

Healthier High School Start Time

**Update to the New Fairfield Board of Education
March 16, 2023**

**Revised October 5, 2023
For HS Start Time Ad Hoc Committee**

History of the Process

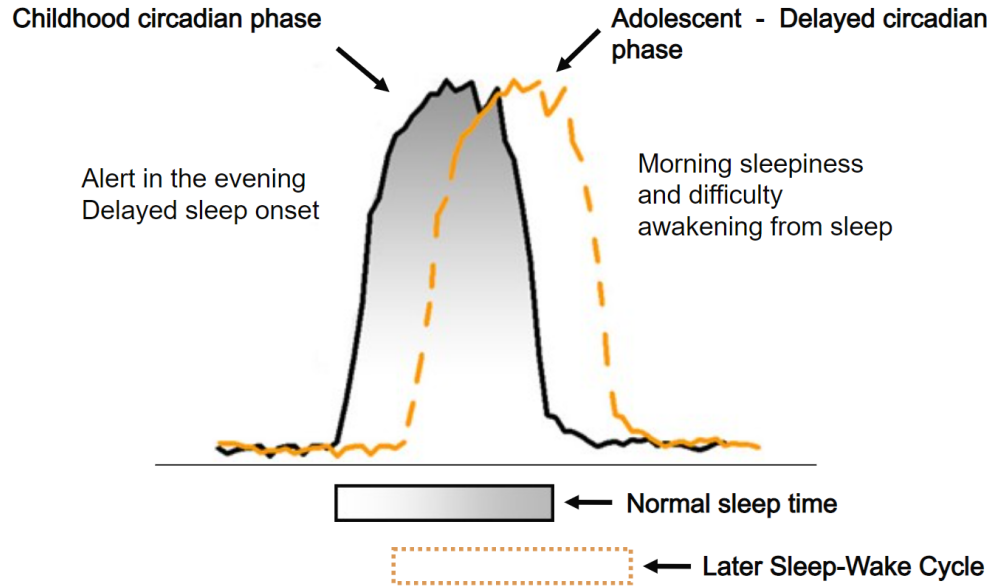
- **BOE Studied School Start Times from 2018-2020**
- **Decision Was Postponed During Construction of the New High School**
- **Healthier Start Time Study Resumed in January 2023**
- **Healthier Start Time Task Force and BOE Subcommittee are charged with studying a shift in the high school start/end time and making a recommendation to the BOE.**

Why Start High School Later?

Puberty changes teens' internal clocks

- **Circadian Rhythms**
- **Natural sleep time shifts to 11:00 pm or later**

Adolescent Sleep-Wake Cycle



American Academy of Sleep Medicine

Why Start High School Later?

American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP)

- **Middle and high schools should start school later to give adolescents the opportunity to get the sleep they need.**

Centers for Disease Control (CDC)

- **Schools Start Too Early**

Most U.S. middle and high schools start the school day too early



5 out of 6 U.S. middle and high schools start the school day before **8:30AM**

The American Academy of Pediatrics has recommended that middle and high schools should aim to start no earlier than 8:30 AM to enable students to get adequate sleep.



Teens need at least **8** hours of sleep per night.



Younger students need at least **9** hours.



2 out of **3** U.S. high school students sleep less than **8 hours** on school nights

Adolescents who do not get enough sleep are more likely to



be overweight



not get enough physical activity



suffer from depressive symptoms



engage in unhealthy risk behaviors such as drinking alcohol, smoking tobacco, and using illicit drugs



perform poorly in school

For more information: www.cdc.gov

Why Start High School Later?

Adolescents who do not get enough sleep are more likely to:

- Be overweight.
- Not engage in daily physical activity.
- Suffer from symptoms of depression.
- Engage in unhealthy risk behaviors such as drinking, smoking tobacco, and using illicit drugs.
- Perform poorly in school.

The American Academy of Sleep Medicine recommends that teenagers aged 13 to 18 years should regularly sleep 8 hours or more per day for good health.

[Adolescents and Sleep](#)

SWC Schools' Schedules

School	Class Begins	Class Ends	Total School Day
New Fairfield	7:15 AM	2:05 PM	6:50
Pomperaug	7:20 AM	2:05 PM	6:45
Masuk	7:25 AM	2:00 PM	6:35
Abbott Tech	7:30 AM	2:10 PM	6:40
Barlow	7:30 AM	2:07 PM	6:37
Bethel	7:30 AM	2:10 PM	6:40
Bunnell	7:30 AM	2:00 PM	6:30
Stratford	7:30 AM	2:00 PM	6:30
New Milford	7:35 AM	2:15 PM	6:40
Immaculate	7:45 AM	2:00 PM	6:15
Weston	7:45 AM	2:30 PM	6:45
Shepaug	7:55 AM	2:55 PM	7:00
Brookfield*	8:00 AM	2:45 PM	6:45
Newtown	8:00 AM	2:32 PM	6:32
Notre Dame-Fairfield	8:00 AM	2:00 PM	6:00
Kolbe Cathedral	8:15 AM	2:15 PM	6:00

- **NEHS has earliest current start time**
- **Brookfield moved to 8 AM start time in 2023-24**
- **Abbott Tech and Shepaug not in SWC, receive NF students**

6 Key Considerations

- **Transportation & Budget**
- **Town Programs**
- **Traffic Flow**
- **Bargaining Unit Implications**
- **Athletics & Instructional Time**
- **Implementation Timeline**

Consideration: Transportation & Budget

Current 3-Tier Transportation System:

Grade Band	# Buses
K-5	19
6-8	14
9-12	13

2-Tier Transportation System

Grade Band	# Buses
K-5	19
6-12	19

Transportation study was conducted to document existing 3-tier system and present considerations for a two-tier consolidation.

We are currently in year 5 of a 5-year contract with First Student. A potential change in start time would coincide with a new bus contract beginning with the 2024-25 school year.

Consideration: Traffic Flow

- **New traffic flow has been observed with the start of the new school year. The administration is in regular consultation with the police department regarding the traffic flow to refine the process for both the middle school and high school runs.**
- **The bus and parent pick up/drop off was designed for the possibility of a 2-tier transportation system.**
- **The arrival process for a combined MS/HS run would follow a drop-and-go procedure. Currently, students remain on the MS buses until 7:50 a.m.**

Athletics & Instructional Time

NF has 26 varsity sports during the fall, winter and spring seasons.

There are logistical considerations to take into account in moving to a later start time.

- Instructional Time
 - As is currently the case, athletes and coaches need to leave early for games.
 - Later end time will result in additional instructional time missed.
 - We are looking into how a rotating high school schedule would lessen this impact.
- Southwest Conference (SWC)
 - Many conference opponents do not have later end times.
 - NF Athletic Director will work with opponent AD to accommodate a later end time.

Consideration: Town Programs

- Later high school end time will shift youth sports activities for outdoor sports.
- The high school will have a new gym as well as the old high school gym. We can practice more HS students earlier.
- Once the high school is done with their practices, the community will have access additional resource to mitigate this challenge.

Consideration: Bargaining Unit Implications

- **High school staff will need advance notice of any changes in their work hours.**
- **Some staff will need to plan for childcare needs.**
- **Staff with other after-school commitments would need sufficient notice of changes to their work day.**

Consideration: Implementation Timeline

- **If there is a shift to a later start time, it will take place no earlier than the 2024-25 school year.**
- **A decision on changing start/end times will occur by October 2023.**
- **Timeline is important because it allows time for:**
 - **Community input,**
 - **Further study of the considerations outlined in this presentation,**
 - **Budget development for FY 25.**

Next Steps for the Task Force?

- **October/early November, 2023:**
- **October, 2023:**
 - **Review Transportation Report**
 - **Initiate Bid Process for New Transportation Contract**
 - **Stakeholder Surveys - All Families, Students Grades 6-12, Prek-12 Teachers**
- **November 2023:**
 - **Review bids with Business and Operations Committee & BOE**
 - **Review survey results with the BOE and community**
- **December 2023 - Recommendation from Ad Hoc Committee to the BOE**

Members of the Task Force

Kathy Baker, Board of Education

Ed Sbordone, Board of Education

Kenneth G. Craw, Ed.D., Superintendent

Julie Luby, Assistant Superintendent

Carrie DePuy, Director of Business & Operations

James D'Amico, NFHS Principal

Mark Ottusch, Athletic Director

Andrea Forzaglia, NF Education Association

Kyle Schmitt, NF Education Association

Jody Michalek, Paraprofessional Association

Amanda Lombard, PTO

Millie Kellogg, PTO

Peter Pomeroy, Parent

Rick Regan, Community Member