Late Start Task Force Work

November 23, 2026

4 Models

Eliminate 90-Minute Late Starts	Minimize 90-Minute Late Starts (Now Early Release)	Retain 90-Minute Late Starts with Strategic Adjustments	Retain 90-Minute Late Starts as Currently Executed

These considerations were discussed:

1. Staff Professional Development Needs
2. Impact on District operational Areas
    a. Instructional and Learning Impacts
    b. Nutrition Services
    c. Early Childhood
    d. Transportation
    e. Community and Family Impact

3. Comparisons and Best Practices
4. Benefits and Drawbacks
5. Costs or Savings

Eliminate 90-Minute Late Starts

Description: Instead of late starts, use full day PD models and PLC once a week before school

- 171 Student Contact Days
- Professional Development Days
  - 7 hours back to school week
  - 8 hours on Day 172
  - Teacher Academy-30 hours
  - Building Meetings 1x per month
  - +Could structure to meet PD requirements
  - -Teachers do not prefer a full day of PD
- Possible variations/improvements
  - Decrease conference times and use those hours for Professional Development
  - Pay teachers overtime for PD beyond contracted hours
  - Decrease student contact days and add in a PD day
  - Extend teacher 186 days to 188
  - Different PD models for each level (ie. Elementary, Secondary)

Considerations of Eliminating Late Starts

Instructional and Learning Impact:

- + more instructional time
- + decreased behavioral and attendance will increase
- - less data driven instruction
- - fewer opportunities for teams to collaborate to improve instruction and reduce behaviors

Impact on Families/Community:

- +Schedules easier
- -Decreased data time may impact conferences negatively
- -Less communication about student data with families
- +No impact on non public schools

Impact of Operations: Status quo-Neutral

Benefits/Drawbacks:

- +Predictability with the schedule
- -Significant concern with losing PLC, teaming, data analysis, and trainings

Estimated Costs or Savings: depends on variation (ie. adding two days would cost more to pay teachers)

Early Release

(formerly Minimize Late Starts)

Description: Instead of a late start once a month, students start school at normal times and leave early (Early Release)

- 171 Student Contact Days
- Professional Development Days
  - Day 171 and add Day 172
  - Staff prefer short, regular occurring days to meet
  - 9 Early Release Days (1x per month)
    - Elementary
      - 3 horizontal
      - 1 building
      - 3 PLC data + 2 PLC for goals + MCA
    - Secondary
      - 2 Vertical
      - 2 building
      - 3 PLC data + 2 PLC for goals + MCA
- Other districts with Early Release
  - Mankato(monthly)
  - Hopkins (4 at MS, digital days at HS)
  - Bloomington (differs by level)
  - Moorhead (4)
- Possible variations/improvements
  - Nov and Jan convert to conference time
  - Move Nov, Dec and Oct Early Release before breaks

Considerations of Early Release

Instructional and Learning Impact:

- +Student could be more focused-the sky's the limit!
- +Instruction begins at the start of school every day

Impact on Families:

- -Possible daycare needs for young children
- +Family at home earlier
- +Older sibling able to be home could help
- +No impact on non public schools

Impact of Operations:

- +/-Bus drivers may have similar issues as the current model-see next slide
- +Nutrition-minimal impact-see next slide

Benefits/Drawbacks:

+ No impact on nutrition
+ consistent morning bus schedule
+ other districts use this model
+ possible decrease in behaviors
- Adult supervision at the end of the day
- similar bus impacts as late start
- Possible schedule change may affect secondary students eating lunch
- sports and activities start time

Estimated Costs or Savings:

- End of day daycare possibly, possibly neutral cost, PLC trainer cost

Nutrition and Transportation Feedback on Early Release

Wendy (Nutrition)

From a food service perspective, I anticipate minimal impact at the elementary level, as I would expect Principals to keep lunch schedules largely the same. At the secondary level, some lunch schedule adjustments would likely be needed since the early release at SFHS and SFMS would shorten the current last lunch period.

The high school has flexibility to move lunch periods earlier in the day, and the middle school could likely accommodate the adjustment by combining or overlapping grade lunch periods to ensure all students continue to be served efficiently.

From a staffing standpoint, I would plan to maintain current elementary staffing levels. At the middle school and high school, staff start times could shift earlier to align with any lunch schedule adjustments.

Overall, this appears manageable operationally with schedule modifications at the secondary level. One consideration at the high school is that students who currently have last lunch and drive may choose to leave campus once their classes conclude, which could have some impact on meal participation.

Peggy (Transportation)

There would be fewer obstacles for us but many would remain the same such as students who don't attend school for an entire day and us having to guess what time they have to be at school and what time they would be done so we could continue to scramble to find their required transportation.

Retain 90-Minute Late Starts with Strategic Adjustments

Description: Rearrange some late starts with natural breaks, not always on Wednesdays

- 171 Student Contact Days
- Professional Development Days
  - Same # PD days and Late Starts but moving some dates to better align with calendars
  - Some PD at Late Starts and Day 172
  - Staff prefer short, regular occurring days to meet
- Possible variations/improvements
  - PLC each week
    - Discuss current classes and data for the trimester
  - PLC not during late start
    - Dig into MCA/Fastbridge and other data (vertical or horizontal meetings)
  - PLC time replace conference time?
  - Day 172 (½ day PD, ½ conferences)

Considerations of Late Start with Strategic Adjustments

Instructional and Learning Impact:

- Possibly less impact with some late starts aligned to breaks
- Would still impact students who struggle with schedule changes

Impact on Families:

- Alignment to breaks by moving some late starts connected to breaks
- Still need childcare
- No impact on non public schools

Impact of Operations: Nothing different from normal late starts

Benefits/Drawbacks:

+ Built onto already interrupted days
+ Allows for flexibility to state requirements
+ Allows for extended collaboration
- PLC training needed to be more consistent

Estimated Costs or Savings: neutral or possible PLC training costs

Retain 90-Minute Late Starts as Currently Executed

Description:
Current Model
Once a month late start revised to need based PLC and meetings

- 171 Student Contact Days
- Professional Development Days
  - Workshop week PD day and Day 172
  - 9 Late Starts (with planned use of the days)
  - Staff prefer short, regular occurring days to meet
- Other districts with Late Starts
  - New Prague, Lake City High School
- Possible variations/improvements
  - 27-28 PLC training to improve PLC time
  - Vertical Days planned with administrator facilitation

Considerations of Current Late Start

Instructional and Learning Impact:

- Some PD able to occur on late starts, more data work, more intervention planning
- Students less focused, more behaviors

Impact on Families:

- Daycare once a month in morning for some
- Predictable on the calendar
- No impact on non public schools

Impact of Operations:

- Breakfast vs lunch separation
- Transportation conflicts for students from other districts or on alternative schedules.

Benefits/Drawbacks:

+ Consistent monthly date throughout the year, more time than just staff meetings
- Not many staff are PLC trained any longer, late starts aren't just PLC, doesn't occur near natural breaks

Estimated Costs or Savings: Possible PLC training

Task Force Recommendations

1st Choice: Early Release

2nd Choice: Retain 90-Minute Late Starts with Strategic Adjustments

3rd Choice: Retain 90-Minute Late Starts as Currently Executed

***The task force does not recommend eliminating the extra time of late starts or early release (Model #1). Important data work, training and meetings would not be able to occur with the minimal time we would have if they were removed or with regular frequency.**

Additional Parent/Community/Teacher ACT Feedback

- One parent strongly recommended eliminating late starts and go to full PD days
- One teacher and parent of an Elk River high school student said they had a different model to release time for teachers
- Others were in support of the recommendations.