



REPORT

**BOARD OF EDUCATION OF HOWARD COUNTY
MEETING AGENDA ITEM**

TITLE: School Start Times: Preliminary School-By-School Bell Times **DATE:** July 14, 2022

Brian Nevin, Director, Student Transportation Office

PRESENTER(S): Tom Platt, Decision Support Group, LLC

Strategic Call To Action Alignment:

Operations and practices are responsive, transparent, fiscally responsible and accountable, with students at the heart of all decisions.

OVERVIEW:

On February 10, 2022, the Board of Education approved the decision to begin immediately planning the SST implementation for the 2023/2024 school year. This is the first report that directly addresses the objective of the School Start and End Time planning for the 2023/2024 school year. The report is of a preliminary nature and will need to be finalized in the future as the iterative process continues.

RECOMMENDATION/FUTURE DIRECTION: Action and information items related to the implementation will continue to be presented to the Board in accordance with plan tasking. Final school-by-school bell times for action and approval by the Board will be submitted as a December 2022 task milestone.

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Informational Briefing
*Preliminary School-by-School
Bell Times*

for the

2023/24 School Start Time Initiative

July 14, 2022



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Status of the School Start Time Project Implementation

This briefing provides the latest in a sequence of information and action-based reports to the School Board. They coincide with various milestones in the plan. The implementation continues to be on time and on task, even with the targeted delay in presenting these milestones to the School Board. The objective is to introduce critical items to the Board, be they for information or action, in a steady and logical sequence and as they are completed while also allowing time for a focused review of each item by the members.

Background for this Briefing

This is the first briefing that directly addresses the objective of the plan: school start and end time planning for the 2023/24 school year. Most of the ongoing early action items continue to be focused on changes to the type and manner of transportation service delivery beginning in 2023/24. Embedded in the plan, however, was a recognition of the importance of early action on the determination of school-by-school bell times. Presenting this early in the process is meant to facilitate community education and engagement regarding the changes that will happen a year from now.

It continues to be impossible to provide bell times with 100 percent accuracy. That level of certainty must await completion of two other milestones on the critical path: finalization of redistricting associated with the opening of High School 13 next year; and analysis of school bus route changes required following completion of the preliminary transportation reengineering efforts currently in process. The implementation plan currently has the setting of final school-by-school bell times for action and approval by the School Board as a December, 2022 task milestone.

Goals and Objectives for this Briefing

The preliminary nature of the bell times appended to this report must be emphasized. This presentation represents the next logical step in the iterative process that began with the start of the feasibility assessment in September, 2021. The objective for this briefing is to provide a 70-80% correct solution. Changes to be anticipated before the final report for action in December, 2022 include:

- Some movement of schools between bell time tiers, with the objective of minimizing the number of changes required relative to the tier structure presented here; and
- Adjustments of +/- 10 minutes on either side of the tier center point for some individual schools to optimize the final logistical bus routing solution for efficiency and effectiveness.

Process To-Date

Sequence of Iterations

This continues to be an iterative process, with the finalization of school-by-school bell times and the individual bus routes that will service each school as the final step. The sequence of iterations to-date, and those planned for completion include the following:

- Feasibility assessment iterations 1, 2, and 3 – These were the first three analytical steps that resulted in the final report to the School Board in January, 2022 and the subsequent decision to proceed with implementation planning in February, 2022. These iterations did not identify specific school bell times.
- Preliminary school-by-school bell times – This is the iteration presented in this report. Using the results of the feasibility assessment as a starting point, this iteration translates those findings and requirements into a first cut delineation of bell times for each school in the system. While further adjustments and changes will be required, staff believes the results are within a range of accuracy that will provide the members and the community with a clear understanding of the changes to be anticipated for 2023/24.
- Finalization of school-by-school bell times – This will occur after the redistricting for High School 13 is approved and following the final analysis of the impacts associated with the transportation service reengineering currently in process. It is scheduled for presentation to the School Board for action in December, 2022.
- Finalization of school-by-school bus routes – This will be the final iterative step and will occur on the normal transportation planning schedule as reflected in the implementation plan for the months leading up to school start in 2023/24.

Analytical Turnover to Staff

There is one other item that deserves mention before presenting the results. In the iterative sequencing, this report also represents a turnover of responsibility. There was a series of tasks in which Decision Support Group, LLC, the consulting firm responsible for the feasibility assessment, provided an initial analysis of school-by-school bell times and subsequently turned this work over to Transportation Office staff for review and further analysis. This report therefore represents staff work, as will each of the following iterations in the sequence to completion identified above.

Results

Three-Tier Bell Time Structure

There were three primary constraints imposed on the assessment of feasibility for school start time changes:

1. Keep all high schools at the same, and first in the sequence of start times.
2. Start all high schools no earlier than 8:00 AM, and with a desired target time of 8:30 AM.
3. Minimize the impact on schools later in the sequence by compressing the time spread between the earliest to the latest school start times.

In addition to changes in the type and manner of transportation service delivery, the other primary enabler of the solution identified in the feasibility assessment was to structure the sequence of school start times around three fixed time tiers, with flexibility to assign all middle and elementary schools to any of the three tiers. This structure assigns each school in the system to one of three baseline start times, with only minor variances around the center point being allowed, and that only to encourage logistical efficiency. Thus, the system can be planned in such a way as to encourage the maximum utilization of available transportation resources. The bell time assignments in the appended table reflect this structure.

Earliest School Start Time Decision

One key item of note is that the decision regarding the final start time assigned to the earliest starting schools in this structure (i.e., the high schools), is not established. This is still flexible within a range. The table assumes 8:00 AM, but this can be adjusted to reflect community feedback and engagement, and the final decision can be left to the School Board's determination. The net impact of any change to the times proposed will be to shift the entire structure forward or backward in time. Thus, by means of example, should the School Board determine that the earliest time should shift from 8:00 AM to 8:30 AM, each school's start time in all tiers would shift in a coordinated manner 30 minutes later.

Introduction to Bell Time Table

The school start time table displays each school in the system within three columns, with each column representing one of the three time tiers, and the schools listed alphabetically within each column.

Preliminary 2023/24 School Bell Times

The following is provided in alphabetical order by school and by preliminary bell time tier. The proposed center point for the start time in each tier is as follows:

Tier 1 8:00 AM

Tier 2 8:40 AM

Tier 3 9:15 AM

Tier 1 – 8:00 AM	Tier 2 – 8:40 AM	Tier 3 – 9:15 AM
Atholton HS	Bollman Bridge ES	Atholton ES
Centennial HS	Bonnie Branch MS	Bellows Spring ES
Dunloggin MS	Bryant Woods ES	Cradlerock ES
Elkridge Landing MS	Burleigh Manor MS	Dayton Oaks ES
Folly Quarter MS	Bushy Park ES	Deep Run ES
Glenelg HS	Centennial Lane ES	Elkridge ES
Hammond HS	Clarksville ES	Ellicott Mills MS
HS 13	Clarksville MS	Forest Ridge ES
Howard HS	Clemens Crossing ES	Fulton ES
Long Reach HS	Ducketts Lane ES	Gorman Crossing ES
Marriotts Ridge HS	Glenwood MS	Guilford ES
Mount Hebron HS	Hammond ES	Hanover Hills ES
Oakland Mills HS	Hammond MS	Harpers Choice MS
Oakland Mills MS	Hollifield Station ES	Ilchester ES
Reservoir HS	Jeffers Hill ES	Laurel Woods ES
River Hill HS	Lake Elkhorn MS	Lisbon ES
Thomas Viaduct MS	Lime Kiln MS	Longfellow ES
Wilde Lake HS	Manor Woods ES	Northfield ES
	Mayfield Woods MS	Pointers Run ES
	Mount View MS	Running Brook ES
	Murray Hill MS	St John’s Lane ES
	Patapsco MS	Thunder Hill ES
	Patuxent Valley MS	Veterans ES
	Phelps Luck ES	Waterloo ES
	Rockburn ES	Waverly ES
	Stevens Forest ES	West Friendship ES
	Swansfield ES	Worthington ES
	Talbott Springs ES	
	Triadelphia Ridge ES	
	Wilde Lake MS	