

Why are we requesting early release for students one day per week?

A. Change in arrival procedures:

Students at the elementary school are arriving between 7:45 and 8:10 and after grabbing breakfast they head down to their classroom. This transition has gone remarkably well and has limited exposure to and from students and staff.

However this does cause some scheduling issues for staff:

- Teachers contract time is 7:45 a.m. With our current schedule, students are in their classrooms almost immediately and by law students must be supervised, which hinders their ability to finalize prep for the day. Some rooms have an associate but several have students that they have to be with 1-1 all day, and others are helping with drop-off and bus arrivals.
- Teachers may need to touch base with a special education teacher, grade level team, TLC coach or principal about student or personal issues that need to be addressed before school begins.
- Meetings with grade level PLC's are expected to be scheduled during this time (7:30-8:00) so paras or other staff have to cover those meetings. PLC's are supposed to meet twice per week, which is nearly impossible.
- In the past, teachers used this time to respond to parent calls or emails during this time, but with students in the room this is less efficient and causes privacy issues.

B. Change in lunch and recess schedules:

Due to Covid restrictions, all students do recess and lunch within their classroom cohort. This has caused the following concerns:

- We have had to double the number of staff needed to cover recess and lunch periods. In the past, two staff could easily cover the lunchroom with two grade levels eating at the same time because it was a relatively small space. Students cannot be crammed together as they have been in the past.
- Recess is only by grade level which requires more coverage. More recess periods, more coverage.
- Teachers receive a 20 minute duty-free lunch by contract and we have to schedule lunch breaks for associates as well. Teachers used to rotate recess and lunch coverage which gave them time to connect with parents, check emails, etc., in their classrooms. They now have 20 minutes total to eat and anything else that they need to get done.

C. Online learning demands:

Although we have other teachers as the primary contact for most of our online learners, classroom teachers still need to make connections with that teacher to review how online learning is going and how to assess progress and

assignments. Because they have students all day, there is little time within their contract hours to make those connections.

D. Dismissal procedures:

Covid guidelines require teachers to stay with their students until the last student leaves the building, which is at approximately 3:25, but is sometimes later. If a teacher needs to schedule a special education or other meeting at the end of the day, it is very difficult.

E. PLC:

Professional Learning Communities are a new tool that we are integrating into our professional development this year. It requires teachers at each grade level to collaborate with each other and with Title, Special Ed and specialist teachers to focus on standards- what are students expected to learn, how will we know they have learned it, what do we do if they don't learn and how do we move forward when they do. The model suggests meeting twice per week; we are only able to schedule one per week, which is not what we need.

F. Professional development:

In the era of Covid, we are desperately in need of some mini-lessons in a variety of areas: Social-Emotional learning, online learning, and others.

Early dismissals as proposed each Wednesday at 12:50 p.m. would allow us to spend time on all of the above areas to "catch up" on PLC's, parent connections, special education and Title meetings, PBIS meetings and professional development.

On behalf of my Instructional Coach, Tiffany Ahrens, whose idea this was to begin with, and the staff at Jacobson Elementary, we respectfully request that the board allow students to be dismissed at 12:50 p.m. each Wednesday for the remainder of the school year, or until the Covid pandemic allows us to return to a normal schedule, whichever comes first. We already have an early dismissal scheduled for September 23rd, so this would technically begin on September 30th.