

**School Committee Meeting
Minutes of Thursday, May 31, 2018**

Members in Attendance: Chair, Shannon Scully, Vice-Chair, Paul Murphy, Joel Blumstein, Susan McCready, and Tracey Spruce

Others in Attendance: Superintendent Berman, Assistant Superintendent Dr. Nancy Duclos
Invited guests: Superintendent Eric Conti, Burlington, Mass

I. **Regular Meeting**

A. Call to Order /Moment of Silence/Salute to the Flag

The Chair called the meeting to order at 8:10 A.M. in the 2nd floor Conference Room in Town Offices.

B. Presentation: AHS Student, Yashvi Gosalia and AHS Health Teacher Betsey DesFosse

Why School Should Start Later: for both AHS and Andover Middle Schools

In her study of 'Why School Should Start Later', Yashvi found that Teens need 8-10 hours of sleep each night and provided information on the facts that substantiate her findings.

The preferred school start time is 8:30 AM for middle and high school students, but only 1 in 5 schools start at that time and only in 1 in 5 students are getting 8 hours of sleep. Studies show that adolescents are not fully functional until 8:30--9:00 AM. Moving school start times will benefit students, even an additional 15 minutes would have a huge effect. Causes for Sleep Deprivation in teenagers include but are not limited to, homework, technology/devices, and the physical biology of teenagers.

The student population at AHS is very open to delaying the school start time. Other area towns have started to shift towards a later start time, and have made accommodations for afternoon sports and activities. A study showed that kids actually do better in sports with a later start time.

C. Presentation by Burlington Superintendent – Dr. Eric Conti “Change of School Start Times”

Dr. Conti said Burlington shared information on the process they followed to shift school start time for high school students and how it is working for them, and how they engaged the community which is an important aspect of initiating an earlier start time. The research is very clear, a later start date for middle and high is beneficial for kids.

Logistical issues were undertaken through the formation of a league of twelve area town superintendents and school officials who met regularly to collaborate on school start times and the process to change to a later start time. Results of the Youth Risk Behavior Survey showed a large percentage of health reasons (depression, suicide, health risks) exist amongst the students who took the survey, and the hope is to reduce these risks by offering a later start time.

Responses from the community increased when a 'draft' schedule was sent out (even though they had been talking about this issue for two years). Dr. Conti recommends starting the conversation on values, the motivating factors for making this change, and include the details

that go with those values (i.e. student health). Establish guiding principles and a framework on why later start times are being considered was crucial to the process. Start with the 'Why'. Burlington's guiding principles: Student wellness was primary reason for change, physiological reasons, and the research that shows a later start time is better for kids.

Superintendent Conti will send the School Committee a chart of their school start/end times and how they rescheduled bus routes, which was one of the bigger challenges. Some of the alternatives would have increased transportation cost, but they were able to provide transportation that was cost neutral.

Another key component were the parent forums they held to communicate 'the Why' and to also explain how the process would work. Burlington has a popular before and after school program, and they also provide daycare for staff, which aided in the ability for parents not to have to change their schedules. There is a lot of communication that has to happen throughout the schools, community, etc.

Dr. Conti talked about how Burlington overcame the resistance to change, and how to address faculty concerns, particularly at the elementary school level. Athletic programs had to be flexible to incorporate the change in start time, and he recommends setting up the appropriate mechanisms for conversations to happen with parents, faculty, outside groups, community groups, and bussing companies. A 10-15-minute time change should not be problematic for Athletics, but an hour plus would be.

Dr. Berman spoke about reaching out to other districts to see if there is interest in changing school start times.

It was suggested setting a 2-year timeline for discussion and implementation of the change and that the reason for change is student wellness. It was also recommended to Invite Susan Owens to present to community.

Having the ability to provide professional development for the Burlington Public Schools staff has been a struggle. If you have early release built into your calendar now, don't give it up. A lot of compromises have to be made to make the schedule work.

D. Discussion for consideration of school start times

The Committee agreed to the Chair's request to include this topic as a meeting agenda item to start the conversations. It was suggested for Donna Ruseckas, Program Coordinator for Health and PE, to present results of the Youth Behavior Survey before the beginning of the next school year or in the early fall. It was also agreed to have our new communications person educate the community on the science behind changing start times, and to alert the community that Andover is embarking on this process. Dr. Berman suggested having two School Committee members look at what Burlington and other communities have done and bring that information back. He will reach out to area School Superintendents again.

The School Committee thanked Dr. Conte for meeting with them today and providing invaluable insight into this process.

E. Consent Agenda

Warrants: In Order

On a motion by Susan McCready and seconded by Paul Murphy, the School Committee voted 5-0 to approve the Consent Agenda as presented.

F. Adjournment:

On a motion by Tracey Spruce and seconded by Joel Blumstein, the School Committee voted 5-0 to adjourn from the meeting of May 31, 2018 at 10:08 A.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Dee DeLorenzo