

## **FOCUS GROUP PROTOCOL for SCHOOL START TIME**

### **HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS**

#### **Introduction (To be read to participants):**

I am here today to gather information to determine what students think about changing the high school start and end times.

As you know, the Brighton Central School District is in the midst of implementing the Brighton Blue Print strategic plan recommendations created in the summer of 2016. One of those recommendations was to study our school start and end times and make recommendations to the Board of Education. A community survey on school start and end times was conducted and results are being reviewed by a K-12 Committee consisting of representatives from all school constituent groups, including students.

We are very interested in what students are thinking about in terms of school start and end times.

I'd like to take a moment to allow you to introduce yourselves:

- Name
- Grade
- Current activities you are involved in

All information shared in this discussion is strictly confidential. Your responses will be used to inform Brighton's decision-making process on changing the school start and end times. When the discussion is over, please respect the privacy of your fellow group members and do not repeat comments others make during our discussion to anyone outside of this group.

Before we begin I want to emphasize that there are no right or wrong answers. I want to hear what you think. I also want to make sure that we cover a number of topics in a limited amount of time as efficiently as possible, so I'll try to keep things moving. There is no need to raise hands. Speak right up but please respect others when they are talking. My hope is to hear from most if not all of you. Our discussion will take approximately 40 minutes.

I will begin with an overview of the 4 options that the committee is considering. Are there any questions at this time?

- 7:40 – 2:47 PM (maintain current start and end time)
- 8:15 – 3:22 PM (start and end time pushed 35 minutes later)
- 8:30 – 3:37 PM (start and end time pushed 50 minutes later)
- 9:00 – 4:07 PM (start and end time pushed 80 minutes later)

Track, Swimming, Field Hockey, Theatre, Machapella, Wrsteling, Soccer, LAX, Baseball, Football, Lax, Speech and Debate, Art Club, Women's Awareness, Swimmer,

**Let's begin our discussion.**

**1. What are you excited about when it comes to the district reviewing school start and end times and the options being considered?**

- Teens go to bed late, starting HW is later, winter is so dark, better if going in daylight
- If it starts later, you could go to bed earlier and then get up earlier to do work
- Excited for more sleep, wake up at 7:00 instead of 6.
- Practices in the AM if we have them, would start later. Swimming and Boys girls LAX. Waking up at 4:45 AM, 5:15 practice.
- Possibility of getting more sleep.
- Straight up sleep makes me excited.
- Coming to school being more awake and engaged, ready to go if starting later.
- Possibility of doing something in the morning, working out, can do it now. Gives us time
- More time to get breakfast, instead of skipping it.
- Actually asking students for feedback on this. I don't get enough sleep so excited we could get more sleep.
  1. Usually a lot of HW and up late
  2. OR, I can't sleep at 11:00.
- I like the starting later time, not ending later.
- Glad there is a discussion, voices heard
- Getting more sleep!
- Mentally feels better starting classes after 8:00 AM, just seems better.
- When I have first free, I can see the difference in how I do 2<sup>nd</sup> period as compared to 1<sup>st</sup> when I am here for HR. Gives me more time, eat breakfast
- On days where I am starting later, I can eat breakfast!
- Nice to see the sun!
- I have had first free all year, I come in early anyway. I feel bad if I am late.
- If there were a possibility for start times to be flexible.
- Semi-FLEX in the AM, FLEX in morning. FLEX is good to have.
- Sleeping in more
- Waking up later
- Seeing the light when we wake up
- More time in the morning to eat, wake up. Breath
- Time to wake up.
- It is nice that people seem concerned about teens and their health, well-being.

**2. What concerns do you have when it comes to the district reviewing school start and end times and the options being considered?**

- I am an early person as it is, mornings are fine, but concerned about getting home later.

- If we had morning practices, being able to sleep would not help.
- Regarding theatre, rehearsals go from after school for about 2-3 hours, then 3-4 hours, then up to 5 hours – 3:00 PM. Getting home much later.
- Games, when would they start? How late would they be? How will this work?
- I think I would stay up later, if I could. Not go to bed earlier.
- Game times, starting so late.
- If we ended at 4:00, getting home so late in the day, does not leave time for family HW, etc.
- If parents drive kids to school, hard to pick up kids at 4:00 or later.
- Siblings who have to watch younger siblings at home, younger gets home first and we have working parents.
- It may or may not make a difference when they go to bed, but kids might think about going to bed later because they wake up later and sleep remains the same.
- Jobs and students working – 2 shifts we can do now, but if school ended later, it would affect which shift you could work – 6 people have jobs.
- We have dance at 4:00 PM, have to leave house by 3:45, so school ends at 2:47, we eat, maybe do a little work, take a breath and then off.
- I know since I was getting up later, I would go to bed later.
- HW would take the same amount of time each night, so pushes it off.
- With sleep, starting it later wouldn't make a difference. Kids busy would just go to bed later, not get anymore sleep.
- School ending so late, if you have a job or do HW, it would be so hard to get things done and go to bed.
- Less time in afternoon for after school activities.
- We will be pushed off to later times.
- Are we just shifting the time we will have kids go to bed? Will we actually gain anything?
- Kids who go to bed earlier but wake up earlier to finish school work.
- Conflicting with WORK Schedules, outside of school clubs/activities if we end later. Will kids be able to do all of this?
- How about Health class and volunteering our time? Would we have enough time to do this?
- Family Time cut into?
- Is 35 minutes later worth the change? Will it make a difference?
- If we end later, we would miss out on things in the afternoon.

### **3. How do you think the proposed options will affect athletics?**

- I don't think it will really matter.
- JV and Varsity Swimming, later start times for games, getting home later, really affects us.
- I don't think any option will really affect us except for 4:00 time. Even ending at 3:30 not a big deal.
- What will other schools do with later start times? All games would start later.
- Pool practices and sharing space in gyms, etc., push all practices later in the night.
- In winter, it gets darker earlier. More kids driving later at night or can't drive?
- 5-7 PM practices now, so it won't affect us.

- 7:30 – 9:30 PM Boys LAX would be pushed to a later time, Lights would have to go on? Track needs to practice separately and can't share space with BOYS LAX.
- Already for track, we get out at 5:30/5:45 from practice. It eats up most of our night. I have seminary in the AM and I have to get up early anyway.
  1. Practices pushed back
- Girls LAX practices right after school, boys start later than that – concerned about how late.
- GOLF – we get out at 2:30 PM for matches far away to play 18 holes. If it was much later, we would miss even more class or not play 18 holes and push all schools back. 4 hours for 18 holes
- Alpine and Cross Country practices we are traveling, out late, bus ride 45 minutes, practices all day.
- Cross country we have meets involving multiple schools, meets start at 4:30 PM. Current start times we leave and get to meet and have a little time to warm up. We won't have much time to warm up and it will be hard to do your best if you start running right away. Away meets are worse.
- Daylight is an issue with later times.
- Field hockey and cheer practices might happen in the morning, so I would not be able to sleep.
- Staying up longer doing HW.
- If you practice before school, no busses, not equitable to all groups.
- If times moved to 9:00 AM, sports would never work. Winter especially. Decreased window for practices. Could we lose practice.
- Seems like a lot of coaches would move practices to morning.
- Meets swim start at 4:00 PM every day, 3:22 makes me worried. We have to set up pool, meets go long, stressful on days of meets, it appears to be more stressful to get set up.
- SKI Team – hour to get to Bristol and back, practice even later and come back later. Very difficult, would lose more sleep.
- If other schools started at their regular times, how will schools schedule games?
- Schools are about academics but should not rely on sports.
  1. Hard to put health first. Reserve time to sleep.
- I have to leave school early already for dance outside of school. I might have to miss the entire 8<sup>th</sup> period next year?
- If we have to travel away from Rochester area, we will have to leave 8<sup>th</sup> period or earlier and STRESS us out even more.
- Our club teams for sports are later in the day – HW in the AM (5:00 AM), School all day, Track practice/Soccer, Drivers' Education and then class, then club soccer 8 PM to 10 PM, (EAT), home and bed by 11:00. (multiple kids have similar schedules) – I will have to make a decision NOT to do something or go to bed later.
- If you want to have the opportunity to do multiple things and make choices, we like the schedule.

**4. How do you think the proposed options will affect club participation?**

- Club meetings will end later, not a big deal, if you want to do the club, should not affect the time you put in. It should not be a big deal.
- A lot of groups rehearse before school
- Some clubs meet before school, more clubs would meet before school if they could, but not be able to be bussed to school. Concerns about having meetings without everyone present.
- Most likely end time would not cause you to stop clubs.
- 9:00 AM time would have a difference on club participation.
- Sometime clubs compete on days and meet same days. Here longer. That would be difficult.
- Clubs from 3-4 now, and 3:30 – 4:30 later let's say, might not incentivize kids to go to club meetings as day is longer.
- Participation would decrease, because rides might change with times at school changing, might not be able to get rides to or from school.
- Activities and music lessons outside of school, more difficult to maintain and schedule activities (no eating or downtime)
- Easier for clubs to have meetings in the morning. Bollywood would present an issue, 3:30 – 5 instead of 3-4:30.
- Always hard to get kids to stay after school but I don't think it would be more difficult.
- Not really sure, work would be an issue.
- Participation will most likely go down. People will make choices and clubs might be the first to be dropped due to schedules and after school times.
- Coaches might say, "What do you mean you have to go to recycling club?" Kids would have to drop these activities.
  1. More pressure to stay in athletics and NOT clubs.

**5. How do you think the proposed options will affect the visual and performing arts program?**

- Give us a lot more time to rehearse if school started later – a cappella groups? If students agreed?
- You could concentrate on school or sleep on weekends when you don't have to rehearse on weekends.
- With some directors, we start at 6 and don't end till 9:00 to give breaks and eat dinner. Right after school, where would we eat?
- All acapella groups rehearse in the AM at 6:55 AM. Not great but it works. If acapellas were forced to be in afternoon, that would compete with sports and all clubs – this would be very difficult and potentially diminish participation in VPA.
- Acappella groups rehearse in mornings at 6:55 AM. Pushing it back would help us. Kids would be here on time.
  1. 8:15 AM would
- Musicals/Plays
  1. Kind of depend on directors, some start at a different time.
  2. Less time in between
  3. NOT a big difference with VPA
- No practice times like sports.

- Concerts and dress rehearsals – we don't leave school.
- Tech week is a lot of time, so 3-9 would turn into 3:30 – 9:30. Or later.

**6. If the district moves to change school start times, how do you think it will affect your sleep patterns?**

- Benefit if we make it later. You will have choice to get up earlier or sleep later. Now, we have to get up early to get there. Kids who need sleep sleep and kids who can get up, get up.
- A lot of kids are in CLUB teams with practices going on and we are out late. Later time would help us to sleep more – travel team practices and theatre groups.
- I go to bed late as it is, so I would be able to sleep later and feel better because of it.
- I would stay up later doing HW, instead of 11, maybe 12
- Last year I had a first period class all year. Felt sleepy and not awake and it took me a couple periods to wake up. Now I have a first free and I feel so much better period 2.
- Having 1<sup>st</sup> free, I felt so awake! I felt like a new woman coming into school.
- Most kids commented that they loved having first free and felt better and did better in school.
- When I get home, I take a nap which is bad, but it is important to me and my health. If we start later, might not have nap.
- I think it would be good, I would go to bed same time, and have better quality and more sleep.
- I would stay up later most likely and not go to bed any earlier if I knew I could sleep.
- I would not feel so guilty staying up late.
- If everything was pushed back later, I would find myself doing HW later and later. HW is a problem, we are up so late.
- I think I would still wake up early.
- Go to bed later and get up same time?
- I am very scheduled and consistently I have been going to sleep between Midnight and 1:00 AM. If people had a later time to get up, they would sleep so much more!
- Choosing between work and school. Go to sleep later, after 2:00 AM.
- In the room the next day.
- Positively
- I might schedule things more in the night.
- I would go to bed later if I could wake up later.
- Sometimes I just like to sit in my bed and relax.
- I can't finish HW and go right to bed. I will stay up later. There is not room for both social and school.

**7. If the district moved to change school start times, how do you think it will affect your school performance?**

- First period is so hard, late to school, tired, need to wake up, it should HELP first period classes to stay awake if we could sleep longer.

- I would do better because I could prepare for the morning and organize, wake up, or sleep in.
- Improved academic performance and relationships with teachers. Kids come in late first and second period, I think it would be reduced.
- So much better if we had more time in the AM.
- A little extra time to wake up, eat, and wake up.
- Being alert in the first two periods will help!
- Maybe ending later, I might be more exhausted.
- I think I would sleep, eat, not be hangry all day, better.
- I don't function at all in the AM, I don't have time to eat, no coffee, recipe for disaster, if it could be solved, I would do better and grades would increase.
- Starting at 9 and ending at 4:00, I get more tired at 4:00. Class from 3:15 to 4, I would feel like I was really tired.
- In the winter, when sun sets early, I have a hard time doing HW once night comes. I think if we get home at 4:00 and it is then dark, that will be an issue. Performance would decrease in winter. Seasonal affect disorder.
- In winter with rehearsals, we come to school in dark and leave in the dark. A later start time would be nice because you would see sun.
- I don't like staying in school later, that is so much worse for me. I would rather come earlier and leave earlier.
- Still be really tired, I don't wake up before FLEX.
- I have English 1<sup>st</sup>, not focus for 10 minutes, then focus.
- I don't rush in the morning. I would be so much more productive. Just starting a little bit later, would be better.
- I think people would enjoy school more. Improve performance. You care for yourself.
- Dark outside so depressing, sun out,
- I am so much less stressed and more positive when I come in late. I come to school happier.
- I would not doze off in class if it were pushed off. My grades would be better.
- Encourage more kids to get work during free periods. IT is there and valuable time to get it done.
- I can't do HW at school in terms of writing essays, I need home time. If I have less, it will be worse.
- If day is full and you are trying to get work done in day, you have no breather.
- When I have first free, I am more alert and more active. I do better. Feel better.

**8. If you could change the school start times, what option would you choose and why?**

- a. **7:40 – 2:47 PM** (maintain current start and end time)
  - o 2, 3, 5, 3, 4, 4 = **21 people preferred this**
- b. **8:15 – 3:22 PM** (start and end time pushed 35 minutes later)
  - o 3, 9, 2, 13, 3, 4 = **34 people preferred this**
- c. **8:30 – 3:37 PM** (start and end time pushed 50 minutes later)
  - o 6, 4, 6, 1, 3, 3 = **23 people preferred this**
- d. **9:00 – 4:07 PM** (start and end time pushed 80 minutes later)

- o 0, 2, 3, 0, 0, 1 = 6 people preferred this
- e. 11pm-6:00 AM
  - o 0,0,1

**9. What additional information do you want the committee to consider as it continues to study the issue of school start and end times?**

- Is FLEX negotiable? If it could move to AM, give more time for kids to sleep and gives and end time of 3:07 if we started at 8:30.
- Lots of kids like the time in the middle of the day to distress, get help, take a breather, especially when they don't have free periods. We would not want to lose it.
- I am a senior with 4 frees and DON'T need FLEX. I would rather have the time back and
- We need FLEX, don't change it.
- Moving school would give more time for teachers to prepare for their classes and not rush to school.
- DO NOT get rid of FLEX. We need this to break up the day. So useful.
- Can we have two start times, 7:30 – 2 and Noon to 6? Or 3-9 PM
- Urban Suburban student, coming early because of parent schedule?
- What about babysitters from BHS students watching FRES and CRPS. How many kids are we talking about?
- WHY DID THE COMMITTEE DECIDE NOT TO MOVE CRPS AND FRES START TIMES???
- Will sport and club coaches/advisors just move to make all morning practices? Who will oversee this and will this be allowed? Bus issues if kids can't get there?
- DO NOT GET RID OF FLEX. WE need it.

Finally, is there anything I haven't asked you that I should have or that you would like to share at this point?

Thank you very much for helping us out today. Your feedback will be very useful.

It is all right to talk to others about what we discussed here today, but please remember to respect each other's privacy, and don't mention anyone's name outside this room.

**If we have any additional questions or need clarification on any the points that were made today, may we contact you?**

Thank you.