TO: Jeffrey P. Simons, Superintendent of Schools
FROM: Larry Edson, Assistant Superintendent for School Business Finance
DATE: June 25, 2019

As you requested, attached is a status report and recap of the activities of the High School Start Time Committee for the 2018-2019 School Year.
Committee Annual Objectives & Priority Areas

2018-2019 Objectives & Priorities - Status Update:

● Follow short-term reporting mechanism and timelines
  ○ **Completed:** The Superintendent has updated the Board of Education on Committee progress at seven meetings during the 2018-2019 school year. Information on the regional meeting of area schools was presented at the November 14, 2018 meeting. Student volunteers serving on the Committee were recognized at the April 16, 2019 meeting.

● Conduct and review scholarly research and literature regarding impact of school start times on student sleep cycles, academic performance, high-risk behaviors, impact on mood, physical health, and automobile accidents
  ○ **Completed:** The Committee reviewed research articles in small groups during the September 18, 2018 meeting and reported out concerns and comments.
    ■ Start school later? Many say no way, but science says teens need more sleep, Hearst, Times Union, Bethany Bump, www.timesunion.com/local/, 2018
    ■ Schools around the US are finally pushing back their start times - and it’s working, Washington University in St. Louis/Facebook, Chris Weller, September 4, 2017
  ○ **Completed:** Committee members individually reviewed the Final Report of the Study Group on Later School Start Times, State of New Jersey Department of Education, April 25, 2017
  ○ **Conclusion:** The research evidence is overwhelming on the benefits of moving school start times on student sleep cycles, academic performance, high-risk behaviors, mood, physical health, and automobile accidents.
Examine local school case studies for relevant information, contact individuals for more details and information as appropriate

- **Completed:** At the November 27, 2018 Committee meeting, members reviewed a research-based report titled Later Start Times for High Schoolers: Benefits, Challenges and Creative Solutions, CASDA, Jennifer Bashant, Ph.D. and Terry Barlow, Ed.D.
- **Conclusion:** The authors quote the Hamilton Project, 2011 by indicating that there is “over 25 years of research and ample evidence demonstrating that starting school later in the day for high schoolers (and middle schoolers) has the potential to substantially improve school performance. Their report reviewed the science of circadian rhythms, definition of the problem, negative consequences of sleep deprivation (academic complications, increase in high-risk behaviors, impact on mood, poorer physical health, and increase in risk of car accidents), positive outcomes of changing times (better academic performance, improved behavior, reduced tardiness and absences, improved mood, and fewer car accidents), optimal start time, addressing barriers and concerns, the stand by the medical field, and local case studies.

Collect, review and evaluate internal data on student tardiness, academic performance and other areas as identified by the Committee

- **Completed:** At the February 6, 2019 Committee meeting, Mr. Harkin, Columbia High School Principal, presented a summary of Regents Exams GPA by period, course GPA by period, attendance and tardies, and student GPA by late arrival.
- **Conclusion:** Regents Exams scores and course GPA improved for students taking classes later in the school day. Annual unexcused tardies averaged over 17,000 incidents in the last three years. Late arrival students had an average student grade point average of 82.71 in the last three years.

Collect, review and evaluate information on District internal processes related to transportation and athletics

- **Completed:** At the October 29, 2018 Committee meeting, Mr. Leonard presented information on scheduling of athletic practices and events. Ms. Belmont presented an overview of transportation routing and scheduling.
- **Conclusion:** If start times are changed, athletic practices will end at a later time and early practices before school are unlikely. Athletic contests will likely end later in the day. Due to the complexity of transportation
routing and evaluation of scheduling impact, the District engaged the Transfinder Corporation as a consultant to assist in the study. The consultant, along with Ms. Belmont and transportation staff, were instrumental in coming up with a potential option for start time changes that is unlikely to result in additional cost to taxpayers.

- Identify potential options for start times, including current start time for study
  - **Completed**: At the November 5, 2018 Committee meeting, members reviewed a listing of seven options and evaluation rubric for start-time changes, including the current three-tier system.
  - **Conclusion**: Three of the proposed options related to a two-tier system were eliminated due to additional cost required to purchase buses and find qualified drivers. The other three two-tier system options were remanded to the transportation department and Transfinder Corporation for future study and evaluation. The two-tier options involving additional taxpayer cost were eliminated due to the survey results received by the Committee on January 16, 2019.

- Develop rubric or other evaluation methodology to compare and rate options
  - **Completed**: At the November 5, 2018 Committee meeting, members reviewed a proposed rubric for evaluation of start-time change options.
  - **Conclusion**: Each start time change option provided improved educational benefits, met instructional time requirements, ensured athletic participation, and allowed coordination of schedules with BOCES and private schools. However, heavy emphasis in the rubric was placed on the additional budgetary cost to taxpayers, particularly when options required purchase of new buses and finding qualified bus drivers. The rubric will be used to compare the current option and the proposed option once stakeholder meetings are completed in the fall of 2019.

- Engage transportation consultant for assistance with determining route impact of changing start times
  - **Completed**: At the October 17, 2018 Board of Education meeting, a professional services agreement was approved with the Transfinder Corporation.
  - **Conclusion**: Transfinder issued a Bell Time Study Report dated February 5, 2019 and Representative Terrell Dooley presented the results at the March 12, 2019 Committee meeting. Transfinder Representative also attended the June 10, 2019 Committee meeting. The most important
conclusion of the study was the need to limit options for study due to the time involved and the complexities of routing.

- Estimate additional costs associated with each option
  - Completed: A potential preferred option for changing start times was presented to the Committee at the June 25, 2019 meeting. The preferred start times option is currently under review by the transportation department, along with any cost impact. As the review progresses, there may be potential savings in transportation cost to be achieved by implementing a bus stop walkout for students similar to the Bethlehem School District procedure. Therefore, there is likely to be no net cost impact.
  - Conclusion: No additional costs are currently anticipated by implementing the preferred start times option.

- Identify and address barriers and concerns with changing start times including, but not limited to change processes, athletic processes, athletic schedules, childcare, local traffic, transportation schedules, and cost
  - Completed: During the year, the Committee identified a series of potential barriers and concerns involved with changing start times.
  - In Progress: During the 2019-2020 year, the Committee plans to host a series of community forums to discuss the identified and not yet identified barriers and concerns with changing start times. After the forums, the Committee will review whether such barriers and concerns can be reasonably addressed if start times change.

- Designate Committee representatives to participate in regional meetings with other school districts also studying school start times; collaborate on research and resources, share information received with District Committee members
  - Completed: Mr. McHugh, Mr. Edson, Ms. Massey, Ms. Belmont, Mr. Harkin, Ms. Hosier, Ms. Marchiony, and Ms. Howard attended a regional start time forum on November 5, 2018 at Bethlehem High School. The group has posted research articles to the shared Google drive.
  - Conclusion: Guilderland, Bethlehem, and East Greenbush School Districts were beginning their start time studies in the 2018-2019 school year. Niskayuna is the second year of a start time study. No school district plans to change start times prior to the 2020-2021 school year.
Prepare and conduct surveys of District stakeholders: report and evaluate findings

- **Completed:** The Committee thanked Mr. Adam, Public Information Specialist for creating and distributing a survey on school start times. The survey was opened on December 3, 2018 and closed on December 21, 2018. The survey had a total of 1,127 responses from K-12 parents, 319 responses from Columbia High School students, and 263 responses from District staff. Survey results were reported at the January 16, 2019 Committee meeting and February 13, 2019 Board of Education meeting.

- **Conclusion:** Summary survey results are as follows:
  - Later start and dismissal times at Columbia would have a positive impact (parents - 69.8%)
  - Later start and dismissal times at Goff would have a positive impact (parents 55.5%); Earlier would have a negative impact (parents 48.9%)
  - Later start and dismissal times for elementary schools would have a mixed impact (parents 45% negative, students 45.1% positive, staff 60.5% negative); Earlier times would have a positive impact (parents 44.4%, students 52.7%, staff 46.5%)
  - Parents, students and staff were unsure about schedule changes impacting pick up and drop off times (parents 54.1%, staff 65.9%)
  - If schedules were changed and ride times increased more than 15 minutes, parents, students and staff viewed the change as having a significant impact (parents 72.1%, staff 80.9%)
  - Increased walking distances to a bus stop were viewed as having a mixed impact (parents 45.7% negative vs. 40.2% positive)
  - Schedule changes requiring later end times for athletics and activities were viewed as having a mixed impact (parents 36% positive vs. 39% unsure)
  - Parents, students and staff were unsure about schedule changes requiring changes to athletic practices and games locations (parents 52.5%, students 40.7%, staff 53.8%)
  - Parents and staff had significant concerns about early dismissal of students from school for athletic contests (parents 57.7%, staff 71%)
  - Reaction was mixed for athletic practices and clubs meeting before school (unsure - parents 34.4%, students 24.3%, staff 37.2%)
High school age students are not relied upon for after-school childcare for elementary age or younger children (parents 91.4% no)

Parents and staff were unsure of the impact on later start and dismissal times on childcare arrangements (parents 62.3%, staff 66.7%)

Changes in school start and dismissal times which required increases in school taxes were viewed negatively (parents 40.9%, staff 48.3%); Changes requiring reductions in programs were viewed negatively (parents 75.6%, students 51.3%, staff 85.1%)

Any changes in start and dismissal times providing increased academic offerings or opportunities were viewed favorably

Not enough information was available for parents, students, and staff to effectively evaluate how they would favorably or unfavorably view a time change for a particular grade grouping

2019-2020 Objectives & Priorities:

- Follow short-term reporting mechanism and timelines
  - Planned: The Superintendent will report on Committee activities at Board of Education meetings scheduled during the 2019-2020 school year. A presentation, including a recommendation for change or status quo, is anticipated at the December 11, 2019 Board of Education meeting.

- Conduct educational and informational forums for parents, students and community residents
  - Planned: The Superintendent’s office will develop a schedule of community forums once the draft parent calendar is finalized in order to avoid potential conflicts. The forums are designed to obtain general input from all stakeholders, review potential time schedule changes, discuss research findings on start times, and identify barriers and concerns with implementation.

- Provide recommendation in writing to the Board of Education for start time status quo or change
  - Planned: A recommendation is anticipated for the December 11, 2019 Board of Education meeting.
- If start times change is recommended for 2020-2021 school year (or future year) and approved by the Board of Education, develop plans for implementation and communication to District parents, students and residents
  - **Planned:** The Superintendent, Central Administration, Athletic and Transportation Departments will develop a comprehensive plan dependent upon the outcome of the December 11, 2019 Board of Education meeting.
Meeting Schedule

2018-2019 Meeting Dates, Times & Agendas:

1. Tuesday, September 18, 2018 at 6:00 p.m. (Committee Meeting)
   a. Initial committee meeting and introduction of topic
   b. Handout of local high school start and end times
   c. Discussion of factors that influence school start times/schedules and factors impacted by school schedule changes
   d. Group review of research literature on changing school start times

2. Wednesday, October 3, 2018 at 7:00 p.m. (Board of Education Meeting)
   a. Superintendent update under Board Forum & Superintendent Report

3. Wednesday, October 17, 2018 at 7:00 p.m. (Board of Education Meeting)
   a. Approval of Transfinder Professional Services Agreement to assist with study of school start times

4. Monday, October 29, 2018 at 6:00 p.m. (Committee Meeting)
   a. Presentation by Ms. Belmont, Transportation Supervisor on current transportation routing and issues
   b. Presentation by Mr. Leonard, Director of Health, Physical Education and Athletics on athletic scheduling and issues
   c. Initial discussion on school stakeholder survey

5. Monday, November 5, 2018 at 6:30 p.m. (Regional Meeting at Bethlehem CSD)
   a. Update of start time study process by Bethlehem, Guilderland, Niskayuna and East Greenbush School Districts
   b. Brainstorming session of how to form a collaborative group on research and resources

6. Wednesday, November 14, 2018 at 7:00 p.m. (Board of Education Meeting)
   a. Superintendent update under Reports and Presentations
   b. Presentation of draft rubric to evaluate proposals to change school start times
7. Tuesday, November 27, 2018 at 6:00 p.m. (Committee Meeting)
   a. Update from November 5 regional schools meeting
   b. Presentation of CASDA study by Jennifer Bashant, Ph.D. and Terry Barlow, Ed.D.
   c. Review of school day options proposed evaluation rubric
   d. Review of proposal from Transfinder to study school bell times
   e. Discussion of draft stakeholder survey on changes to school start times

8. Wednesday, November 28, 2018 at 7:00 p.m. (Board of Education Meeting)
   a. Superintendent update under Committee Reports

9. Wednesday, December 12, 2018 at 7:00 p.m. (Board of Education Meeting)
   a. Approval of High School Start Time Committee Summary, including purpose, membership/representation, meeting schedule, annual objectives/priority areas, and reporting mechanism/timelines

10. Monday, December 17, 2018 at 6:00 p.m. (Cancelled)

11. Wednesday, January 16, 2019 at 6:00 p.m. (Committee Meeting)
    a. School Start Time Survey results presentation

12. Wednesday, January 23, 2019 at 7:00 p.m. (Board of Education Meeting)
    a. Superintendent update under Committee Reports

13. Wednesday, February 6, 2019 at 6:00 p.m. (Committee Meeting)
    a. Review of Columbia High School data relating to average exam and course grades by period of the day, attendance and tardies, late arrival and student grade point average
    b. Review of proposed timeline

14. Wednesday, February 13, 2019 at 7:00 p.m. (Board of Education Meeting)
    a. Presentation of School Start Time Survey results

15. Tuesday, March 12, 2019 at 6:00 p.m. (Committee Meeting)
    a. Review of bell time study in conjunction with Transfinder Corporation

16. Tuesday, April 16, 2019 at 7:00 p.m. (Board of Education Meeting)
    a. Recognition of student committee volunteers: Ryan Blake, Chase Durivage, Laura Haney, Rachel Haney, Lily Mahoney, Ryan Seely
17. Monday, June 10, 2019 at 6:00 p.m. (Committee Meeting)
   a. Update on proposed school schedules with transportation department and Transfinder Corporation

18. Wednesday, June 25, 2019 at 7:00 p.m. (Board of Education Meeting)
   a. Superintendent update on High School Start Time Study

2019-2020 Meeting Dates & Times:

Meetings and community forums to be scheduled for fall 2019
Membership/Representation

Jeffrey Simons, Superintendent and Chairperson
John Dunn, Board of Education Member
Jim Giordano, Board of Education Member
Jennifer Massey, Board of Education Member
JoAnn Taylor, Board of Education Members
Jack Alvey, Donald P. Sutherland Elementary School Principal
Mary Ann Belmont, Transportation Supervisor
Paul Bickel, Director of Facilities
Marissa Cannon, Director of Human Resources
Muriel Church, Columbia High School Parent
Jennifer Cuttler, Green Meadow Teaching Assistant & Parent
Diane Cohen, Green Meadow Teacher
Chase Durivage, Columbia High School Grade 10 Student
Larry Edson, Assistant Superintendent for School Business Finance
Linda Furnari, Columbia High School Parent
Dan Garab, Green Meadow Elementary School Principal
Wayne Grignon, Howard L. Goff Middle School Principal
Mark Halsey, Head Bus Driver
Laura Haney, Columbia High School Grade 12 Student
Mike Harkin, Columbia High School Principal
Alison Hosier, East Greenbush Teachers Association
Sarah Howard, Howard L. Goff Middle School Parent
Kevin Kelly, Civil Service Employees Association
Ed Kilmartin, Columbia High School Assistant Principal
Michael Leonard, Director of Physical Education, Health & Athletics
Lily Mahoney, Columbia High School Grade 11 Student
Laurie Marchiony, Howard L. Goff Middle School 8th Grade Parent
James McHugh, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum & Instruction
Phyllis Sanford, School Lunch Manager
Ryan Seely, Columbia High School Grade 9 Student
Kelley Sheraw, Columbia High School Teacher
Fran Sprague, East Greenbush School Related Personnel