Mary's Fishkill/Wappingers and St Columba would remain intact.

Unfortunately, I remain uncertain about the logistics. I'm looking for clarification on whether or not, OR if so and to what degree, private/parochial school busing will be affected by the proposed start time change. Could you provide me with details on what parents like myself should expect if this proposal is passed? I understand there will be a forum in October and I would like to be properly informed before that time. I do watch the live feed of board meetings but often find it difficult to hear all of the information. I appreciate your time.

Response:

If indeed the WCSD does change start times and implement a two-tier transportation system, the morning private and parochial routing will remain intact.

The afternoon will have Our Lady of Lourdes and St Martin DePorres students traveling to their respective "home" WCSD sSchool, the bus they arrived on would become part of that school's lineup, they would disembark, board their respective vehicles and ride to their home or community bus stop. Even with this addition, we do not see significant increases for these students. The remaining private and parochial schools would not have any changes in the afternoon.

The fact that WCSD is entertaining a two tier system does not materially impact private and parochial schools as their start times are in between the proposed WCSD start times. The fact that WCSD basically has exclusive transportation for private and parochial students has put these runs on their own "tier" no matter how many tiers we run. For example, while we currently run a three tier system, the private and parochial runs bridge between the first and second tier in the morning and second and third tier in the afternoon. We are not looking to change the route pattern for private and parochial in this proposal.

I hope this is helpful and again I thank you for taking the time to review the information provided. I will also pass on the sound quality of the BOE meetings. We look forward to having you at the upcoming forum.

Question: I am unable to attend the community forum next Wednesday, but have reviewed the presentations. If the goal of this change is to allow for safety/extra daylight for HS and MS students, why are you proposing a change to the elementary start time? The presentation shows that our current elementary start time aligns with 4 out of 6 of the other districts surveyed, and aligning with other districts is mentioned multiple times in the presentation, so this change seems to contradict the purpose of the proposal.

Response:

We have heard from elementary families and school level administration that our current school end time is late and that makes getting to afternoon obligations difficult. We have been told that parents opt to pick up their children from school directly because if they waited for the bus they would miss these obligations or cause conflict with other family obligations.

The start time survey completed in April 2015 by public school parents only indicated that 55% of elementary school families agreed with a change in start time, with 35% saying no and 9% with no opinion. The survey conducted in January 2016 included both private and parochial elementary families relayed an even split between yes and no with 13% not having an opinion.

Question: Can you please clarify the current and proposed start and end times for High School, Middle School, and most Elementary Schools? If there is a decrease in the total time, can you please explain what is driving that decrease?

In conjunction with the proposed changes to start and end times, has any consideration been given to the dismissal procedures currently in place in the Elementary schools? At Gayhead at least, children who are to be picked up are dismissed a full fifteen minutes before the rest of the kids are dismissed to the buses. I assume that this procedure is in place so that a child who was supposed to be picked up but does not actually get picked up can be sent home on the bus before it leaves. While I appreciate the goal, I'm not sure that it is fair to hold over a thousand kids for fifteen minutes to avoid having to deal with a few kids that may be in that situation. If the proposed start and end times do go into place, I would hope that fewer children would need to be picked up (as I suspect the volume is driven by the late time of arrival at home which makes it impossible to get to things like Religious Education on time without being picked up). That should reduce the need to hold the rest of the school waiting to make sure everyone is picked up. In that case, I would like to understand if there is a plan to dismiss even earlier (if the fifteen minute waiting period is not needed) or to make that time into something other than waiting around.

Response:

The current instructional school day at each level (High School, Middle School and Elementary Schools) does not exceed 6 hours and 40 minutes. Not one student will be losing educational time with this proposed change. This proposal is an attempt to bring uniformity to the learning day and maximize the instructional time for students. Currently we have a span of dismissal times that vary from the times posted in our parent/student handbooks.

The concern you mention in your second question is one of the reasons we have created this proposal. We have heard from parents that the later elementary dismissal time makes afternoon activities for elementary students difficult. This has translated into more parent pick-ups in the afternoon. The elementary schools have had to adjust their dismissal processes to meet this need leading in some cases to staggered dismissals lasting nearly 20 minutes. We are hopeful that adjusting the time of our school day will alleviate some of that stress.

Additionally, the Capital Project that was approved by the voters in May 2016 includes work to the front of school buildings, which includes studying the current traffic patterns in an effort to maximize the efficiency and safety of our parking areas, drop-off locations

and sidewalks. The intent with these improvements is to improve the current dismissal process as well.

Question: Is the \$280,000 +/- a one time savings or will this be a yearly savings? The response at the BOE meeting was a little confusing.

Response:

We will use an example to explain - the Transportation budget is \$12,280,000 (year 1). In the year of the implementation of a change in start time/two tier the budget is \$12,000,000 (year 2). The savings is slated for \$280,000 and that is accounted for however, there are contractual obligations for Union salaries (which are dependent on the year of implementation), a projected increase in gasoline and diesel prices etc. The year after the implementation (year 3) the Transportation budget is \$12,120,000. This increase is based on contractual salaries, increased supply costs etc.

The savings is recognized in the year of implementation.

Question: What will this savings be used for? Will it be added into the budget to cover field trips? Used in the Transportation budget line items. Can you please advise.

Response:

The detailed use of these budgetary savings will depend on when the implementation occurs and the administration would certainly plan and share this with the Board of Education through the budget process.