



Chesterfield County Public Schools
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Superintendent letter on school starting times

Team Chesterfield,

When you are diagnosed with a medical issue, you look for a way to treat it.

Research conducted by the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) shows that students who don't get enough sleep often suffer from physical and mental health issues, an increased risk of car accidents and a decline in academic performance. In response to these medical findings, the AAP recommends that middle and high schools start later than they currently do in Chesterfield County.

"Chronic sleep loss in children and adolescents is one of the most common – and easily fixable – public health issues in the U.S. today," said Dr. Judith Owens, a pediatrician and the AAP policy statement's lead author.

Understanding this has been a long-standing discussion item in our community, I asked my leadership team this summer to once again review school starting time options. The analysis is linked [here](#). During the next several months, we would like to re-engage the community about possible changes that would align with medically suggested best practices and provide students with optimal learning experiences.

We'll start this month with our internal Advisory Council of Teachers and Staff (ACTS). The Chesterfield County Council of PTAs will hold a Hot Topics session about school starting times on Oct. 10. That meeting starts at 7 p.m. in the Fulghum Conference Center at the Chesterfield Career and Technical Center @ Hull, located at 13900 Hull Street Road, and you are invited. Individual magisterial district town halls will be held on this topic this fall; dates will be shared soon.

We'll review the options below during these meetings, and we really want your feedback.

TABLE A	First Group 8 a.m. - 2:30 p.m.	Second Group 8:45 a.m.- 3:15 p.m.	Third Group 9:30 a.m.- 4:00 p.m.	Buses Needed	Year 1 Cost (Millions)	Annual Operating Expense (Millions)
Potential Option 1	All HS MS (Group 1)	MS (Group 2) ES (Group 1)	ES (Group 2)	107	\$14.3M	\$5.2M
Potential Option 2	ES (Group 1)	ES (Group 2) MS (Group 1)	All HS MS (Group 2)	134	\$17.9M	\$6.5M
Potential Option 3	ES (Group 1)	All HS ES (Group 2)	All MS	144	\$19.3M	\$7M

As we study potential changes, the School Board also has asked us to study putting afterschool programs in our elementary schools similar to the program offered through Prince William County Public Schools. Through this type of program, students who needed oversight after school could remain at the school to do homework, get exercise and participate in remediation and enrichment opportunities. Our team will begin looking into this opportunity in the coming weeks.

After the school division gets feedback from the community during the next several months, I will make a formal recommendation to the School Board during the upcoming budget cycle in January 2017. No permanent changes would go into effect until the 2018-19 school year at the earliest.

The School Board and I have made it a priority to bring closure to this topic. We look forward to receiving your input as we work together to choose the option that has the most positive health, social and academic impacts on our children.

Sincerely,
James F. Lane, Ed.D.
Superintendent

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