

Community Linkage Meeting: November 16, 2010
Exploring the Impact of School Schedules on Academic Achievement
(Policy E-2)

The School Board welcomed parents from 12 of the 14 elementary schools in the district: Alderwood parent Israel Hidalgo; Birchwood parent Jennifer McAuley-Cziz; Cedar parent Sara Knies; Columbia parent Rachel Greenwood; Geneva parent Danielle Burnett; Happy parent George Dauber; Larrabee parent Barry Arps; Lowell parent Anne Welsh; Northern Heights parent Piper Fowler; Parkview parent Darcy Riggins-

- x Parent feels that elementary students work earlier in the day and feels it is a disservice to students and families for them to start so late. So she states that by 2:30 p.m. the younger kids especially are unfocused. Her family has no choice but to make the schedule work by doing homework before school because by the time the student gets off the bus at 4:15 p.m., it is a squeeze to get to soccer practice. One positive from the new schedule and specialists in primary grades is that she heard her son singing for the first time recently and that came directly from his music class. She also reiterated the fact that PE is essential in light of the childhood obesity epidemic. Getting kids to be active is important.
- x Parent states that she would invite any art, language or enrichment into the curriculum. The question should be how do we challenge our kids more. She believes that often the focus is on the ones not yet at standard and that the bar gets lowered for all.
- x Parent thinks start time for elementary schools should be earlier, while the high schools should start later. The district should take the lead on this, clean up the box and switch it up. She believes the district shouldn't let athletics and transportation issues shape the academic school schedules. It isn't fair to link the schedules to bus problems. We changed the schedule and busing problems remain, maybe more. Working parents are paying for before- and after-school care now. It used to be difficult on one end of the day, now it is difficult both ends. Parent thinks music for her first grader is great but saddened by loss of the strings program. If we get our children in art and music early, then it becomes a lifetime passion. Grateful for early grades getting music, but would really like strings back. Some teachers take on the PE component, some do not. It all depends on the teacher.
- x With a high free/reduced rate at her school, she believes the current schedule is a worry for many working parents. These parents do not have the ability to adjust their work schedules and lose income at an hourly rate. As a PTA parent, she would help the entire school community so that it feels like the school is helping these parents with some of these issues. She would like to echo the need for enrichment programs in the schools. She is surprised that the HCL program is all we have and not sure that the pull-out is the answer we need. At her school, the specialists for music and PE are 'rock stars' so it is great to share that with the younger grades. The kindergarten schedule as it is now offers no continuity, especially for those kids who may not get extra support at home. It is like starting over every day they are in school.
- x Parent believes that starting school earlier is important for younger kids. As a community, we should teach them that school is serious and important. Children are sponges in the early grades so we need to expose them to everything we can. Parent concerned by childhood obesity and what is served in the cafeteria as 1 (ais hel)-6(p in t)-4(h)m(at)-otmn Dake feat tly foss 5ld

loss of librarian time. Math and science instruction has been good but varies year to year with the teacher. She believes kids need to be challenged from an early age, help those at the bottom, but also help those at the top. Parent appreciates communication this fall, for example Dr. Baker's recorded message. Overall, this shows a caring from the district.

- x Parent has experienced each version of the kindergarten schedule. She prefers the schedule with the longer days because the half-days just do not give enough time in the day to delve into the work. She dislikes the 9:30 a.m. start time because kids are up early, get bored before the day starts as they wait. It is great that the primary grades are getting PE and music specialists.
- x Parent enjoys 9:30 a.m. start time but it is a mixed bag. Her kids go the FLAN program a couple times a week. She appreciates (loves) the same dismissal time for primary and intermediate. The release time, however, has been problematic at her school. There are many supervision issues after school as students wait for buses. She does not see any overarching science curriculum at the school. Some teachers can teach it, some can't.
- x Parent hopes the kindergarten schedule returns to every-day, half-day with a noon release time. She would like the start time to return to 9 a.m. or earlier as the research shows that an earlier start time is better for younger children. As a member of the Parent Advisory Committee, she learned there are different curriculum/focuses at different schools but she felt that certain things should be taught at all schools, not on a school-by-school basis. The technology cuts made this year were noted with fewer librarian hours.
- x Parent would like for her first grader to be more integrated in the classroom but appreciates the help that her struggling fourth grader receives. She says the PE cuts hurt. Being on PTA, they have tried to help families with the late start time by offering before school activities. She echoed the sadness about the loss of the strings program.

Dr. Baker ended the linkage by noting that everyone articulated the district challenges quite well.

- x What do we, as a district, find common and what do we let schools develop independently? He stated that all schools have discretionary FTE, depending on the size of the school, allowing uniqueness in each school. Some schools use their discretionary funds for language instruction, others on the arts, smaller class sizes, and/or literacy support. This small amount of FTE may make it appear that others might be getting more.
 - x Kindergarten schedules bring up issues on what the district should fund full-day every-day kindergarten across the system. We would need to decide as a community whether to invest in full-time kindergarten or in other programs.
 - x As noted in the discussion, there are challenges and benefits to the different start and end times for the elementary school day. One of the unintended consequences of the change in the school schedule is that schools began to develop their own before-school activities. Schools are
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