



Horseheads CSD
Special Ad Hoc Committee
Start & End Times

Presented to the
Board of Education
June 8, 2026





Horseheads CSD

Special Ad Hoc Committee Start & End Times

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How to Read the Report

This report documents the work of the Horseheads Central School District Special Ad Hoc Committee on Start and End Times. It gives the Board of Education, district leaders, staff, families, students, and community members a clear record of the process, the feedback received, the major findings, and the possible next steps for further review.

Read this report as a synthesis of information, not as a recommendation document. The Special Ad Hoc Committee served in an advisory role. Members reviewed information, asked questions, identified themes, shared perspectives, and tested emerging ideas through the lenses of feasibility, practicality, and desirability. The report reflects those discussions and the broader engagement process. It does not reflect a committee vote.

The report has four major parts. The first section explains the purpose, process, advisory structure, and method used to guide the review. The second section summarizes public updates and engagement activities, including ThoughtExchange feedback, surveys, student voice sessions, and focus group findings. The third section presents findings and actionability ratings. The final section organizes possible short-term, long-term, and process-oriented next steps.

The possible next steps are organized by actionability. Short-term items may be reasonable to review for the 2026-27 school year. Long-term items require deeper analysis, broader discussion, and more detailed planning before any decision. Process-oriented actions are not schedule changes. They support clearer communication, stronger data, better trust, and sound decision-making.

The report does not suggest that one schedule change can solve every concern. Start and end times connect to transportation, athletics, extracurricular activities, childcare, family routines, student sleep, instructional programming, staff schedules, contracts, finances, and public trust. The report is meant to support careful Board deliberation, not quick conclusions.

Executive Summary

The Horseheads Central School District Special Ad Hoc Committee on Start and End Times was established to review community perspectives on the district's 2025-26 start and end times and to identify what future actions, if any, may be feasible, practical, and desirable. Leadership Solutions Advisers facilitated the process to support the Board of Education and district leadership through a structured, transparent, student-centered review.

The review centered on one question: What are the community perspectives regarding the current start and end times, and what, if any, feasible, practical, and desirable future actions make sense to consider? The Special Ad Hoc Committee used three lenses to examine that question: feasibility, practicality, and desirability. These lenses helped organize discussion around operations, transportation, contracts, finances, instruction, family impact, and community experience.

The process included several forms of engagement. The Special Ad Hoc Committee met throughout spring 2026 to clarify its purpose, review the current state, examine stakeholder input, and discuss possible future actions. Engagement activities included internal and external ThoughtExchange opportunities, internal and external stakeholder surveys, Elevating Student Voices sessions with middle school and high school students, an external stakeholder focus group, voluntary individual interviews, and public updates after major stages of the work.

Several clear themes emerged. Stakeholders raised concerns about sleep, fatigue, morning readiness, afternoon energy, family routines, childcare, transportation, extracurricular participation, and communication. The feedback also showed real variation. Not every student, family, or staff member experiences the schedule the same way. Some concerns were most visible at the secondary level, especially early start times, BOCES, CTE, and New Visions alignment, and after-school activity gaps. Other concerns were more prominent at the elementary level, including later dismissal, after-school fatigue, family routines, and limited decompression time.

The review also confirmed that school schedules are system decisions. A change in one area can affect many others. Start and end times shape bus routing, instructional time, supervision, athletics, clubs, staff availability, contract conditions, family routines, and student access to programs. This does not prevent future action. It does require careful analysis and clear expectations.

The possible future actions are organized into three categories. Short-term possible next steps include items that may be reviewed for September 2026, such as addressing BOCES, CTE, and New Visions conflicts; reducing the after-school activity gap; exploring a middle school/high school activity hour; reviewing modest Intermediate School/Middle School timing adjustments; and considering building-level schedule refinements. Long-term possible next steps include

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larger structural questions, including later secondary and earlier elementary start times, pulling start and end times closer together, reassessing the district's 100% busing commitment, exploring transportation eligibility or walking zone changes, and studying a high school/elementary start time swap.

The report also identifies process actions that may support future decision-making. These include clarifying what can and cannot change for 2026-27, strengthening communication and trust, gathering broader student feedback, conducting a transportation usage audit, reviewing staffing and contract implications, creating a working group for continued study, and adding a student health and developmental impact review.

This report is intended to inform Board of Education discussion and future district planning. It is not a formal vote of the Special Ad Hoc Committee. It does not present official committee recommendations. It organizes the information, perspectives, findings, and possible actions that emerged through the process so district leaders and the Board of Education can decide the next steps with greater clarity.

Key Takeaways

The Special Ad Hoc Committee process produced several important takeaways for the Board of Education, district leadership, staff, families, students, and community members.

1

The current start and end times are affecting stakeholders in different ways.

Some students, families, and staff have adjusted to the schedule. Others continue to report concerns related to sleep, fatigue, family logistics, transportation, extracurricular participation, and communication. The feedback does not point to one simple answer, but it does identify clear areas for continued attention.

2

Student well-being should remain central in future review.

Student voice sessions, family feedback, staff feedback, and committee discussion all raised questions about sleep, readiness to learn, developmental needs, morning fatigue, afternoon energy, stress, and the combined effects of homework, athletics, activities, transportation, and family routines.

3

Transportation is one of the strongest factors shaping what can and cannot change.

Several ideas that appear simple, including flipping start times or pulling start and end times closer together, carry significant implications for routing, bus staging, driver availability, campus traffic, student ride times, athletics, cost, and implementation timelines.

4

Some concerns may be addressed through targeted short-term refinements rather than a full districtwide schedule change.

These include BOCES, CTE, and New Visions alignment; building-level schedule adjustments; after-school supervision; structured student support time; and activity access. These refinements should be reviewed with attention to staffing, contracts, transportation, supervision, and student benefit.

5

The after-school activity gap is not only about waiting time.

It is a student access, supervision, transportation, staffing, and program design issue. Verified athletic transition information shows that the issue is especially significant for middle school and modified student-athletes who travel between campuses and may experience extended transition periods before practice begins.

6

Larger schedule changes remain worthy of study, but they require more time, clearer data, and deeper public engagement.

Later secondary start times, earlier elementary start times, a high school/elementary start time swap, and efforts to pull start and end times closer together should be studied through student health, transportation, staffing, contractual, financial, and family-impact lenses.

7

Communication and public trust are essential conditions for future progress.

The district will need clear explanations, shared facts, realistic timelines, student feedback, small-group dialogue, and transparent Board discussion to support any future decision.

Breakthrough Process Current State Review

The Breakthrough Process Current State Review gave the district a structured way to examine current start and end times before moving toward possible action. The process began with a simple premise: sound decisions require more than opinion or preference. They require a shared understanding of current conditions, a fair reading of stakeholder experience, and a clear view of the operational realities that shape what can change.

For this project, the Current State Review focused on the district's 2025-26 school start and end times. The review did not seek to validate a predetermined option or produce a single answer. It helped the Special Ad Hoc Committee, district leadership, and the Board of Education better understand the educational, operational, transportation, financial, and community factors tied to the current schedule.

The process moved from clarification to evidence gathering, from evidence gathering to theme development, and from theme development to possible future actions. This sequence allowed the committee to consider stakeholder feedback and system constraints together.

Strategic Intent

The strategic intent of the review was to understand community perspectives on the current start and end times and identify what future actions, if any, should be considered because they are feasible, practical, and desirable.

What are the community perspectives regarding the current start and end times, and what, if any, feasible, practical, and desirable future actions make sense to consider moving forward?

This question required the Special Ad Hoc Committee to look beyond simple preferences for earlier or later times. Start and end times affect students, families, staff, transportation, athletics, extracurricular activities, childcare, instructional programs, contract obligations, and district finances. The purpose of the review was to make these factors clearer so future decisions could rest on both lived experience and operational fact.

The review was guided by three assessment lenses:

- Feasibility – operational, contractual, transportation, and fiscal realities
- Practicality – implementation considerations, system capacity, and educational impact
- Desirability – community perspectives, internal stakeholder experiences, student learning implications, and perceived benefits or concerns

Together, these lenses gave the committee a disciplined way to consider possible action without reducing the issue to one factor or one viewpoint.

Process Overview

The work supported the Special Ad Hoc Committee and informed future Board of Education deliberation. It was not built around a predetermined outcome.

Leadership Solutions Advisers facilitated the process by helping the committee clarify its role, review current-state information, examine stakeholder feedback, identify themes, and discuss possible future actions. The committee served in an advisory role. Members did not vote on recommendations. They contributed perspective, asked questions, identified concerns, and helped build a fuller understanding of the issues connected to current start and end times.

The process included committee meetings, current-state review materials, stakeholder engagement activities, public updates, surveys, student voice sessions, focus group feedback, and facilitated discussion. This structure helped the report reflect both stakeholder experience and district operating realities.

“When every voice is part of the story, the path forward becomes clearer for everyone.”

Process Overview



Special Ad Hoc Committee

The Special Ad Hoc Committee included Board of Education members, district leaders, building leaders, instructional staff, non-instructional staff, parents, and community members. This structure brought multiple perspectives into the review and strengthened public understanding of the factors involved in start and end time decisions.

Committee members served as advisors to the process. They reviewed information, asked questions, identified themes, shared perspectives, and helped clarify the practical effects of possible future actions. The committee did not function as a voting body and was not charged with issuing formal recommendations. Its value came from the range of voices represented and the quality of discussion generated throughout the review.

The committee charter emphasized transparency, student-centered decision-making, open inquiry, respectful dialogue, and careful review of feasibility, practicality, and desirability. These commitments framed the committee as both a representative group and a learning body.

Special Ad Hoc Committee Charter Mission

Why do we serve?

- demonstrate passionate commitment to a transparent and inclusive process
- provide unwavering dedication to students, staff, and community members
- explore all options and thoughtfully consider current state and potential future impacts
- ensure district planning is guided by feasibility, practicality, and desirability

Who do we serve directly?

- Board of Education

How do we serve?

- fully committing to and actively supporting the committee and process
- remaining open-minded, curious, and learning throughout the process
- sharing relevant perspectives and experiences respectfully
- communicating openly, factually, and consistently with the public
- consistently attending ALL meetings

What do we provide in serving?

- a representative voice of staff, parents, students, and community members
- valuable feedback to consultants regarding factual findings, pertinent information, and emerging insights during the process
- identification key takeaways and clarifying questions
- transparency and credibility through visible community representation

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Special Ad Hoc Committee Membership

Name	Role
Jessica Benkelmann	Ridge Road Elementary School TA
Katy Buzzetti	Assistant Superintendent for Business
Dan Christmas	BOE President/Committee Chairperson
Margaret Collins	Community Member/Parent
Caitlin DeFilippo	Director of Human Resources
Kris Earl	High School Principal
Angie Finlayson	Community Member/Parent
Bill Finnerty	High School Teacher
Tony Gill	Assistant Superintendent
Sara Gordon	Community Member/Parent
Ron Holloway	Middle School Principal
Shawn Karney	Community Member/Parent
Dora Leland	Middle School Teacher
Candy Maine	Intermediate School Secretary
Kim Malone	Intermediate School Principal
Beth Manwaring	Community Member/Parent
Caitlin McGurgan	Community Member/Parent
Rich Micelotta	Director of Transportation
Julie Monahan	BOE Member
Justin Mucitelli	Community Member/Parent
Kristen Raniewicz	Nurse Practitioner
Rachael Rich	Gardner Road Elementary School Social Worker
Kara Sheehan	BOE Member
Patti Sotero	Gardner Road Elementary School Principal
Kelly Squires	Director of Student Services
Amy Sydlansky	Community Member/Parent
Amy Tingle	Big Flats Elementary School Pre-K Teacher
Katrina Ungvarsky	BOE Member

Report Context

The methodology for this review connected stakeholder perspectives with operational facts. School start and end times are personal for students, families, and staff. They are also shaped by transportation capacity, staffing patterns, contract language, instructional requirements, extracurricular schedules, and financial limits. A credible review required both broad engagement and disciplined analysis.

The process began by clarifying the purpose, role, and scope of the Special Ad Hoc Committee. The committee then reviewed current-state information related to schedules, transportation, state requirements, contract provisions, and financial considerations. This created a shared factual foundation before the review moved into stakeholder feedback.

Stakeholder engagement used several methods. ThoughtExchange activities allowed participants to submit and rate ideas. Surveys gathered broader input from staff and parent/caregiver stakeholders. Elevating Student Voices sessions provided direct student perspective from middle school and high school students. A focus group added parent and caregiver insight. Voluntary individual interviews provided more context in specific areas.

The process used multiple engagement methods because no single source could capture the full complexity of the issue. Survey data helped identify patterns across larger groups. Focus groups and student voice sessions gave richer explanation and lived experience. Committee discussion tested emerging themes against district realities. Together, these sources created a fuller picture of the current state and possible next steps.

Throughout the process, the work remained grounded in three lenses: feasibility, practicality, and desirability. These lenses helped the committee take stakeholder concerns seriously while also recognizing the implementation realities that shape district decisions.

Facilitation and Project Support

Leadership Solutions Advisers supported the Horseheads Central School District Special Ad Hoc Committee by facilitating meetings, organizing stakeholder feedback, synthesizing themes, and preparing the final report for Board of Education review.

Matt Cole, Project Lead Facilitator: Former teacher, curriculum leader, principal, and superintendent, with experience in public school leadership, facilitation, organizational improvement, stakeholder engagement, and strategic planning.

Cosimo Tangorra, EdD, Adviser: Former teacher, principal, superintendent, and New York State Deputy Commissioner of Education, with expertise in district operations, educational leadership, school district reorganization, governance, and long-range planning.

Robert Molisani, Adviser: Former superintendent, middle school principal, and high school principal in the Caledonia-Mumford Central School District, with more than 25 years of experience in school operations, student support, safety planning, policy implementation, and rural district leadership.

Road Map of Major Activities and Milestones

Activation	March 6, 2026	Finalize Project Scope & Plan of Work
Meeting 1	March 9, 2026	Clarifying Goals & Roles
Meeting 2	March 16, 2026	Establishing the Factual Current State
Engagement	March 17-27, 2026	External Stakeholder ThoughtExchange Internal Stakeholder ThoughtExchange Voluntary Individual Interviews
Meeting 3	March 30, 2026	Discussing Stakeholder Feedback
Engagement	April 2-23, 2026	Internal Staff Survey External Parent/Families Survey Voluntary Individual Interviews
Engagement	April 20, 2026	Elevating Student Voices – MS & HS Focus Group Parent/Families
Meeting 4	April 27, 2026	Discussing Stakeholder Feedback
Meeting 5	May 14, 2026	Gathering Feedback on Potential Future Actions
Meeting 6	June 3, 2026	Continuing Discussion on Potential Future Actions
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Stakeholder Engagement & Public Updates

The following public updates and engagement summaries document the major stages of the review. They are included to support transparency, preserve the record of the process, and show how stakeholder input informed the final synthesis.

The engagement results should be interpreted in context. The external ThoughtExchange included 998 participants and the external stakeholder survey received 942 responses, each compared with approximately 2,600 district families. The internal ThoughtExchange included 269 participants and the internal stakeholder survey received 262 responses, each compared with approximately 775 district employees. These participation levels provide meaningful stakeholder feedback and help identify recurring themes, but they should not be interpreted as statistically representative of all families or employees.

The focus group and interview feedback should be understood as qualitative input. The external stakeholder focus group included 27 volunteer participants from the larger district family population. Their feedback provided detailed lived experience, but does not represent all district families. The internal stakeholder focus group was not held because only one of five volunteer participants attended. That individual's feedback was treated as an individual interview rather than focus group data.

Taken together, these engagement activities provided important directional evidence for the review. They helped the Special Ad Hoc Committee understand stakeholder experiences, identify common concerns, and consider possible next steps. The data should be used to inform judgment, not replace it.

Public Update – March 9, 2026

Special Ad Hoc Committee's Review of School Start and End Times

The Horseheads Central School District Special Ad Hoc Committee held its second meeting on March 9, 2026, and its first meeting, facilitated by Leadership Solutions Advisers, began a structured review of the district's current school start and end times.

Leadership Solutions Advisers is a team of experienced educational consultants and former New York State educators – serving in roles including teachers, principals, curriculum leaders, district administrators, superintendents, BOCES District Superintendents, and New York State Education Department Senior Deputy Commissioner. The firm has been engaged through a BOCES CoSer to support the committee's work by providing a structured and disciplined facilitation process to help the committee examine current conditions and community perspectives.

During the meeting, facilitators emphasized that the committee's guiding focus is identifying the best possible educational experiences for students. The committee's purpose is to gather information and stakeholder input to help determine whether any future adjustments to start and end times may be feasible, practical, and desirable for the district.

Committee members also participated in a ThoughtExchange activity to identify key factors that should guide the work moving forward. Responses highlighted several shared priorities, including:

- Keeping students' needs and well being at the center of the conversation
- Ensuring broad community input so recommendations reflect diverse perspectives
- Balancing the greatest benefit for the majority of students while considering vulnerable populations
- Maintaining transparent communication and trust with the community
- Evaluating impacts across all grade levels and learning from other districts' experiences

These early insights reinforce the importance of gathering additional feedback from students, families, staff, and community members.

In the coming weeks, the district will expand opportunities for community engagement through a ThoughtExchange conversation and districtwide survey. These tools will allow stakeholders to share perspectives and help identify common themes that can inform the committee's work.

The committee will continue meeting throughout March and April, with insights ultimately helping to inform future discussion by district leadership and the Board of Education.

Public Update – March 16, 2026

Special Ad Hoc Committee's Review of School Start and End Times

The Horseheads Central School District Special Ad Hoc Committee held its third meeting on March 16, continuing its structured review of the district's current school start and end times with facilitation support from Leadership Solutions Advisers. This meeting focused on developing a shared, factual understanding of current conditions to ensure that future discussions are grounded in accurate and clearly understood information.

The committee's work remains centered on identifying the best possible educational experiences for students and continues to examine current conditions through three key lenses:

- Feasibility – operational, transportation, contractual, and fiscal realities
- Practicality – implementation considerations and educational impact
- Desirability – community perspectives and stakeholder experiences

During the meeting, committee members reviewed draft "current state" materials across key areas, including schedules, transportation, state requirements, contractual provisions, and financial considerations. Members helped refine these materials by identifying what is clear, what needs clarification, and where additional information may be needed.

The committee also reviewed an expanded stakeholder engagement process, approved by the Board of Education on March 12, designed to gather input from students, staff, families, and community members. Upcoming engagement opportunities include:

- Internal and External Stakeholder ThoughtExchanges
- Internal and External Stakeholder Districtwide Surveys
- Internal and External Focus Groups
- Elevating Student Voice Sessions

More information will follow on how you can get involved and share your voice in one or more of these opportunities in the coming weeks. These efforts are intended to ensure that a broad range of voices are heard and that stakeholder perspectives are carefully considered alongside operational and educational factors.

The committee's work continues to emphasize a student-centered approach, supported by careful analysis, transparent communication, and inclusive community engagement.



schedule later activities
 change high younger home
 children exhausted bus earlier
 start fine long day sleep hours older
 middle late practice sports pick
 early intermediate way time
 family parents difficult hard year
 child elementary end work
 homework dismissal

I feel the bus time for my intermediate student is very early she has to be on the bus at 6:17 am that's an hour before I have to be to work

The feedback on the changes to school start and end times this year reveals significant dissatisfaction among participants, with concerns primarily focused on the impact on students' sleep, family routines, and extracurricular activities.

Family and Work Schedule Conflicts: The changes have created challenges for families, particularly those with working parents. Participants noted difficulties in coordinating drop-offs and pick-ups due to the staggered start times across different school levels. The perception is that the schedule is not conducive to typical work hours, leading to increased reliance on childcare and adjustments to work schedules.

Extracurricular Activities and After-School Time: The timing of school dismissal has affected students' ability to participate in extracurricular activities and sports. Participants highlighted the lack of time between school end and practice start times, leading to rushed evenings and limited downtime. The perception is that the schedule does not support a balanced approach to academics and extracurricular involvement.

Transportation and Safety Concerns: There are significant concerns about transportation logistics, including long bus rides and safety issues during drop-off and pick-up times. Participants mentioned traffic congestion and the safety of students walking or waiting for buses in the dark. The perception is that the current system is inefficient and poses safety risks.

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Top Themes

Student Sleep: Participants frequently mentioned concerns about the impact of early start times on students' sleep and overall well-being. Many believe that students, particularly those in intermediate and middle schools, are not getting enough rest, which negatively affects their focus and academic performance. The perception is that the current schedule does not align with research suggesting that older students benefit from later start times.

Family Schedules: The changes to start and end times have created challenges for families, especially those with working parents. Participants noted difficulties in coordinating drop-offs and pick-ups due to staggered start times across different school levels. The perception is that the schedule is not conducive to typical work hours, leading to increased reliance on childcare and adjustments to work schedules.

Extracurricular Timing: The timing of school dismissal has affected students' ability to participate in extracurricular activities and sports. Participants highlighted the lack of time between school end and practice start times, leading to rushed evenings and limited downtime. The perception is that the schedule does not support a balanced approach to academics and extracurricular involvement.

Transportation Safety: There are significant concerns about transportation logistics, including long bus rides and safety issues during drop-off and pick-up times. Participants mentioned traffic congestion and the safety of students walking or waiting for buses in the dark. The perception is that the current system is inefficient and poses safety risks.

Communication Process: Participants expressed dissatisfaction with the communication and decision-making process regarding the schedule changes. Many felt that their input was not adequately considered and that the changes were implemented without sufficient transparency. The perception is that the decision-making process needs to be more inclusive and responsive to community needs.

Academic Impact: Some participants noted that the current schedule affects students' ability to focus and learn effectively, particularly in the early morning hours. There is a perception that the timing of classes does not align with students' natural cognitive rhythms, leading to decreased academic performance. The need for adjustments to better support learning is evident.

Childcare Challenges: The staggered start times have increased the demand for before and after-school childcare, which is costly and sometimes difficult to find. Participants highlighted the financial burden and logistical challenges of arranging childcare to accommodate the new schedule. The perception is that the schedule changes have not adequately considered the impact on families' childcare needs.

Mental Health: Concerns about students' mental health due to the new schedule were mentioned, with participants noting increased stress and fatigue among students. The perception is that the early start times contribute to anxiety and exhaustion, affecting students' overall well-being. There is a call for schedules that better support mental health.

School Day Length: The length of the school day, particularly for elementary students, was criticized for being too long and exhausting. Participants noted that the extended day leaves little time for family interaction and relaxation after school. The perception is that the schedule should be adjusted to provide a more balanced day for younger students.

Community Feedback: Participants emphasized the importance of considering community feedback in decision-making processes. Many felt that their concerns were not heard or addressed adequately, leading to dissatisfaction with the changes. The perception is that greater engagement and transparency are needed to ensure decisions reflect the community's needs.

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Internal Stakeholder ThoughtExchange



ThoughtExchange

Participants
269
Last activity: 0 days ago

Thoughts
285
1.1 thoughts / participant

Ratings
7,691
28.6 ratings / participant

Ratings ratio
27
Ratings / thought

Top Thoughts



The times not aligning 100% to BOCES and New Visions should be reevaluated – students shouldn't have to miss a portion of any class. It sets a poor example of time management and prioritization.

High school schedule should match a timely BOCES schedule. Elementary students schedule should be an 8-3. Elementary students are tired by the end of day and it makes for a long day.

Research actually supports earlier start times for elementary students and later start times for older students. As educators we should always be making decisions based on what is in the best interest of students.

Quick Recap Summary

The feedback on the changes to school start and end times reveals a mixed sentiment, with significant concerns about the impact on students' learning and well-being, particularly at the elementary level. Participants express a need for adjustments to better align with developmental needs and logistical challenges.

Student Well-being and Learning: Participants frequently mention the negative impact of the current schedule on students' energy levels and attentiveness, especially in the afternoons. Elementary students are reportedly exhausted by the end of the day, leading to increased behavioral issues and reduced learning effectiveness. There is a strong perception that the schedule does not align with the natural alertness patterns of younger children, who are more focused in the mornings.

Logistical Challenges: The changes have introduced logistical difficulties, particularly in coordinating meetings and appointments. Teachers struggle to find time for collaboration and planning due to the lack of flexibility in the schedule. The differing start and end times across schools complicate scheduling for staff with children in multiple schools, and the alignment with BOCES times is problematic.

Impact on Extracurricular Activities: The schedule changes have negatively affected extracurricular activities, with reports of reduced participation and logistical issues for sports and clubs. Students face challenges in attending after-school activities due to the late dismissal times, and some programs have been cut entirely, impacting students' opportunities for engagement outside of academics.

Family and Community Impact: The changes have placed stress on families, particularly those with children in multiple schools. Parents face difficulties in arranging childcare and transportation, and the schedule does not align well with typical work hours, creating additional burdens. There is a perception that the changes were made without sufficient consideration of family needs.

Research and Evidence-Based Decisions: Participants express frustration that the schedule changes do not align with research on optimal start times for different age groups. There is a call for decisions to be based on scientific evidence regarding student sleep needs and learning patterns, rather than logistical or sports-related considerations.

Top Themes

Student Well-being: Participants frequently discuss the impact of the schedule changes on student well-being, particularly noting that elementary students are exhausted by the end of the day. This fatigue leads to increased behavioral issues and decreased learning effectiveness. There is a strong sentiment that the schedule does not align with the natural alertness patterns of younger children, who are more focused in the mornings.

Learning Effectiveness: The effectiveness of learning is a major concern, with many participants highlighting that core subjects taught in the afternoon are less effective due to student fatigue. Elementary students struggle to focus and retain information later in the day, which is perceived as detrimental to their academic success. Participants suggest that aligning teaching times with students' peak alertness could improve learning outcomes.

Extracurricular Activities: The schedule changes have negatively impacted extracurricular activities, with reports of reduced participation and logistical issues for sports and clubs. Students face challenges in attending after-school activities due to late dismissal times, and some programs have been cut entirely. This reduction in extracurricular opportunities is seen as limiting students' engagement outside of academics.

Family Logistics: Participants express concerns about the stress placed on families due to the schedule changes, particularly those with children in multiple schools. Parents face difficulties in arranging childcare and transportation, and the schedule does not align well with typical work hours. There is a perception that the changes were made without sufficient consideration of family needs.

Teacher Collaboration: The changes have introduced challenges in teacher collaboration, with limited time available for planning and meetings. Participants note that the lack of flexibility in the schedule makes it difficult to coordinate across different school levels. This is seen as impacting the consistency and quality of education provided to students.

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Scheduling Conflicts: Scheduling conflicts are a significant issue, particularly in coordinating meetings and appointments. Teachers struggle to find time for collaboration due to the rigid schedule, and the differing start and end times across schools complicate scheduling for staff with children in multiple schools. Participants perceive this as a barrier to effective communication and planning.

Research Alignment: There is frustration among participants that the schedule changes do not align with research on optimal start times for different age groups. Many call for decisions to be based on scientific evidence regarding student sleep needs and learning patterns. The perception is that logistical or sports-related considerations have taken precedence over research-backed educational practices.

Transportation Issues: Transportation issues are highlighted, with reports of students spending excessive time on buses and inefficiencies in bus routing. Participants note that the changes were intended to improve transportation but have not achieved the desired results. This is seen as a significant logistical challenge that impacts students' daily routines.

Student Engagement: Student engagement is perceived to be negatively affected by the schedule changes, particularly in the mornings when students are reportedly sleepy and lethargic. Participants express concern that this lack of engagement impacts learning and classroom dynamics. There is a call for adjustments to better align with students' natural energy levels.

Community Impact: The broader community impact of the schedule changes is a concern, with participants noting the effects on local businesses and community supports. The perception is that the changes have disrupted established routines and created additional burdens for families and community members. Participants suggest that community needs should be considered in future decisions.

Public Update – March 30, 2026

Special Ad Hoc Committee's Review of School Start and End Times

The Horseheads Central School District Special Ad Hoc Committee held its fourth meeting on March 30, continuing its structured review of the district's current school start and end times with facilitation support from Leadership Solutions Advisers. This meeting marked a transition from establishing current conditions to reviewing stakeholder feedback and preparing for additional data collection.

The committee's work remains focused on identifying the best possible educational experiences for students and continues to examine current conditions and potential future considerations through three key lenses:

- **Feasibility** – operational, transportation, contractual, and fiscal realities
- **Practicality** – implementation considerations and educational impact
- **Desirability** – community perspectives and stakeholder experiences

During the meeting, members reviewed feedback from internal and external ThoughtExchange engagements. The feedback reflects a range of stakeholder perspectives, with common topics including student well-being, family schedules, extracurricular participation, transportation, and communication processes.

Committee members engaged in discussion of these themes to help identify key areas for further inquiry. This work is intended to support the development of districtwide surveys, focus groups, and student voice engagement opportunities that will gather additional input from students, staff, families, and community members.

Committee members also began developing a survey item map and question bank to guide the next phase of engagement. This work focuses on identifying what the district needs to learn in order to design clear, balanced surveys aligned to decision-making needs.

Upcoming engagement opportunities include:

- Districtwide surveys (internal and external stakeholders)
- Focus groups and student voice engagement sessions
- Continued analysis of ThoughtExchange feedback

The committee will reconvene to review additional data and continue discussion of potential future actions. The overall process will continue through the spring, with a draft report anticipated for committee review in late May and a final report to the Board of Education in early June.

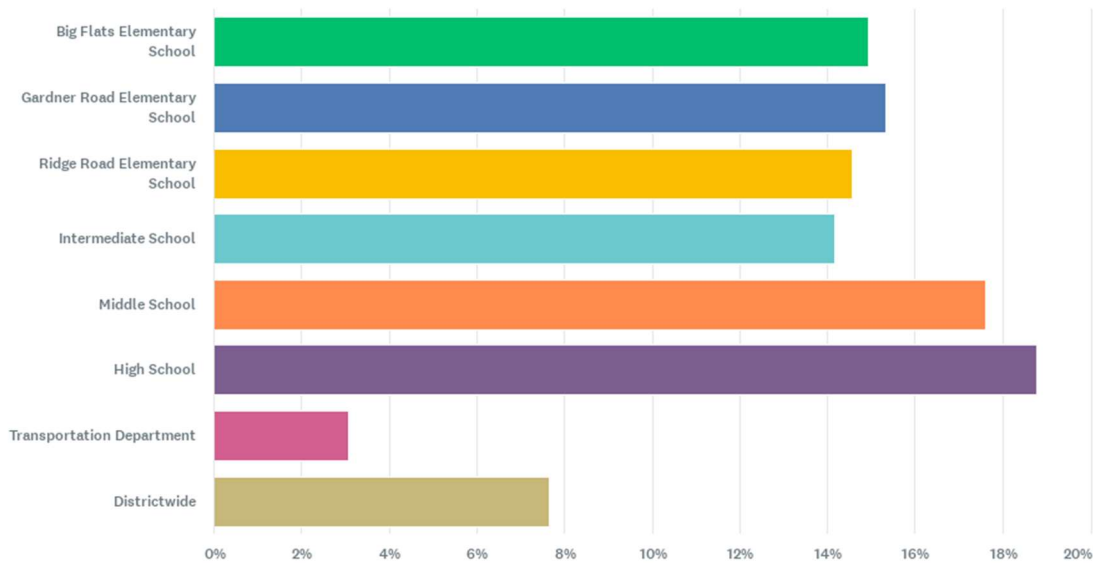
The committee's work continues to emphasize a student-centered approach, supported by careful analysis, transparent communication, and inclusive community engagement.

Survey – Internal Stakeholders (April 2-23, 2026)

The internal stakeholder survey yielded **262 responses**, representing staff across multiple school levels, with the High School, Middle School, and several elementary buildings most prominently represented.

Q2 261 responses

Which school(s) are you currently most directly involved with as an employee?

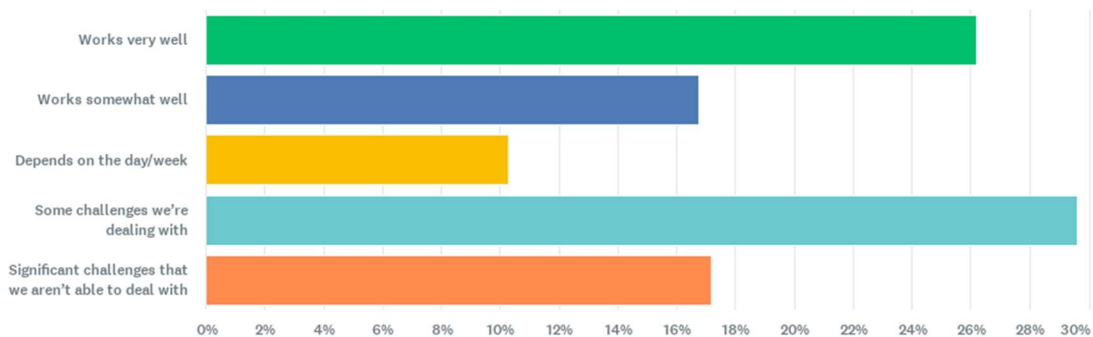


Overall, findings reflect a mixed and nuanced perspective on the current schedule.

Approximately one-quarter of respondents (26%) indicated that the schedule supports their ability to serve students very well; however, a comparable and slightly larger proportion reported challenges, with nearly 30% identifying some challenges and 17% indicating significant challenges.

Q3 233 responses

Which of the following best describes how the current schedule supports your ability to serve students each day?

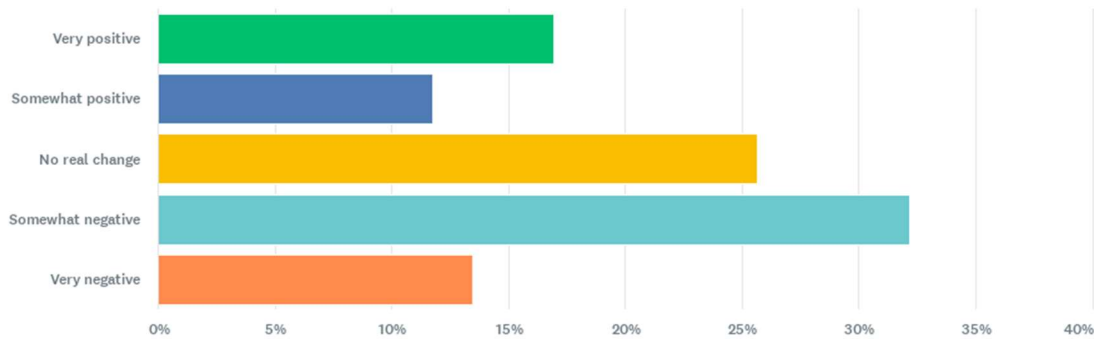


Horseheads CSD Special Ad Hoc Committee Start & End Times
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Perceptions of the schedule's impact on daily work experience were similarly varied, though more weighted toward negative sentiment, as 32% described the impact as somewhat negative compared to 17% who viewed it as very positive and 13% as very negative. While many respondents reported no noticeable changes in student outcomes such as restfulness, mood, academic focus, or participation, a meaningful subset observed declines in these areas, suggesting uneven or context-dependent effects.

Q5 230 responses

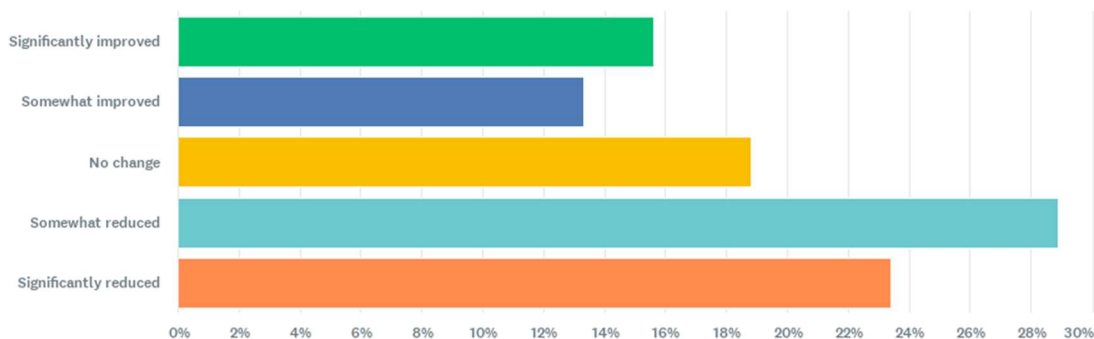
In the past 2-3 weeks, how have current start/end times impacted your daily work experience?



Work-life balance emerged as a notable concern, with 52% of respondents reporting that the current schedule has somewhat or significantly reduced their balance, reflected in a weighted average score of 3.31 on a five-point scale. Looking ahead, the most frequently identified priority for improvement was adjusting start and end times (39%), followed by maintaining the current schedule with targeted refinements (19%).

Q11 218 responses

How have current start/end times impacted your work-life balance?

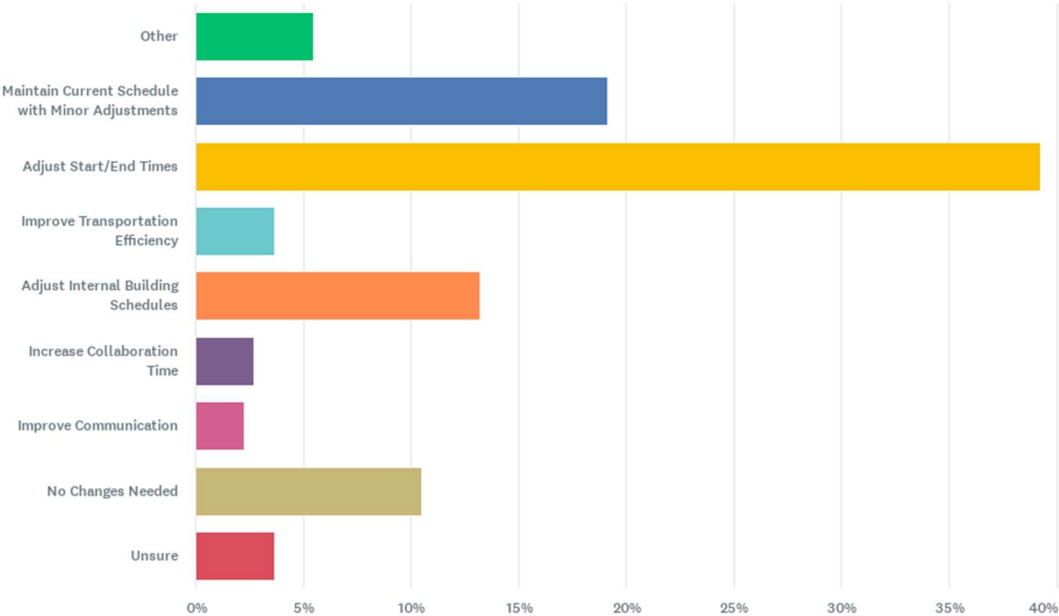


Open-ended responses further reinforce these findings, with sentiment analysis indicating a predominance of neutral to negative feedback, suggesting ongoing concerns and opportunities for refinement as part of the district's broader review process.

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Q13 219 responses

Which of the following would provide the most meaningful improvement for next school year (2026-27)?

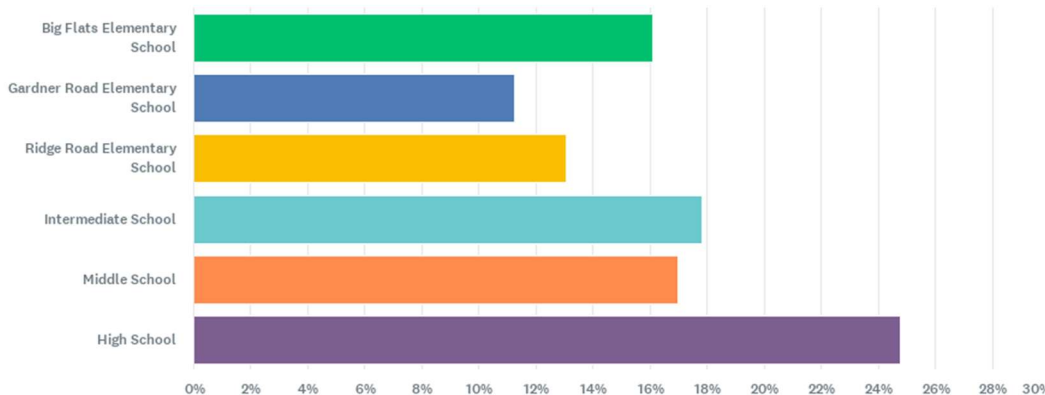


Survey – External Stakeholders (April 2-23, 2026)

The external stakeholder survey generated **942 responses** representing families across all school levels, with the largest proportion affiliated with the High School (24.8%). **Overall, the findings indicate that a majority of families are experiencing challenges with the current schedule**, with 43.6% reporting some challenges and an additional 12.4% identifying significant challenges.

Q3 925 responses

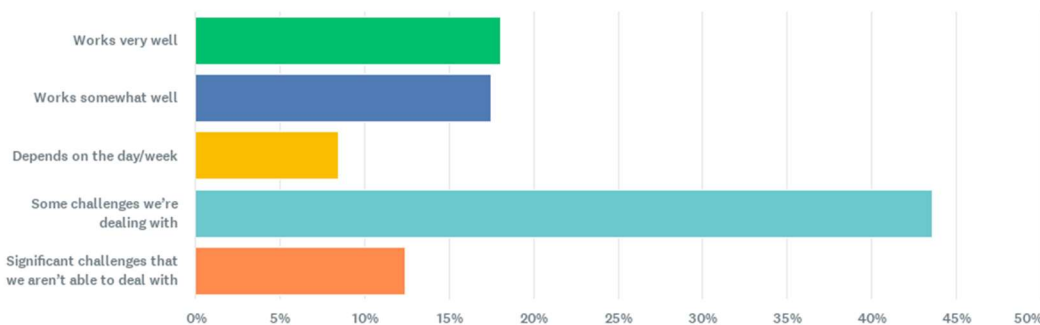
Which school does the student attend that you will be thinking about when completing this survey?



The **most frequently cited areas of concern relate to daily routines and student well-being, particularly morning logistics (61.8%)** and student fatigue (53.6%). Consistent with these concerns, a notable portion of respondents **reported observable changes in their children**, including decreased restfulness or energy (35.0%) and increased negative moods or behaviors (31.7%).

Q4 853 responses

Which of the following best describes how the current schedule fits your family's daily routines?

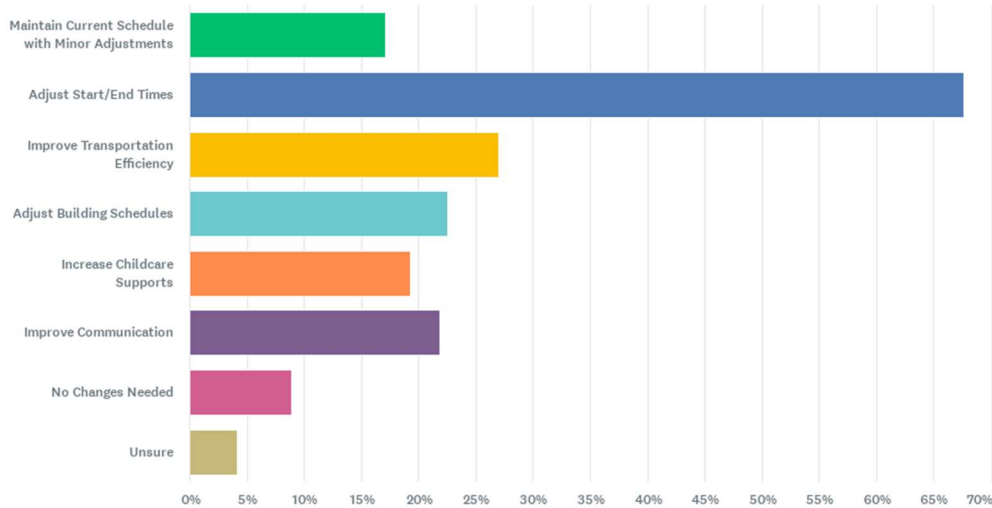


Horseheads CSD Special Ad Hoc Committee Start & End Times Final Report – June 8, 2026

Looking ahead, there is **strong alignment around the need for continued refinement**, with 67.7% of respondents identifying adjustments to start and end times as the top priority for improvement.

Q15 764 responses

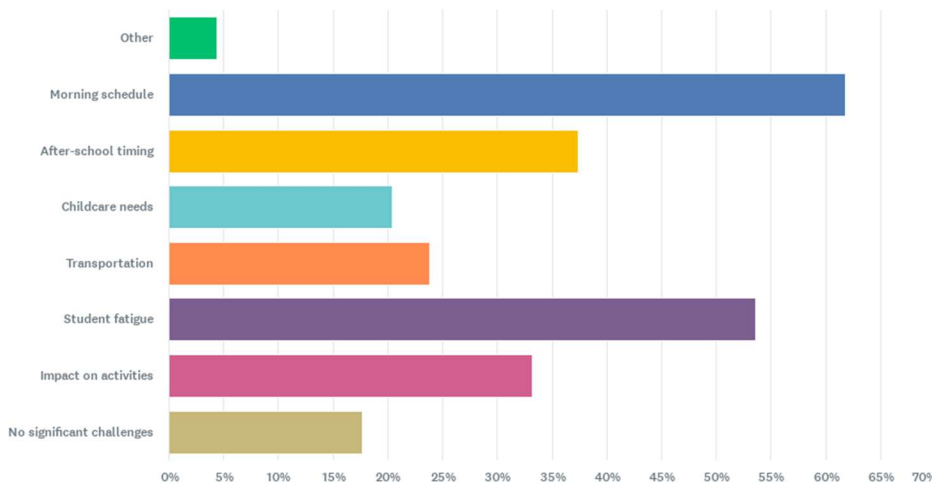
Which of the following would provide the most meaningful improvement for next school year (2026-27)?



Additionally, **62.7% of families indicated that it is very or extremely important for the district to continue exploring potential schedule refinements**, underscoring sustained interest in and support for ongoing evaluation and adjustment.

Q6 828 responses

What challenges does your family experience with the current schedule? (select all that apply)



Open-ended responses further reinforce these findings, reflecting significant concern and dissatisfaction with the current schedule and its impacts, with only a minority of responses expressing neutral or positive sentiment.

Elevating Student Voices – Middle School Session (April 20, 2026)

The Middle School Elevating Student Voices session provided a balanced and candid perspective on how current school start and end times are experienced by students, highlighting both strengths and areas for potential refinement. Students consistently described lower energy and focus in the early morning, often connected to late evenings driven by homework, athletics, and extracurricular commitments, while many reported improved engagement later in the day—though perspectives varied, reinforcing that student needs are not uniform. Feedback underscored the interconnected nature of scheduling decisions, with particular emphasis on the impact of after-school activities, transportation (including long bus rides and mixed age groupings), and family logistics. Students also identified opportunities to improve the internal structure of the school day, including more meaningful use of flexible or study time and reconsideration of shorter end-of-day periods. Importantly, students demonstrated an understanding of tradeoffs—recognizing that later start times may result in later end times—and emphasized the importance of adults considering the full scope of student experience when evaluating future changes.

Key Points to Consider

1. Variability in Student Focus and Engagement Across the School Day

- Students described differing patterns of focus, with many indicating lower readiness in the morning and improved engagement later in the day, while others reported the opposite.
- Representative student perspectives included:
 - *“In the morning I’m just way too tired... I feel more focused in the afternoon.”*
 - *“I feel more focused anytime after like eight to nine o’clock... I’m actually awake.”*
- At the same time, some students noted that morning activity (e.g., gym) can enhance focus, reinforcing variability in individual experience.

2. Perceived Impact of Sleep and Daily Fatigue on Learning Readiness

- Students frequently connected start times with sleep patterns, fatigue, and overall readiness to learn.
- Comments reflected challenges balancing late evenings and early mornings:
 - *“I get home pretty late... I still have to do dinner and everything... I don’t get enough sleep.”*
- These experiences suggest a perceived relationship between scheduling and energy, attention, and academic engagement.

3. Interdependence Between School Schedule and Extracurricular Participation

- Students identified after-school sports and activities as a significant factor influencing their daily experience.
- Feedback reflected both benefits and constraints:
 - Positive: *“I like the after school sports because... there’s time after school.”*
 - Challenge: *“If you have a game and you get home late, you don’t really have much time to do your homework.”*
- Students demonstrated awareness of tradeoffs between scheduling, participation, and academic responsibilities.

4. Transportation Experiences as a Contributor to Daily Fatigue and Time Use

- Students raised concerns regarding bus ride duration and structure, including:
 - *“Some of our friends... have like two hour long bus rides... it’s just too long.”*
- Additional considerations included mixed age group bussing and logistical inefficiencies, indicating that transportation is a visible and impactful component of the student experience.

5. Academic Impact and Performance Considerations

- Some students directly associated schedule changes with academic performance outcomes:
 - *“Last year... almost all my grades were like 90 and above. And this year...[it took me until the 3rd quarter to get back to that level]”*
- While anecdotal, some comments suggest a perceived link between schedule structure and academic outcomes for some students.

6. Recognition of Tradeoffs in Scheduling Decisions

- Students demonstrated an understanding that changes to start times involve system-wide implications (e.g., transportation, athletics, scheduling constraints).
- While many expressed a preference for later start times, they also acknowledged that:
 - *“If you start later... you end later... impacts your after-school activities.”*
- This reflects a balanced and informed perspective on feasibility and practicality.

7. Desire for Adult Understanding of the Contemporary Student Experience

- Students emphasized the importance of adults recognizing how school has evolved:
 - *“School has changed a lot... you did not have to deal with the kind of school that we have to deal with right now.”*
- This includes - academic expectations, extracurricular demands, social and emotional pressures
- Students expressed a desire for decisions to reflect the full context of their lived experience.

Elevating Student Voices – High School Session (April 20, 2026)

The High School “Elevating Student Voices” session provided clear and consistent feedback that current school start times contribute to student fatigue, reduced engagement in early classes, and increased stress, particularly when combined with late evenings driven by athletics, extracurricular activities, and academic demands. Students described a cycle of limited sleep and diminished readiness to learn, with many noting improved focus later in the day. Additional factors—including scheduling conflicts related to specialized programs such as New Visions, inefficiencies within class periods, limited transition time, and transportation and family logistics—further compound the student experience. While students demonstrated an understanding of the tradeoffs associated with schedule changes, there was a strong preference for later start times and more flexible, efficient use of time during the school day. Overall, feedback reinforces the importance of considering student well-being, sleep, and the full range of academic and extracurricular responsibilities when evaluating both near-term adjustments and longer-term scheduling refinements.

Key Points to Consider

1. Early Start Times Are Associated with Reduced Morning Engagement

- Students consistently described low energy and limited participation in early morning classes, with engagement improving as the day progresses.
- Representative student perspectives included:
 - *“Everyone is asleep... no one is paying attention... participation increases throughout the period.”*
 - *“Even an extra half hour would be crucial to feel energized.”*
- These comments suggest a perceived relationship between start times and initial instructional effectiveness.

2. Sleep Deprivation Is a Recurring and Cross-Cutting Theme

- Students frequently connected current schedules to insufficient sleep and fatigue, particularly when balancing school and extracurricular commitments.
- Examples included:
 - *“When you get home from... an away game... at 9:30 or 10... and then you have to be at school... it makes it harder.”*
 - *“Sleep... should be a priority... not something optional.”*
- Students framed sleep as connected to academic performance, focus, and well-being.

3. Academic and Program Demands Contribute to Stress and Time Pressure

- Students described increasing academic expectations, particularly when combined with specialized programming such as New Visions.
- Illustrative feedback included:
 - *“We’ve been more stressed... more rushed... we have to leave early... and work on projects after school.”*
- These conditions were associated with:
 - Missed instructional time
 - Compressed work time during the day
 - Increased reliance on after-school hours for academic completion

4. Extracurricular and Co-Curricular Commitments Extend the School Day

- Students described extensive involvement in:
 - Athletics
 - Clubs and organizations
 - External commitments (e.g., employment, faith-based programs)
- These demands contribute to:
 - Late evenings
 - Reduced time for homework and rest
 - Increased scheduling conflicts
- As one student summarized:
 - *"It's too busy... always trying to figure out how to fit everything in."*

5. Transportation and Family Logistics Influence Student Experience

- Students identified challenges related to:
 - Travel time to and from school
 - Coordination with family schedules
- Example:
 - *"I live 20 minutes away... I get there... and I'm just exhausted in first period."*
- These factors contribute to overall daily fatigue and time constraints.

6. Preference for Later Start Times with Recognition of Tradeoffs

- Many students expressed a preference for later start times (e.g., 8:00–3:00):
 - *"I think the biggest change would just be starting later."*
- At the same time, students acknowledged:
 - Potential impacts on athletics and activities
 - System-wide constraints
- This reflects an understanding of feasibility considerations and tradeoffs.

7. Recognition of Differences Between Student and Adult Perspectives

- Students emphasized that adults should better understand the evolving student experience:
 - *"Everyone has different responsibilities... it changes every year."*
- This includes:
 - Academic demands
 - Extracurricular commitments
 - Social and emotional pressures

Focus Group – External Stakeholders Session (April 20, 2026)

The External Stakeholder Focus Group revealed significant and consistent concerns regarding the impact of current school start and end times on student well-being, family functioning, and overall system effectiveness. Families described a daily cycle of early start times, late evening commitments, and insufficient sleep—particularly for older students—resulting in fatigue, reduced academic engagement, and, in some cases, safety concerns. At the same time, later dismissal times for younger students have limited opportunities for rest, extracurricular participation, and family routines, often leading to increased stress and behavioral challenges. Stakeholders also highlighted substantial logistical burdens, including transportation inefficiencies, childcare needs, and complex coordination across multiple schools. While participants expressed appreciation for the efforts of staff, there was a strong call for improved communication, transparency, and clarity regarding the rationale and outcomes of the schedule changes. Overall, feedback underscores the need to consider both immediate, practical refinements and longer-term, system-level adjustments that better align with student developmental needs, family realities, and community expectations.

Key Points to Consider

1. Student Sleep and Daily Fatigue Are Primary Concerns Across Age Levels

- Stakeholders consistently described insufficient sleep and cumulative fatigue, particularly for secondary students balancing academics, athletics, and extracurriculars.
- Representative perspectives included:
 - *“By the time she got done with everything... she had like five or six hours to sleep... How are you supposed to function?”*
- Younger students were also described as experiencing long days:
 - *“He’s up three hours before he even walks into his classroom.”*
- These comments reflect a perceived connection between scheduling and student readiness, health, and safety.

2. Family Logistics and Daily Routines Have Become Increasingly Complex

- Families reported significant challenges coordinating: work schedules, childcare arrangements, transportation across multiple schools
- In many cases, schedules were described as difficult to manage without support:
 - *“We could not have made the schedules work... without our grandparents, it wouldn’t have been possible.”*
- These experiences suggest that scheduling changes have had system-wide ripple effects on family operations.

3. Elementary Schedule Shifts Impact Student Behavior and After-School Functioning

- Later dismissal times for younger students were associated with:
 - Fatigue and irritability at home
 - Limited time for rest before extracurricular activities
- Stakeholders described:
 - *“They are hangry and tired... there are tantrums... things that we didn’t see before this school year.”*
- These observations point to the importance of transition and decompression time for younger students.

4. Early Start Times Raise Safety and Developmental Concerns for Younger Students

- Stakeholders highlighted concerns about:
 - Young students waiting for buses in the dark
 - Early wake times relative to developmental readiness
- Example:
 - *“Any child standing on a corner... at 6:20 in the morning is a little nerve wracking.”*
- These comments reflect perceived risks related to safety and age-appropriate scheduling.

5. Academic Impacts Are Noted, Particularly for High-Performing Students

- Some stakeholders reported changes in academic performance, even among high-achieving students:
 - *“He went from... 96 and above... to only high honors... that was crushing for him.”*
 - *“My senior actually lost part of her college scholarship because her grade went down.”*
- While anecdotal, these comments suggest a perceived relationship between schedule changes and academic outcomes.

6. Extracurricular Participation Is Constrained by Time and Logistics

- Families described challenges balancing: athletics and activities; homework and family time
- Students often move directly from school to activities with limited transition:
 - *“There’s no decompress time... it’s school to car to somewhere else.”*
- This reflects tension between opportunity access and time availability.

7. Transportation Experiences Are a Significant and Visible Factor

- Stakeholders noted: long bus rides, increased behavioral challenges, perceived inefficiencies in routing
- Example:
 - *“My daughter... is on the bus... for over an hour.”*
- Transportation was frequently identified as a key driver and constraint within the system.

8. System Interdependencies Are Creating Compounding Effects

- Stakeholders described how scheduling interacts with: transportation, staffing and contracts, program requirements (e.g., BOCES/New Visions, music lessons)
- Example:
 - *“20–30 minutes a day... missing instruction... that’s a lot over the year.”*
- These interactions often result in unintended consequences across the system.

9. Communication and Transparency Are Areas of Concern

- A consistent theme was a perceived lack of:
 - Clear communication regarding rationale and outcomes
 - Transparency in decision-making processes
- Stakeholders expressed:
 - *“There’s no communication... no transparency.”*
- This has contributed to questions about process clarity and stakeholder engagement.

10. Alignment with Developmental Needs Is a Common Perspective

- Many participants expressed the view that:
 - Older students would benefit from later start times
 - Younger students may be better suited to earlier schedules
- Example:
 - *“The smaller they are, the earlier they should be... the older they are, the later.”*
- This reflects a perception of misalignment between current schedules and developmental research.

11. Mental Health and Student Support Considerations Are Emerging

- Stakeholders raised concerns about:
 - Stress and emotional strain on students
 - Limited access to support systems
- Example:
 - *“We’re doing stuff that’s affecting our kids’ mental health... and we don’t even have... school counselors.”*
- These comments highlight the importance of student wellness infrastructure alongside scheduling decisions.

12. Community Trust and Process Integrity Are Critical Considerations

- Participants expressed concerns regarding:
 - The timing and sequencing of decisions
 - The extent to which stakeholder input influences outcomes
- Representative perspective:
 - *“We’re saying we hear you... but at the end of the day... it doesn’t matter.”*
- There is a clear desire for:
 - Ongoing engagement
 - Evidence that feedback informs meaningful action

Public Update – April 27, 2026

Special Ad Hoc Committee's Review of School Start and End Times

The Horseheads Central School District Special Ad Hoc Committee convened on April 27, 2026, to continue its review of the district's current school start and end times. This meeting represented a critical phase in the process, focusing on deepening analysis of stakeholder feedback across multiple engagement methods and beginning to translate that data into potential future considerations. Building on prior meetings, the session emphasized structured review of stakeholder input, identification of themes, and initial exploration of potential actions aligned to the committee's guiding framework.

The committee's work continues to be guided by a clear "North Star" of ensuring the best possible educational experiences for students and continues to examine current conditions and potential future considerations through three key lenses:

- **Feasibility** – operational, transportation, contractual, and fiscal realities
- **Practicality** – implementation considerations and educational impact
- **Desirability** – community perspectives and stakeholder experiences

The central focus of the meeting involved a structured review of stakeholder feedback collected through multiple engagement strategies, including:

- Elevating Student Voices Sessions – Intermediate School/Middle School & High School
- External Stakeholder Focus Group
- Internal Stakeholder Surveys
- External Stakeholder Surveys

Committee members engaged in a facilitated protocol to identify key insights, recurring questions, and areas of alignment across these data sources. Committee discussion across all data sources surfaced several cross-cutting insights:

- **Variability of experience** – impacts differ across student groups, grade levels, and family contexts
- **Interconnected factors** – scheduling decisions influence transportation, programming, staffing, and daily routines
- **Student well-being and engagement** – recurring considerations related to sleep, fatigue, readiness to learn, and involvement in activities
- **Operational and logistical complexity** – challenges related to coordination, timing, and system constraints
- **Communication and understanding** – importance of clarity, transparency, and shared understanding throughout the process

These themes reinforced the system's complexity and the importance of balancing multiple factors in future considerations.

The committee will reconvene on May 14 to continue discussing potential future actions. The overall process will enter the final stages by working with the committee to provide feedback on a draft report on May 28 and then present a final report to the Board of Education on June 3.

Public Update – May 14, 2026

Special Ad Hoc Committee's Review of School Start and End Times

The Horseheads Central School District Special Ad Hoc Committee convened on May 14, 2026, to continue its structured review of current school start and end times and to begin discussing potential future actions emerging from the broader stakeholder engagement process.

This meeting represented an important transition point in the process—from identifying and synthesizing stakeholder feedback toward exploring the relative actionability of possible next steps. The session focused on reviewing potential short-term, long-term, and process-oriented future actions through the committee's guiding lenses of feasibility, practicality, and desirability. This session primarily served as an opportunity for facilitated dialogue, clarification, and early-stage feedback regarding potential directions moving forward.

The committee's work continues to be guided by a clear "North Star" of ensuring the best possible educational experiences for students and continues to examine current conditions and potential future considerations through three key lenses:

- **Feasibility** – operational, transportation, contractual, and fiscal realities
- **Practicality** – implementation considerations and educational impact
- **Desirability** – community perspectives and stakeholder experiences

These themes reinforced the system's complexity and the importance of balancing multiple factors in future considerations.

The committee's work continues to support a disciplined, transparent process that informs thoughtful decision-making by district leadership and the Board of Education.

Public Update – June 3, 2026

Special Ad Hoc Committee's Review of School Start and End Times

The Horseheads Central School District Special Ad Hoc Committee convened on June 3, 2026, for a continued discussion of its structured review of current school start and end times. This meeting, rescheduled from May 28, provided an opportunity for the committee to continue exploring potential future actions emerging from the broader stakeholder engagement process and previous committee conversations.

The session focused on further discussion of possible short-term, long-term, and process-oriented considerations. Committee members continued to examine the educational, operational, transportation, financial, and community factors connected to potential future actions. The meeting provided additional opportunity to clarify questions, better understand implementation realities, and refine the information that will inform the committee's final report.

The committee's work continues to be guided by a clear "North Star" of ensuring the best possible educational experiences for students and continues to examine current conditions and potential future considerations through three key lenses:

- **Feasibility** – operational, transportation, contractual, and fiscal realities;
- **Practicality** – implementation considerations and educational impact;
- **Desirability** – community perspectives and stakeholder experiences.

Discussion continued to reinforce several themes that have emerged throughout the process, including the importance of student well-being, the interconnected nature of transportation and scheduling systems, the value of ongoing stakeholder engagement, and the importance of clear communication and community trust.

Facilitators also clarified that the Special Ad Hoc Committee has served in an advisory and feedback role throughout the process. The committee's discussions, questions, perspectives, and guidance, together with the broader stakeholder engagement process and supporting analysis, will be synthesized into a final report for the Board of Education.

The final report is intended to document the process, summarize key themes and considerations, and organize potential future actions for Board deliberation. It is not the result of a formal committee voting process or a set of official committee recommendations. Rather, it reflects the input and feedback generated throughout the process to support thoughtful future decision-making by district leadership and the Board of Education.

The Board of Education Special Meeting for the presentation of the final report has been rescheduled for **Monday, June 8, 2026**. The committee's work continues to support a disciplined, transparent process designed to inform ongoing discussion and future governance deliberation.

Findings

The findings below synthesize the engagement process, committee discussions, student voice sessions, survey results, focus group feedback, and current-state review materials. They are intended to help the Board of Education and district leadership understand the major themes that emerged. They are not formal recommendations of the Special Ad Hoc Committee and are not the result of a committee vote.

Finding 1: Stakeholder feedback indicates that the current start and end times are affecting students, families, and staff in different ways.

The review found that the current start and end times are not experienced the same way across the district. Some students, families, and staff have adjusted to the schedule. Others continue to report serious challenges. The most common concerns involve student fatigue, family logistics, transportation, after-school activities, and daily routines.

Impact varies by grade level, family structure, transportation needs, program participation, extracurricular involvement, and staff role. Future decisions should avoid treating stakeholder experience as one uniform story. The district should continue to separate broad patterns from specific problems that may need targeted solutions.

Finding 2: Student well-being, sleep, and readiness to learn emerged as central considerations.

Student well-being remained a central concern across surveys, student voice sessions, focus group feedback, and committee discussion. Stakeholders raised questions about sleep, fatigue, morning readiness, afternoon energy, emotional regulation, academic focus, and the combined weight of school, homework, athletics, activities, and family responsibilities.

The committee discussions reinforced the need to examine age-appropriate and developmentally appropriate scheduling, especially for Intermediate School and Middle School students. Members also raised the need for a stronger health review, including research on adolescent sleep, developmental readiness, and student wellness. Future study should include credible medical, developmental, and school-health expertise.

Finding 3: Transportation is both a central constraint and a central design factor.

Transportation is one of the strongest factors shaping what is feasible. The district's two-tier model, 100% busing commitment, bus staging requirements, driver availability, route structure, construction-related constraints, and state transportation rules all affect schedule options.

Committee discussions made clear that some ideas that appear simple, such as flipping start times or pulling times closer together, carry major transportation implications. These include bus staging at the Intermediate School/Middle School campus, possible need for additional buses and drivers, traffic flow, emergency evacuation planning, athletics transportation, and the timing of elementary and secondary routes.

Any larger schedule change should be preceded by a transportation usage audit and detailed routing analysis. The district should identify what can be done within the current model, what would require new resources, and what would require changes to policy or community expectations.

Finding 4: Some concerns may be addressed through targeted refinements rather than full districtwide schedule redesign.

The review identified several concerns that may be addressed through internal schedule adjustments, program refinements, supervision changes, activity planning, or transportation coordination. These include BOCES, CTE, and New Visions alignment; the after-school gap before athletics and activities; access to clubs and academic support; and building-level scheduling issues.

These issues may not require a full districtwide change in start and end times. They still matter. They affect student access, time use, instructional continuity, and equitable participation. Short-term work should identify which concerns can improve within the current schedule and which concerns require larger study.

Finding 5: BOCES, CTE, and New Visions alignment remains an important access issue.

Feedback and committee discussions identified concerns about alignment between the high school schedule and off-site programs. Discussion included the loss of bookend classes, student time spent waiting or traveling, transportation limits, and the effect of current scheduling on access to full instructional periods.

The discussion also showed that past structures had tradeoffs. Bookend classes may have helped align some off-site programs. They also limited course options and affected staffing and instructional capacity. Any future adjustment should examine student access and the instructional cost of returning to or modifying prior structures.

Finding 6: The after-school activity gap affects access, supervision, and equity.

The current schedule creates or increases transition periods between dismissal and the start of some athletics, clubs, and activities. The impact differs by level, sport, activity, coach availability, facility use, transportation need, and family transportation capacity. Some students can remain after school, access support, or arrange rides. Others face barriers because they cannot get home and return, cannot wait without supervision, or do not have family transportation.

The Athletic Program Transition and Supervision Report adds important operational context. High school students who dismiss at approximately 2:35 p.m. often have about 25 minutes before a 3:00 p.m. practice. Middle school student-athletes dismiss at approximately 2:05 p.m., are often transported to the high school campus, and may arrive around 2:25 p.m. before a 3:00 p.m. practice. For a 3:00 p.m. practice, this creates about 55 minutes from middle school dismissal to practice start, or about 35 minutes from arrival at the high school to practice start. In some programs, practices begin closer to 3:45 or 4:00 p.m., creating a much longer transition period for some students.

The gap is especially significant for middle school and modified student-athletes. These students may need transportation between campuses, clear supervision, productive use of time, and age-appropriate expectations before practice begins. The report also notes that winter sports may operate differently because limited and shared indoor athletic space can create rotating or later practice times.

The gap is also shaped by coach availability. Many coaches move from their regular instructional or work responsibilities into athletic responsibilities with limited transition time, often about 10–15 minutes. This limits how quickly practices can begin and reinforces the need to review, strengthen, and communicate the district’s pre-practice supervision model.

These facts clarify that the after-school gap is not simply unused time. It is a supervision, transportation, staffing, facility, and student-readiness issue. Structured pre-practice supervision should therefore be understood as an operational need, not only an athletic preference. Committee discussion identified several possible responses, including a structured activity hour, academic support, strength and conditioning, supervised study space, expanded use of the library or cafeteria, adjusted practice structures, and possible late-bus options. Each idea carries staffing, supervision, transportation, cost, and contract considerations.

Finding 7: Larger schedule changes remain desirable to many stakeholders, but they require deeper study before implementation.

Several larger schedule concepts remain desirable to some stakeholders. These include later secondary start times, earlier elementary start times, pulling start and end times closer together, and studying a high school/elementary start time swap. These ideas respond to concerns about student sleep, developmental needs, family routines, and after-school participation.

At the same time, committee discussion identified significant practical and feasibility concerns. These include bus staging, route timing, elementary pickup times, driver and bus availability, modified athletics, BOCES/CTE alignment, instructional time, staff schedules, budget capacity, and communication timelines. These larger ideas should remain part of continued study, but they should not be framed as simple short-term adjustments.

Finding 8: Communication, transparency, and public trust are major conditions for future progress.

The process surfaced strong concerns about communication, timing, transparency, and trust. Stakeholders want to understand why decisions were made, what information was used, what tradeoffs were considered, and how public input will shape future decisions.

The committee discussions also showed that trust grows through direct conversation, clear information, and shared understanding. Future work should use several forms of communication, including written updates, public presentations, small-group discussions, opportunities for questions, student feedback, and clear explanations of what can and cannot change within specific timelines.

Finding 9: Future work should begin quickly if the district wants options for September 2027 or beyond.

Significant schedule changes require more than interest or preference. They require transportation modeling, staffing analysis, budget planning, contract review, community engagement, and Board deliberation. The committee discussions reinforced that the district's budget cycle and implementation timeline matter. If the district wants to consider larger changes for September 2027 or beyond, planning should begin immediately after Board reorganization in July 2026.

A continued working group should begin by clarifying the problem to be solved, identifying the evidence needed, reviewing student health and developmental research, examining transportation and staffing models, and setting a clear public engagement timeline.

Finding 10: The next phase should separate short-term refinements from long-term structural study.

The findings support a two-track approach. The first track should focus on short-term refinements that may be possible for 2026-27 without a major districtwide schedule change. The second track should study larger structural questions for possible implementation in 2027-28 or later.

A third supporting track should focus on process conditions: communication, trust, student health review, transportation data, contract analysis, budget impact, and broader student and community feedback. This structure allows the district to act where action is possible and study more complex changes with the care they require.

Reviewing Potential Next Steps

The possible next steps in this section are not formal recommendations adopted by the Special Ad Hoc Committee. They are organized considerations that emerged from stakeholder feedback, committee discussions, and review of current conditions. They are intended to help the Board of Education and district leadership decide what may warrant immediate refinement, further study, or continued monitoring.

The actions are organized into three categories: short-term possible next steps, long-term possible next steps, and process-oriented actions. This structure recognizes that some concerns may be addressed through near-term refinement, while others require a longer planning horizon. It also recognizes the need to communicate clearly about what is possible for September 2026, what needs more study, and what tradeoffs must be understood before larger changes are considered.

Actionability Heat Map

The actionability ratings below are a consultant synthesis of stakeholder feedback, committee discussions, current-state information, and known district constraints. They are not committee votes and should not be interpreted as formal recommendations adopted by the Special Ad Hoc Committee.

Desirability is rated 4 for each possible next step because each item emerged from stakeholder feedback, committee discussions, or both. In other words, each item was included because stakeholders or committee members identified it as worth considering. The more important distinctions are practicality and feasibility.

Practicality considers whether the idea is likely to work educationally and operationally. It asks whether the action makes sense for students, families, staff, programs, supervision, daily routines, and school operations.

Feasibility considers whether the district has the time, staffing, transportation capacity, contractual flexibility, financial resources, and implementation window needed to carry out the action within the relevant timeline.

Some items with low feasibility remain included because they were raised through the process and reflect real stakeholder concerns. Their inclusion does not mean they are ready to advance. It means they should be documented, understood, and, where appropriate, studied further or explained clearly to the public. This is especially important for ideas that are highly desirable to some stakeholders but difficult to implement because of transportation, staffing, cost, contract, safety, or policy constraints.

Rating	Label	Meaning
4	Ready to Advance	Strong desirability, clear practicality, and sufficient feasibility to advance into near-term planning, implementation review, or immediate next steps.
3	Refine Before Advancing	Desirable and potentially actionable, but requires clarification, operational refinement, cost review, staffing review, or implementation design before advancing.
2	Further Study Needed	Desirable, but significant practicality or feasibility questions remain. Requires deeper analysis before any implementation decision.
1	Do Not Advance at This Time	Desirable to some stakeholders, but current feasibility or practicality barriers are too substantial for near-term advancement. The item may still be documented because it emerged through the process.

Potential Short-Term Next Steps

Potentially considered or advanced for September 2026

The short-term potential next steps focus on targeted refinements that may be possible within the current districtwide schedule structure. These items do not assume a full redesign of start and end times for September 2026. They identify specific schedule, access, supervision, and program concerns that surfaced through stakeholder feedback and Special Ad Hoc Committee discussion.

Each item should be reviewed by the administrative team for implementation requirements, staffing needs, contract implications, transportation effects, and cost. Some items may be ready to advance quickly. Others may need additional analysis before action. The purpose of this section is to identify practical areas for near-term attention while keeping larger structural schedule questions in the long-term study category.

Potential Next Step	Desirability	Practicality	Feasibility	Overall
1. Address BOCES, CTE, and New Visions schedule conflicts	4	3	3	3 – Refine Before Advancing
2. Reduce the after-school time gap for athletics and activities	4	3	3	3 – Refine Before Advancing
3. Explore a middle school/high school activity hour	4	3	2	3 – Refine Before Advancing
4. Review modest Intermediate School/Middle School timing adjustments	4	2	2	2 – Further Study Needed
5. Review minor building-level schedule tweaks	4	4	4	4 – Ready to Advance

Rating Rationale

The short-term ratings reflect a distinction between targeted refinements and larger schedule changes. Building-level schedule tweaks are rated highest because they can likely be reviewed within existing structures and may address specific concerns without changing districtwide start and end times. BOCES, CTE, New Visions alignment, the after-school activity gap, and a possible activity hour are also desirable and potentially actionable, but they require more refinement because each involves staffing, supervision, transportation, contract, or program design considerations.

The modest Intermediate School/Middle School timing adjustment is rated lower for overall actionability, not because the concern is less important, but because even a small timing change may affect transportation tiers, bus staging, other school schedules, athletics, family routines, and program alignment. This issue should remain visible and should be studied carefully, especially through the lens of student health, developmental readiness, and transition into grades 5-8.

1. Address BOCES, CTE, and New Visions schedule conflicts

Overall Actionability: 3 – Refine Before Advancing

The alignment between the high school schedule and off-site programming emerged as a clear short-term concern. Stakeholder feedback and committee discussions identified issues related to BOCES, CTE, and New Visions access, including travel time, missed instructional time, waiting time, and the effect of current bell times on students who participate in specialized programs.

This item is desirable because it is directly connected to student access and productive use of instructional time. It is also more practical than a full districtwide schedule change because it may be addressed through internal high school schedule refinements, transportation coordination, or targeted adjustments to how students move between the high school and off-site programs.

The committee discussions also made clear that there are tradeoffs. The prior “bookend” model may have helped some students align more efficiently with BOCES or New Visions. At the same time, bookend classes limited course options for some students and affected teacher assignment patterns. The current structure allows students to take full class periods before or after BOCES, but it has created new timing and travel challenges for some students.

For that reason, the district should review this issue as a near-term refinement, not as a simple return to a prior model. The review should examine whether students can access a meaningful first period, whether BOCES and New Visions students are losing instructional time, whether waiting time can be reduced, and whether transportation assignments or internal schedule structures can be improved without creating larger problems elsewhere.

Possible areas for further refinement include:

- Whether limited schedule adjustments could improve BOCES, CTE, and New Visions alignment
- Whether any version of a modified bookend structure would help students without reducing broader course access
- Whether transportation timing, loading, or drop-off procedures can be improved
- Whether construction-related traffic patterns are temporary constraints or longer-term design issues
- Whether students are missing meaningful instructional time because of current program alignment

2. Reduce the after-school time gap for athletics and activities

Overall Actionability: 3 – Refine Before Advancing

The time gap between dismissal and the start of some athletics, clubs, and activities emerged as a significant concern. Stakeholders described challenges for students who must wait after school, students who need supervision, students who cannot go home and return, and families who cannot provide transportation during the gap.

This issue is desirable because it affects student access, equity, safety, and time use. It is practical to review because some improvements may be possible without changing districtwide start and end times. These may include adjusted practice structures, expanded supervision, academic support, study space, club scheduling, activity programming, or more intentional use of existing staff and spaces.

The Athletic Program Transition and Supervision Report provides factual context for this concern. High school students who dismiss at approximately 2:35 p.m. often have about 25 minutes before a 3:00 p.m. practice. Middle school student-athletes have a more complex transition because many dismiss at approximately 2:05 p.m., travel to the high school campus, and arrive around 2:25 p.m. before practice begins. For 3:00 p.m. practices, this creates about 55 minutes from dismissal to practice start, or about 35 minutes from arrival at the high school to practice start. For later practices, some middle school student-athletes may experience a transition period approaching two hours from dismissal to practice start.

This issue is most significant for middle school and modified student-athletes because they are younger, often move between campuses, and may need more structured supervision before practice. Winter athletics should also be reviewed separately because shared indoor facilities can create rotating practice times and longer transition periods.

The issue is also shaped by coach availability. Many coaches have only a short window between the end of their regular work responsibilities and the beginning of practice. This limits how quickly practices can begin and reinforces the need to review, strengthen, and communicate the district's current supervision model.

For that reason, the district should treat this as an access and supervision issue, not only an athletics issue. The most immediate work should identify where the gap is most significant, which students are most affected, what supervision already exists, and what additional supports may be needed.

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Possible areas for review include:

- Current supervision structures before practice begins
- Middle school and modified student-athlete transition needs
- Winter athletics and shared indoor facility constraints
- Supervised study spaces after dismissal
- Library, cafeteria, or designated academic support areas
- Strength and conditioning or structured pre-practice programming
- Adjusted practice start times where possible
- Activity and club scheduling that reduces conflicts with athletics
- Transportation options for students who cannot remain after school or return later, recognizing that late-bus options would increase costs and reduce feasibility

3. Explore a middle school/high school activity hour pilot

Overall Actionability: 3 – Refine Before Advancing

A structured activity hour emerged as a possible way to use after-school time more productively. This concept is related to the after-school activity gap, but it should remain a separate short-term next step. The broader gap issue focuses on access, supervision, staffing, transportation, and practice timing. The activity hour is one possible design response.

The district should consider this first as a pilot rather than a full-system launch. A pilot would allow the district to test whether a structured period can support clubs, academic help, supervised study, student activities, or pre-practice programming before expanding the model more broadly.

This idea is desirable because it could improve access for students who cannot return to school later, provide more equitable participation in clubs and activities, and reduce unstructured waiting time. It may also help students complete homework or receive academic support before evening practices, games, employment, or family responsibilities.

The Athletic Program Transition and Supervision Report supports this concept by identifying structured pre-practice supervision as a potential benefit for students and programs. Possible uses include supervised study halls, academic support, strength and conditioning, team meetings, leadership development, injury prevention activities, nutrition and hydration education, and character development. These examples suggest that an activity hour should not be viewed only as a waiting period. If designed well, it could become a productive student support structure.

The first focus should be modified athletics and middle school student-athletes. This group appears to experience the most significant transition issue because many students are dismissed earlier, transported between campuses, and supervised before practice begins. The district could also examine whether the model has value for high school students who need academic support, club access, or supervised time before athletics.

The idea requires careful refinement before it can advance. An activity hour would require supervision, staffing, clear student expectations, space management, coordination with athletics, and transportation review. A late bus may be one possible area for review, but it would increase cost and reduce feasibility.

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Possible areas for review include:

- Whether the pilot should begin with middle school and modified student-athletes
- Whether the activity hour would serve middle school, high school, or both
- Whether the purpose is academic support, clubs, athletics support, supervision, or a combination of these
- Which students would benefit most
- What staffing or contract issues may apply
- How current supervision could be reviewed, strengthened, and communicated
- Whether a late bus is needed, affordable, and feasible
- How the activity hour would affect students who already participate in athletics or outside commitments

4. Review modest Intermediate School/Middle School timing adjustments

Overall Actionability: 2 – Further Study Needed

The Intermediate School/Middle School schedule remained one of the most sensitive issues in the review. Stakeholder feedback and committee discussions identified this age group as a major area of concern, especially in relation to sleep, developmental readiness, morning fatigue, and the transition from elementary school to the Intermediate School/Middle School campus.

This item is highly desirable to many stakeholders. It reflects a serious concern that students in grades 5-8 may be among the most affected by the current structure. It also connects to broader questions about student health, adolescent development, and readiness to learn.

At the same time, even a modest timing adjustment may be difficult to implement quickly. The June 3 discussion showed that the term “modest” needs to be defined. A shift of 10 or 15 minutes may not solve the core concern. A larger shift may create transportation, athletics, supervision, instructional, and family impacts. A change to Intermediate School/Middle School timing may also affect the high school, elementary schools, BOCES/CTE alignment, and bus routing.

For these reasons, this item should remain visible, but it should be treated as a focused study item rather than an immediate September 2026 implementation item unless the district can quickly model the effects and define a workable adjustment. The review should include student health and developmental research, especially regarding adolescent sleep, grade-level transition, and student readiness.

Possible areas for review include:

- Whether a small timing adjustment would produce meaningful benefit
- Whether grades 5-6 and grades 7-8 should be considered differently
- What student health or developmental research should inform the review
- How any adjustment would affect transportation tiers and bus staging
- How any adjustment would affect athletics, activities, BOCES/CTE, and family routines
- Whether a pilot study would clarify the issue or create additional complexity

5. Review minor building-level schedule tweaks

Overall Actionability: 4 – Ready to Advance

Minor building-level schedule refinements appear to be the most actionable short-term item. These refinements may address specific problems without requiring a full districtwide change in start and end times.

This item is desirable because stakeholder feedback identified several concerns that may be rooted in internal schedule design rather than bell times alone. These include music scheduling, BOCES/CTE alignment, class sequencing, use of flexible time, after-school transitions, access to academic support, and supervision before activities. It is practical because building leaders can identify specific pressure points within their own schedules. It is feasible because many refinements may be possible within existing structures, although staff, contract, supervision, and transportation considerations still need review.

Building-level refinements should not be used to avoid larger structural questions. They should be used to address problems that can be solved sooner while the district studies more complex schedule options for the future. This approach allows the district to respond to stakeholder concerns without assuming that every issue requires a full start/end time change.

Possible areas for review include:

- Internal class sequencing
- Music, intervention, and support schedules
- Use of flexible or study time
- BOCES, CTE, and New Visions alignment
- Supervision before athletics and activities
- Building-level communication about available supports
- Adjustments that improve student access without changing districtwide bell times

Potential Long-term Next Steps

requiring further investigation for possible implementation in September 2027 or beyond

The long-term potential next steps involve larger structural questions. These items are highly desirable to some stakeholders because they respond to concerns about student sleep, developmental needs, family routines, transportation, after-school access, and public trust. They also carry the greatest operational, financial, contractual, and implementation complexity.

These items should not be framed as quick fixes. They require deeper study, public communication, transportation modeling, cost analysis, contract review, staffing review, and Board deliberation. If the district wants to consider larger changes for September 2027 or beyond, the work should begin soon after Board reorganization in July 2026 so that any future option can be studied before the next budget development cycle.

Potential Next Step	Desirability	Practicality	Feasibility	Overall
1. Study later secondary and earlier elementary start times	4	3	2	2 – Further Study Needed
2. Explore whether start/end times can be pulled closer together	4	2	1	2 – Further Study Needed
3. Reassess the district's 100% busing commitment	4	1	1	1 – Do Not Advance at This Time
4. Explore walking zones or grade-level transportation eligibility changes	4	1	1	1 – Do Not Advance at This Time
5. Study a high school/elementary start time swap	4	2	1	2 – Further Study Needed

Rating Rationale

The long-term ratings reflect the difference between ideas that are compelling to many stakeholders and ideas that can be implemented responsibly within current constraints. Later secondary and earlier elementary start times, pulling start and end times closer together, and a high school/elementary start time swap all respond to real concerns about student sleep, family routines, transportation, and after-school participation. They remain important topics for study, but they require deeper analysis before any implementation decision.

The lower feasibility ratings are driven primarily by transportation capacity, bus staging requirements, driver availability, budget impact, staffing, contract implications, athletics, BOCES/CTE alignment, and the time needed for public engagement. Reassessing 100% busing and exploring walking zones or grade-level transportation eligibility changes are included because they emerged through the process, but they are rated lowest for overall actionability

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because they appear unlikely to provide a strong schedule solution without creating major safety, equity, state aid, traffic, policy, and community concerns.

Low feasibility does not mean these concerns should be ignored. It means the district should be clear about the barriers, avoid overpromising, and use future study to determine whether any version of these ideas can reasonably support the district's educational and operational goals.

1. Study later secondary and earlier elementary start times

Overall Actionability: 2 – Further Study Needed

A later secondary start time and earlier elementary start time emerged as one of the clearest long-term concepts for further study. This idea reflects stakeholder concerns about adolescent sleep, student fatigue, morning readiness, and developmental alignment. It also reflects the view shared by some stakeholders that younger students may be better suited to earlier schedules, while older students may benefit from a later start.

This item is desirable because it responds directly to student wellness and learning readiness concerns. It is also practical to study because the district can review research, compare models, engage stakeholders, and examine transportation scenarios. However, it is not yet feasible as a near-term change because implementation would require a full review of transportation, staffing, instructional time, athletics, childcare, family routines, BOCES/CTE alignment, and budget impact.

The committee discussions reinforced the need to include student health and developmental research in any future review. Committee members raised concerns that the process had not yet included enough direct study of sleep, health, and age-appropriate scheduling. A future study should begin there. It should then connect the research to local schedule models and district operating realities.

Possible areas for review include:

- Student sleep, health, and developmental research
- Differences among grades 5-6, 7-8, and 9-12
- Elementary family routines and childcare impact
- BOCES, CTE, and New Visions alignment
- Athletics, activities, and evening commitments
- Transportation tiers, ride times, and bus staging
- Staffing, contract, and budget implications

2. Explore whether start/end times can be pulled closer together

Overall Actionability: 2 – Further Study Needed

Reducing the spread between school start and end times is desirable because it may reduce family strain, narrow gaps between levels, and create a more coherent districtwide schedule. Stakeholders raised concerns about staggered schedules, long gaps, childcare, transportation coordination, and the effect of schedule spread on family routines.

The concept is practical to study, but current feasibility appears limited. The June 3 discussion identified major transportation and cost barriers. A model that brings times closer together may require additional buses, additional drivers, route redesign, and added financial capacity. Transportation discussion also noted the relationship between schedule compression, bus staging, pickup and drop-off timing, and the district's current two-tier model.

This item should remain in the long-term study category. It may be worth exploring if the Board of Education wants to understand the true cost of greater schedule alignment. However, the district should be clear that pulling times closer together may require new resources and may create tradeoffs with staffing, programs, and taxes.

Possible areas for review include:

- How much schedule compression is actually possible within the current transportation model
- Whether additional buses or drivers would be required
- Whether driver recruitment is realistic
- How costs would affect the budget and tax levy
- Whether schedule compression would improve enough problems to justify the cost
- What tradeoffs would be required in staffing, programs, or operations

3. Reassess the district's 100% busing commitment

Overall Actionability: 1 – Do Not Advance at This Time

Reassessing the district's 100% busing commitment surfaced as a possible way to create transportation flexibility. Some stakeholders asked whether reducing transportation eligibility could free buses, reduce pressure on the system, or make schedule changes easier.

Based on the June 3 discussion, this item should not advance as a central schedule solution at this time. The practical and feasibility barriers are substantial. Transportation discussion suggested that changing the 100% busing commitment may not produce the level of schedule flexibility some stakeholders expect. It may also create safety concerns, equity concerns, increased parent drop-off traffic, public opposition, state aid implications, and possible referendum requirements.

The issue may still be worth documenting as part of the public record because it was raised through the process. However, it should not be presented as a strong pathway for solving start and end time concerns unless future analysis shows greater benefit than currently appears likely.

Possible areas for review, if the Board chooses to study this later, include:

- Actual ridership by route and grade level
- Potential bus savings under different eligibility models
- Safety conditions for students who would no longer receive transportation
- Sidewalks, road shoulders, traffic patterns, winter conditions, and crossing needs
- State aid impact
- Public referendum requirements
- Equity impact on families without flexible transportation options

4. Explore walking zones or grade-level transportation eligibility changes

Overall Actionability: 1 – Do Not Advance at This Time

Walking zones or grade-level transportation eligibility changes are closely related to the 100% busing discussion. This idea is desirable to some stakeholders because it may appear to offer transportation efficiency. However, the June 3 discussion identified major limitations.

Transportation discussion noted that walking zones are problematic under the district's current 100% busing eligibility structure. The discussion also raised safety concerns related to roads, sidewalks, traffic, crossing guards, and parent drop-off congestion. Some areas that may fall within distance-based walking ranges may not be safe or reasonable walking areas for students. In addition, reducing transportation eligibility may increase car traffic at already congested campuses and may not produce enough bus savings to support larger schedule changes.

For those reasons, this item should not be advanced as a near-term or primary long-term solution. If studied at all, it should be part of a broader transportation policy review, not a narrow schedule fix.

Possible areas for review, if pursued later, include:

- State rules and local policy requirements
- Public referendum requirements
- Student safety by road segment and neighborhood
- Sidewalks, lighting, crossings, and winter conditions
- Effect on parent drop-off and campus traffic
- Equity impact on families without transportation flexibility
- Actual relationship between walking zones and start/end time flexibility

5. Study a high school/elementary start time swap

Overall Actionability: 2 – Further Study Needed

A high school/elementary start time swap remains desirable to many stakeholders because it appears to respond directly to concerns about adolescent sleep and older student readiness. It also appears, on the surface, to be a simple way to return to a more familiar structure or align schedules more closely with developmental needs.

Committee discussions made clear that a swap is not simple. Transportation implications are significant. Discussion identified the need for buses to pre-stage at the Intermediate School/Middle School campus, the importance of loading order, the effect of campus traffic patterns, and the possibility that an elementary start time could move much earlier than some stakeholders would consider acceptable. Discussion also raised concerns about buses rolling out very early, modified athletics, seventh and eighth grade participation in higher-level sports, instructional schedules, food service, supervision, and construction-related traffic constraints.

This item should remain a long-term study item. It should not be dismissed, because it is desirable to many stakeholders and connects to legitimate student wellness concerns. It also should not be framed as an easy September 2026 change. A credible review would need to build transportation models from the afternoon schedule backward, test elementary pickup times, examine campus staging, review athletics and BOCES/CTE effects, and determine cost.

Possible areas for review include:

- Earliest realistic elementary pickup and start times
- Bus staging needs at Intermediate School/Middle School
- Parking lot and traffic flow constraints
- Impact on modified, JV, and varsity athletics
- Impact on BOCES, CTE, and New Visions
- Food service, supervision, and instructional schedule effects
- Family routines and childcare impact
- Whether the educational benefit is strong enough to justify the operational cost and disruption

Process Recommendations for Moving Forward

process-oriented actions to support informed decision-making

The process recommendations below are not direct changes to school start and end times. They are enabling actions. They create the conditions for clearer communication, stronger analysis, better public understanding, and more credible future decision-making.

The stakeholder engagement process and committee discussions made clear that future progress will depend not only on what options the district studies, but also on how the district studies them. Community members, staff, students, and Board of Education members need shared facts, realistic timelines, clear explanations, and meaningful opportunities to understand tradeoffs before larger schedule decisions are considered.

These recommendations should begin as soon as possible. They can help the district clarify what may be adjusted for 2026–27, preserve momentum from the Special Ad Hoc Committee process, and build a stronger foundation for any larger schedule review connected to September 2027 or beyond.

1. Clarify what can and cannot change for 2026–27

Communicate realistic expectations, possible refinements, constraints, and decision timelines.

The district should clearly identify what refinements may be possible for the 2026–27 school year and what changes require more time. This includes naming which issues can be addressed through building-level adjustments, internal schedule refinements, supervision changes, program coordination, or transportation tweaks, and which issues require deeper study.

This step matters because expectations must be clear. Stakeholders need to know what can be reviewed now, what cannot be responsibly changed by September 2026, and what timeline will guide future discussion. Clear boundaries can reduce confusion, prevent overpromising, and help the Board of Education and district leadership communicate with greater precision.

Possible areas for clarification include:

- Which short-term refinements are under active review
- Which options require transportation modeling or budget analysis
- Which items require contract or staffing review
- Which decisions rest with administration and which require Board action
- What timeline will guide continued study, public feedback, and future communication

2. Strengthen communication and trust-building

Use multiple communication methods beyond Board meetings to share information directly with families, staff, students, and the community.

Communication and trust emerged as major themes throughout the process. Stakeholders expressed a need for clearer explanations, more accessible information, and stronger evidence that feedback is being heard and considered. Future communication should extend beyond Board meetings alone.

The district should use multiple methods to share information directly with families, staff, students, and the community. Written updates, public presentations, small-group conversations, frequently asked questions, building-level communication, and opportunities for questions can all help improve public understanding.

This work should focus on dialogue, not only distribution of information. The committee discussions showed that people often need a chance to ask questions, hear the constraints, understand the tradeoffs, and see how one schedule decision affects transportation, staffing, programs, athletics, and family routines.

Possible areas for action include:

- Regular public updates on next steps
- Clear explanations of what has been studied and what remains unresolved
- Small-group community conversations before large public forums
- Staff-facing communication so employees can answer common questions accurately
- A public timeline for study, feedback, Board discussion, and possible decision points
- Clear explanation of how stakeholder input is being used

3. Gather broader student feedback

Seek input from a wider range of students, including those who may be less involved or less visible in traditional feedback settings.

The Elevating Student Voices sessions provided important insight, but future work should include a broader range of student perspectives. Students experience the schedule directly. Their feedback should remain central in any continued review.

Broader student feedback should include students across grade levels, programs, activities, performance levels, and school experiences. It should also include students who may not typically participate in formal leadership groups or public-facing feedback opportunities. Student voice should not be limited to the most visible, most involved, or most available students.

Future student feedback should help the district understand how the schedule affects sleep, focus, stress, homework, activities, transportation, family responsibilities, and access to support. It should also help distinguish differences among intermediate, middle, and high school students.

Possible areas for student feedback include:

- Sleep, fatigue, and readiness to learn
- Morning and afternoon focus
- Homework, activities, athletics, employment, and family responsibilities
- Transportation and ride times
- Access to clubs, academic support, and extracurricular opportunities
- Differences among grades 5–6, 7–8, and 9–12
- What students believe would make the current schedule work better

4. Conduct a transportation usage audit

Gather accurate data on ridership, routes, timing, capacity, and transportation constraints.

Transportation is one of the strongest factors shaping schedule feasibility. A transportation usage audit should gather accurate information on ridership, routes, timing, capacity, ride times, staging, driver availability, bus utilization, and transportation constraints.

This step is essential because many possible schedule changes depend on transportation capacity. The committee discussions made clear that ideas such as pulling start times closer together, adjusting Intermediate School/Middle School timing, changing transportation eligibility, or swapping school start times cannot be evaluated responsibly without better transportation data.

The audit should help the district identify what can be done within the current transportation model, what would require additional resources, and what would require policy, staffing, or budget changes. It should also help separate perceived transportation issues from documented transportation constraints.

Possible areas for review include:

- Actual ridership by route, school, and grade level
- Morning and afternoon route timing
- Bus capacity and utilization
- Ride times and wait times
- Driver availability and assignment constraints
- Campus staging and traffic flow
- Transportation impact of possible schedule scenarios
- Relationship between 100% busing, route efficiency, and schedule flexibility

5. Review contractual and staffing implications of larger schedule changes

Examine labor, supervision, coaching, transportation staffing, pre-practice coverage, activity supervision, and operational constraints connected to larger schedule changes.

Larger schedule changes may affect teacher schedules, transportation staff, coaches, advisors, monitors, teaching assistants, supervisors, food service, and building operations. These implications should be reviewed before any major schedule option is presented as actionable.

Committee discussion showed that many schedule ideas carry staffing or contract implications that may not be obvious at first. For example, after-school activity gaps may connect to coach availability, supervision, staff workday rules, and pre-practice coverage. BOCES/CTE alignment may connect to high school schedule structure, teacher assignments, and transportation contracts. A larger start/end time shift may affect multiple employee groups at once.

This review should include the athletic supervision model, especially for middle school and modified student-athletes who travel between campuses and may experience longer transition periods before practice begins. It should also account for winter athletics, when shared indoor spaces and rotating practice schedules may create different supervision and transition needs.

This review should not be used to close down discussion. It should help the district identify what would be required to make an option work. Clear information about staffing, contracts, supervision, and coaching implications can help the Board of Education, staff, and community understand the practical path, cost, and timeline connected to any larger change.

Possible areas for review include:

- Teacher workday implications
- Transportation contract and driver assignment rules
- Coaching and advisor availability
- Supervision before and after school
- Pre-practice coverage for middle school and modified student-athletes
- Winter athletics and shared facility scheduling
- Teaching assistant, monitor, and overtime needs
- Food service and building operations
- Special education transportation and student support needs
- Staffing needs connected to activity hours, late buses, or extended supervision

6. Create a working group for continued study by July 2026

Establish a structured group to review data, stakeholder feedback, and possible options for consideration by November 2026.

The district should create a structured working group for continued study immediately after Board reorganization in July 2026. This would preserve momentum from the committee process and allow the next phase to begin before the budget development cycle becomes a limiting factor.

The working group should not restart the process from the beginning. It should build from the current report, stakeholder feedback, student voice sessions, committee discussions, transportation information, and identified short-term and long-term next steps. Its purpose should be to deepen the analysis, test possible options, and prepare the district for informed Board discussion.

The committee discussions made clear that time matters. If the district wants to consider larger options for September 2027 or beyond, planning should begin early enough to inform transportation modeling, staffing review, public engagement, and budget development.

Possible areas for working group review include:

- Definition of the problem to be solved
- Student health and developmental considerations
- Transportation models and cost scenarios
- Short-term refinements already implemented or under review
- Long-term schedule options
- Public engagement methods
- Staffing, contract, and budget implications
- Decision timeline for Board consideration by November 2026

7. Conduct a student health and developmental impact review

Review student sleep, fatigue, developmental readiness, wellness, and age-level schedule impacts to inform future consideration of start and end time options.

A student health and developmental impact review should be added as a process recommendation. Stakeholder feedback and committee discussions repeatedly raised questions about sleep, fatigue, developmental readiness, adolescent health, and the appropriateness of current schedules for different age groups.

This review should include credible medical, developmental, and school-health expertise. It should help the district understand relevant research on sleep, student wellness, adolescent development, attention, emotional regulation, and readiness to learn. It should also help the district interpret local feedback through an evidence-informed lens.

This step is especially important for any future review of Intermediate School/Middle School timing, later secondary start times, earlier elementary start times, or a high school/elementary start time swap. It would help ensure that future decisions are not based only on logistics or preference, but also on student development and wellness.

Possible areas for review include:

- Student sleep and circadian rhythm research
- Developmental differences among elementary, intermediate, middle, and high school students
- Student fatigue and readiness to learn
- Mental health and emotional regulation
- Effects of athletics, homework, activities, and employment on sleep
- Grade-level transition needs, especially grades 5–8
- Implications for future start and end time options

Closing Considerations

The work of the Special Ad Hoc Committee has given the district a clearer understanding of how current start and end times are experienced by students, families, staff, and community members. It also confirmed that schedule decisions are complex system decisions. They affect transportation, instruction, staffing, athletics, extracurricular opportunities, childcare, family routines, and public confidence.

The feedback gathered through this process does not point to one simple answer. It does identify clear areas for attention. Student well-being, sleep, readiness to learn, family logistics, transportation efficiency, program access, after-school time, and communication should remain central in future planning.

The Board of Education and district leadership now have an organized set of findings and potential actions to consider. Some items may be ready for near-term review. Others need more detailed study and sustained public engagement. The path forward should remain grounded in feasibility, practicality, desirability, and the district's responsibility to provide strong educational experiences for students.