

Oyster River Cooperative School District
Start Time Meeting
March 3, 2016
Oyster River High School Library – 6:00 PM

Administrators Present:

James Morse, Superintendent, Todd Allen, Asst. Superintendent, Mike McCann, Interim Principal, ORHS, Jay Richard, Principal, ORMS

School Board Member Present:

Tom Newkirk, Allan Howland, Denise Day, Kenneth Rotner, Daniel Klein, Sarah Farwell
Maria Barth

Public: 13

I. Call to Order

Meeting was called to order at 6:02 PM.

Tom welcomed and explained the purpose of the workshop to get a sense of the road ahead.

II. Public Comment

Kate/Kale MacManes (6th grader ORMS) suggested the Board established working group which would involve staff and community.

Emma L (Frosh) senator student written letter to the School Board pointed out the following:

- More pressure before sleep to stay up later
- Additional responsibilities – sports, afterschool hobbies
- Lack of sleep makes memorization tough
- Less sleep = procrastination
- I'm worried about next day
- Grumpy/unfocused
- A/B period kids not as awake and less focused
- Asked the Board to support time change to late start
- She believes it will lower levels of depression/drug use/and create safer drivers

Liz Shay of Lee opposed for a variety of reasons unless “flex schedule” is included.

- Why should OR be on the cutting edge/
- If we do it alone athletes would miss greater academic time.
- Athletics is an organizing feature – get home, ready for bed
- Some programs (swimmers) up at 5:30 AM. How would that be addressed
- PM athletics = loss of natural light

- Bit of a catch 22 – start later = up later
- Concern about “switching” impact on elementary students.

Jennifer Lyons – representing working group in favor of change. The science is clear, others have done it, the issues have been addressed by others.

Julie Haynes – surprised by folks not supporting later start. She told the story of putting Britannica Encyclopedia __ internet – they didn’t change happened anyway. Science is clear - If we learn something is bad for you we don’t ask if it’s okay to do it (smoking).

III. Discussion

Jim updated as to the status of the Southeasters Superintendent’s Group and where they stand on a later start time.

- Portsmouth is one step ahead
- ORCSD – serious investigation
- Exeter – seriously interested in Portsmouth/ORCSD work
- Other systems in the Southeast have a range of interest. Some have no interest, others are watching Portsmouth and ORCSD closely.

Al Howland – research clear about start time – obstacles are big rocks – very complex – extracurricular is important. Process is important to build consensus – we need to build community support.

Maria Barth – When I was a child we went to school from 8-4 Monday – Friday and 8 – 1 on Saturday. Did not care about start time/seems administration solution/I now there is proactive research, but there is opposite research. Ben Franklin on obesity. Maybe kids have too much homework

Dan Klein – I agree with Al. I look at the science behind it. So many organizations say that we’re doing it backwards/Paradox of a solution may create 2/3 other problems. This needs a certain level of support from the community. The concern we hear I share. We do have a tendency to do as we’ve done. It takes courage to look at science. Take best information that we have for the largest body we serve and institute best practice. Support a change but unsure what that change should be at this point.

Denise Day – appreciate the information from community, we’ve been talking about this for a while. I support the research but 5th/6th grade I don’t know where it fits into the research. If the proposed schedule was in effect – I don’t know how this would impact working parents. Would they leave their 10 and 11-year-old children to get themselves off to school? Would there be before school care for them? But wouldn’t that defeat the purpose of a later start time? Then we had that horrible tragedy of the 10-year-old. Over time I’ve started to come up with an out of the box idea. *What if we made our school year longer with shorter school days?

Kenny Rotner – The science is clear, but I think we need to look at the totality. I see more stress placed on our students. When a decision is made we make gains but lose something. I don't remember much of what I learned in high school. I don't know the answer. Does the benefit exceed what we might lose?

Tom Newkirk – Robert Putnam "Our Kids" talks about the importance of extracurricular activities. Perhaps a tradeoff of a later start is a reduction in extracurricular? Do we want that? Homework is the elephant in the room. We need to audit homework/how smart is the homework asked of students. We need to work with teachers; I know we did surveys. First period has its problems, but last period has its problems too.

Sarah Farwell – Definitely agree with Maria/Denise that other area schools are investigating, this is encouraging. I'm an everything in moderation person. There are many things in life that are good, but we don't always do what is good for us. Why can't we find some compromise on other aspects of life. We know what good food to eat, but we don't always eat what's right

Al Howland – trying to formulate direction and structure/nexus of ideas. Present 3 or 4 options – can we live with any of those.

- 72% of high school and 50% of middle school are involved in extracurricular. We don't want to lose that.
- Transportation Impact?
- Flushing out a set of options and get reaction
- Need to involve all stakeholders
- Viable options by fall so there is time for the community, the parents, the staff and the students to adjust.

Kenny Rotner – I have a question. Does anybody have a sense how much this issue is talked about in the community?

Denise Day – I like the idea of meeting with the leadership team at the high school. Need to survey the greater community.

Sarah Farwell – I think this is a wellness issue. With my teenagers, we were discussing it and how we could move forward. The case studies were very interesting. How these systems are like ours/unlike? If we could work through in increments. We need to focus on student impact on kids.

Dan Klein – My concern – so many complexities without focus will result in this being derailed. Why as a Board we think we need a change? Not "What do you think?" Present a case/think about/and respond to concerns. I worry about getting trapped in rabbit holes. The process could overwhelm us.

Maria Barth – What community are we talking about? 20% school community or like 80% not connected to school – who may not care. Research electronic use; how much is that issue preventing students from sleeping?

Tom Newkirk – chicken and egg thing/school community. Get input on alternatives. Another workshop/leadership team/middle school team. We haven't talked much about the elementary – what's the optimum time for them.

Sarah Farwell – chicken/egg thing really true. Staff and families/then formulate solutions. I don't disagree with the science – how would the school community implement/mitigate the science so it works for our school system?

Kenny Rotner – the science is right, but the science doesn't measure the totality. What if we break ourselves down and maybe then we can craft ideas? Then we reach out.

Al Howland – with teachers what are the practical obstacles, concerns to develop, we want proposals that include criteria solutions based upon teacher input. What are the problems you see in current structure?

Dan Klein – going back to the first question. We feel compelled by the evidence to get going on this. How do we leverage the conversations with those other towns? The lack of early success can be disastrous. If we talk to teachers and they say we see no difference? How do we weight it/proceed?

Kenny Rotner - we have the obligation to ask the right questions? We have the research that many professional organizations have recommended. More than first/last.

Dan Klein – we need to develop the right path.

Tom Newkirk – This did not come from teachers. Just as a reminder, we have a strategic plan and this was not on it. It's important we gather teacher perception.

Kenny Rotner – I think Dan /Tom are on the same page.

Maria Barth – I'd like to see the survey of how many kids work in PM.

Al Howland – agree with Jim. March – June is a great window for us to get as much done as we can.

Develop questions.

First meeting in April.

Workshop in April – Feedback.

IV. Adjournment

Meeting ended at _____ PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Dr. James C. Morse, Sr.
Superintendent

Board Workshop Late Start - To DO List

Speakers in Favor: 3

Speakers Against: 4 (show of hands)

Meet with Teachers

Forum

- Community – how important is it to the community?
- Community Survey

The Board asked for the following data.

Data Collection

A vs. F period/grades/is there a difference

- What's it like to teach first period?
- Teacher perceptions of late classes?

The Action Plan the Board agreed to:

1. Meet with teachers K-12 in April
 - a. The Board will divide itself among schools
 - b. HS & MS will provide staff meeting times
 - c. Elementary schools will have “coffee & conversation with Board
2. Before meeting with teachers, the Board will develop common questions/script
 - a. The Board will submit draft questions to superintendent, and chair and vice-chair will edit
 - b. Draft questions will be presented to full Board on 6th for full Board review
 - c. Board will meet with teachers between April 6 – 20th
 - d. Board will report out results in a workshop after April 20th
 - e. The Board/Administrators will develop proposals for community at scheduled workshop
 - f. The superintendent will hold a community forum in May to gather community feedback
 - g. The Board/Administrators will refine proposal over the summer
 - h. A refined proposal will be presented in September
 - i. The Board will make a final determination by 1st meeting in October.