

**Scarborough Board of Education**

March 12, 2018

**1.0 Call to Order**

Mrs. Shea, Vice Chair, called the meeting to order.

**2.0 Attendance**

Present: Mrs. Shea, Ms. Perry, Mrs. Starr, Ms. Kazilionis, Mrs. Durgin, Mrs. Lyford, Mr. Vachon, Mr. Hinton

Absent: Mrs. Beeley

**3.0 Pledge of Allegiance****4.0 Adjustments to the Agenda**

No adjustments to the agenda.

**5.0 Workshop****5.1 2018-2019 start time issues**

Superintendent Kukenberger opened the meeting with a statement as follows:

*“Good evening,*

*Our aim in adjusting the school start time schedule in Scarborough was to design a schedule that would increase positive outcomes for all of our students. We fully anticipated and understood the magnitude of this type of change and acknowledged the potential impact on students, families, and staff.*

*Over the last several months we have been listening to our community and recognize that there are a variety of perspectives and numerous considerations that this type of change will have on students, families, and staff. We have worked alongside our transportation department, Implementation Planning Committee, teachers, parents, and other stakeholders to plan and problem-solve in a positive manner. Unfortunately, we have not been able to resolve all of the current issues and the climate in our community around this issue is untenable.*

*As we continue to listen to our community, we recognize the wide variety of perspectives on all sides of this topic and we believe that it is time to re-evaluate where we are today and what we seek to accomplish in the long term. Members of our leadership team have come together to discuss how we can move forward. Currently we see three start time options and believe that each option has both pros and cons:*

- 1. We **stay the course** and continue with the current start time plan for the 2018-2019 school year.*
- 2. We **pause implementation** completely, maintaining our existing schedule.*

3. We **compromise** for the 2018-2019 school year with an adjusted plan that includes, 8:00am SHS/SMS and 8:50am K-5 start time

*No matter the reasons or the plans, timing and community readiness matters. As a leadership team we believe that it is time to reconsider two of these options. With that said, we believe that a complete pause may allow more time to engage the community.*

*However, we have heard the community and the call for a compromise. Understanding that the final decision is that of the School Board, we feel that a pause or a compromise for the 2018-19 school year are both options to be considered.*

*We look forward to an open conversation this evening that is thought provoking and provides the School Board with additional insight from our Leadership Council members. Should the Board wish to do something different than our current plan, it is our hope that a final decision may be made sooner than later in order to move our community ahead in a positive direction.”*

The School Board and Leadership Council had a discussion regarding the proposed compromise (option #3). An administrator from each phase level addressed the Board and shared with them the effects that the proposed start times would have at their level:

- Mrs. Crosby, Wentworth Principal (grades 3-5) – Mrs. Crosby noted that her staff and students would experience the greatest impact from the change. With the original implementation plan for 2017-2018, Wentworth students would be starting their day 20 minutes (8:00am) earlier than they currently do. With the new plan, they would start 20 minutes later (8:50am). She did note that with the two tier bus schedule, it appears that students would be arriving to school on time and students would be starting their instructional day on time. Mrs. Crosby did state that she and her staff had been preparing all year for the new start time (8:00am) and that they were anxious to implement the change with their students.
- Mrs. Mullen-Martin, Blue Point School Principal (grades K-2) – Mrs. Mullen-Martin spoke on behalf of the three primary school administrators. There would be little change noticed at the K-2 level, as the start time in this compromise is the same as their current start time (8:50am). The added benefit is with the two tier bus schedule – it will allow for a more consistent arrival time for students riding the bus to school. However, like Wentworth, Mrs. Mullen-Martin noted that the K-2 staff was looking forward to an earlier start time for their young students,
- Mrs. Nadeau, Middle School Principal (grades 6-8) – The compromised start time for the middle school would have very little impact on the staff and students. Currently the middle school starts their day at 7:45am – the new start time would only be 15 minutes later (8:00am). This new start time would minimize the need to release student athletes early to attend events, it also

allows the middle school to keep their advisory block (called CREW) at its current slot on their daily schedule. The original implementation plan would have had them move this to the end of the day.

- Mr. Creech, High School principal (grades 9-12) – Like the middle school, Mr. Creech explained that with the start time moving to 8:00am, it would allow the high school to keep their advisory block to the morning. It would also allow students athletes to not miss instructional time at the end of the day to attend sporting events. Mr. Creech also noted that this schedule would align more closely with the other sending vocational schools. Staff, students and coaches would be able to participate in their afternoon school activities with little impact.

Ms. Perry stated that she firmly believes in the science of starting school later for the high school and middle school students and supported the vote last year. However, she feels that there is too much conflict in the community and supports the compromise and would like to move it forward.

Several questions were asked regarding the impact of the compromised times on the bus schedule. Mrs. Kukenberger stated that during the month of January, bus runs were tested and broken down as follows:

School	Minimum Run	Maximum Run	Average Run	Note
SMS/SHS	15 minutes	37 minutes	25 minutes	Same as current schedule
K-5	18 minutes	38 minutes	29 minutes	Current schedule
K-5	20 minutes	49 minutes	37 minutes	New 2-tier schedule

Mrs. Kukenberger did point out that typically the direction of the bus routes are reversed between the morning run and the afternoon run. Therefore, if a student was picked up first in a morning run, resulting in a longer bus ride, he/she would be dropped off first in the afternoon, resulting in a shorter bus ride.

## 6.0 Public Comment

Kristen Nilsen – 23 Morning Street – Ms. Nilsen expressed her concerns that teacher morale and mental health are at an all-time low at the high school for a number of reasons – but the main reason is that they do not feel like they are being heard. She asked the School Board to listen to the students, staff, parents and community. She applauded them for their willingness to consider a compromise on both proficiency-based education and start times, however she asked them to bring back their principal.

Betsy Chalmers – 17 Fairway Drive – Ms. Chalmers thanked the Board for their hard work, and appreciated their efforts in presenting a compromise. However, she noted that while the compromise is what is best for the community, it does not support the science that adolescents need to start school after 8:30 a.m.

Andrea Varney – 3 Morrison Drive – Ms. Varney has a son who will be entering kindergarten next fall. She was impressed by the time and work that the School Board has put into the start time issues. She is hopeful that this issue does not stall the progress that the Town has made. She thanked the Board for their time and hard work.

Lea Desveaux – 15 Wynmoor Drive – Ms. Desveaux, a junior at SHS, thanked the Board for opening up the discussion on start times and allowing for public comment. She is currently enrolled in AP and honors classes, and uses the time before and after school to seek help from her teachers. Also, it is important for her to continue to have the advisory block in the morning – and not move to the afternoon as is proposed with the late start times. Ms. Desveaux is a swimmer and has early morning practices. The later start times would not affect her current schedule as she must still get up very early to attend practice.

Scott Hardy – South Portland – Mr. Hardy no longer lives in Scarborough, but his two daughters both attended and graduated from Scarborough Schools. Mr. Hardy stated that he supported the Board 100%. He understands that this is a difficult topic that represents big change, and he applauded them “for staying the course.” Mr. Hardy also stated that he agrees with Ms. Perry and believes in the science. He is concerned that the compromised new start time is before the recommended start time for adolescents which is 8:30 a.m. or later (the new proposed time is 8:00 a.m.).

Debra Fuchs-Ertman – 15 Fairway Drive – Dr. Fuchs-Ertman has two children – one in college and one a senior at SHS. She is in agreement that adolescents should not start school before 8:30 a.m. and that is what the research and science recommend. Dr. Fuchs-Ertman hopes that in the next two years Scarborough Schools can get to the recommended start time (after 8:30 a.m.). She believes that later start times would have been beneficial for her two children.

Christy Zavasnik – Freeport – Ms. Zavasnik is a teacher at Scarborough High School. She stated that on February 15<sup>th</sup>, three Board members (Cari Lyford, Leanne Kazilionis and Donna Beeley) met with the high school staff as part of their “listening tour.” During this time, Ms. Zavasnik asked the members if “compromise was an option?” She pointed out that it appeared “the team was not ready then.” She continued to note that the very next day (February 16<sup>th</sup>), she learned that SHS Principal Creech’s contract would not be renewed. Ms. Zavasnik asked herself “was this connected or was it just a coincidence?” She concluded by asserting that “this (the compromise) is what we have needed for a long time. Thank you for starting now.”

Alicia Giftos – 2 Saratoga Lane – Ms. Giftos believes that the Board will not “consider her thoughts” – she believes this as she stated “the best predictor of future behavior is past behavior.” She continued to say that this meeting to discuss school start times was announced with little notice, and that people have opposed Board changes for months, and that the Board has ignored them until now. Ms. Giftos feels that there are still too many unresolved issues with the original proposed new school start times. She noted that she has asked for a compromise, but has been ignored – so have students, staff and Principal Creech – and that only now, is compromised being addressed. She stated that a

compromise was now being offered only because of the potential recall of 3 Board members.

April Sither – 14 Huntley Drive – Ms. Sither pleaded with the Board to “slow down.” She raised the question “what is the rush?” She stated that last April the School Board voted for the new start times, even before the bus audit was complete. She noted that she appreciates the compromise, but that she “no longer trusts this Board decision making ability when it comes to what is best for all students.”

Jennifer Jubulis – 16 Haystack Circle – Dr. Jubulis is a pediatrician and the parent of a first grader at Pleasant Hill School. She thanked the Board for trying to come to a compromise and thanked them for their service to the community. She understands that this has been a very challenging time for the community and feels that some of the challenges are a result of communication. She does support whole-heartedly later start times for adolescents, but, at the same time, she does support the recommended 10-13 hours of sleep/night for younger children. Dr. Jubulis’ professional organization, the American Academy of Pediatrics, “issues guidelines after significant review of medical literature, but there are often parts of the guidelines where there is either no hard data or there is weak data.” Dr. Jubulis also referenced the potential longer bus rides for younger students, and she noted that sleep deprived children can sometimes focus adequately in some areas (i.e. academics), but not focus well in other areas (i.e. social interaction, motivation). Dr. Jubulis agrees that high school should start later, but supports the compromise.

Cindy Kueck – 6 Moors Point Drive – Ms. Kueck fully supports the Board’s decision for a later start time. She believes that starting school after 8:30 a.m. is ideal for teenagers. She also noted that earlier in the evening both a K-2 principal and the Wentworth principal were disappointed that their younger students would not be starting earlier in the morning. Ms. Kueck understands that change is difficult and her family has had to rearrange their own schedules in the past. She is appreciative of the School Board and their willingness to make tough decisions – not necessarily the most popular with the community. Ms. Kueck feels confident that the Board has thoroughly analyzed this data, and has been studying it since 2014.

Jason McGovern – 14 Sequoia Lane – Mr. McGovern has three issues he wanted to address:

1. Bullying – Mr. McGovern does not believe that the community has a good handle on the bullying that occurs on school buses. He feels that “switching from a 3-tiered system to a 2-tiered system will only exasperate the problem.”
2. Outcomes – Mr. McGovern would like to know what the anticipated outcomes (from the propose change) are? In what areas will he see a benefit from the changes? And what is the actual impact on students?
3. Science – Mr. McGovern agrees in the science data presented, however, he would like to further analyze and discuss the sleep requirements for the K-5 students. He does not believe that this group has adequately been addressed.

Christopher Motyl – 7 Evergreen Farms Road – Dr. Motyl has two children in the Scarborough School Department. Dr. Motyl wanted to “publicly express his support for the school start times changes.” He also wanted to “commend the School Board and the Superintendent for basing this decision on the best available scientific research to date.” He stated that the “AP (Academy of Pediatrics) released a policy in 2014 recommending that all middle and high school students start no earlier than 8:30 a.m.” Dr. Motyl shared data released by the National Sleep Foundation - that found that 59% of 5<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> graders and 87% of high school students are getting less than the recommended 8 ½ - 9 hours of sleep on school nights. Some of the issues brought on by chronic sleep deprivation for adolescents include “increasing rates of cardiovascular disease, obesity, type 2 diabetes, and mental health problems such as anxiety, depression and suicidal ideation.” These studies have also shown an increase in car accidents. Dr. Motyl stated that when schools have implemented later start times, they have seen improved attendance and graduation rates. He said that there is some evidence that suggests that earlier start times (for elementary students) may result in lower standardized test scores and increased behavior and incidents in students. However, the evidence from these two studies is not conclusive. Dr. Motyl strongly encouraged families who still have concerns with the later start times to speak with their medical professional regarding their child’s health.

Steve Truncellito – Cape Elizabeth – Mr. Truncellito is a Social Studies teacher at Scarborough High School. He has taught at SHS for 10 years. He has attended many of the late start meetings and understands the issues at hand from both an educator perspective and a parent perspective. He thanked the Board for the compromise that was introduced earlier. He reminded the Board that they are working “of the people, by the people and for the people.” He closed by expressing to the Board if they wish to respect the will of the people and respect the community at the high school, they should reinstate Principal Creech.

Thor Nilsen – 23 Morning Street – Mr. Nilsen listed four issues he wanted to review:

1. Compromise – Tonight was the first time in 11 months that Mr. Nilsen has heard the word “compromise.”
2. Communication – There has been no communication. The high school staff did an excellent job creating a hybrid model (in regards to PbE), but it appeared as though both the School Board and the Superintendent had not heard them.
3. Democratic Process - Mr. Nilsen commented that he is “so saddened by what is happening to the Town” and he acknowledged that he is big part of that; Mr. Nilsen apologized for this. He stated that he was following the democratic process because he felt that he had not been heard.
4. High School Principal – Mr. Nilsen affirmed that 100% of the students and almost 100% of the staff are in support of the principal. He asked to Board to listen one last time.

Jeannine Uzzi – 17 Nutter Way – Ms. Uzzi is an educator and has been so for 19 years. She was happy and relieved to see that the Board and Superintendent offered a compromise proposal. She believes that this does show that between the February 15<sup>th</sup> meeting and tonight that important communication was occurring. She also

understands that the Board and Superintendent focus on student outcomes – much like herself. However, there are budgetary constraints that create challenges to achieving the best student outcomes, i.e. transportation (lack of buses), revising assessments, revising teaching and learning, etc. She agrees that PbE should be implemented, but that it will be costly to do so.

Ben Farino – 8 Crossing Drive – Dr. Farino has had three children go through the Scarborough School system, and his fourth child is currently a junior at the high school. Dr. Farino cited several sources that maintain that adolescents need more sleep and he shared many examples of what can happen if a teen does not get adequate sleep: increased obesity risk, type 2 diabetes risk, hypertension risk, increased rate of motor vehicle crashes, increased caffeine consumption, increased risk of anxiety, and several others. He commended both the School Board and Superintendent for leading this change. Dr. Farino remarked that he “does not think that disagreements divide a town, but rather that discourse divides a town.” He maintained that disagreements are vibrant, but that people have to be respectful of one another. He noted that disagreements are a “good thing” but that there needs to be good conversations, good discourse and respect.

Amy Topchik – 3 Rays Circle – Ms. Topchik is a sophomore at SHS. She addressed the Board and reminded them that though they believe they are doing what is in the best interest of students – that they are all adults, and not students. Ms. Topchik is a very busy student with a heavy course load and many extra-curricular activities. She also babysits for families after school in order to get spending money. If the new late start times are implemented, she will not be available to babysit afterschool. Many of the families she babysits for will be forced to find an alternative for their families. Ms. Topchik asked the Board to consider how this change will directly affect her and her peers. She asked the question, “Why are adults making the decision?” She asked to Board to maintain the current schedule.

Amy Moore – 15 Wildrose Lane – Ms. Moore is concerned that the later dismissal will compromise high school students providing after school care for younger students. She hopes that the Board is considering this impact also.

Alaena Dunn-Hoffman – 12 Libby Street – Ms. Dunn-Hoffman is the parent of a kindergarten student and wanted to be sure that there was a voice for the youngest students. She believes that the research regarding sleep is sound and valid. Her hope is that a solution can be found that will allow adolescents to get the sleep they need without adversely affecting the younger students.

Rachel Gelowtski – 4 Brookview Court – Ms. Gelowtski has a child at Blue Point School, one at Wentworth School, and will have a kindergartener at Blue Point in the fall. She also wanted to advocate for the younger students. Her children are early risers, and would benefit from an earlier start time. Ms. Gelowtski supports the earlier start time for the younger students.

Brandie Rubin – 1 Frederick Thompson Drive – Ms. Rubin has both a second grader and a sixth grader. She reminded the Board that the younger children require more hours of sleep, like her younger child. Also, for her middle school child, a later start and end time will impact her after school activities. She thanked the Board for the opportunity to speak and for the compromise, and hopes they consider all age groups before making any changes.

Max Bennett – 32 Tall Pines Road – Mr. Bennett is a 9<sup>th</sup> grade student and the freshmen class president. Mr. Bennett stated that students have gone to school under the current schedule for years and years, and future students can do the same. He maintained that like many of the students who have spoken out tonight against the time change, he too is opposed to the change. He concluded that he was there “to protect his rights and the rights of his principal.”

## **7.0 New Business**

### **7.1 Review of SB Policy ID-R – Instructional Day Regulations**

Mrs. Shea advised the Board that this policy reflects the start and end times of the student day at each phase level. Should there be a time change, this policy will be changed. There was no further discussion.

## **8.0 Adjournment**

Motion to adjourn made by Mrs. Durgin, seconded by Mrs. Lyford and voted 5-0; student rep vote 2-0 (Ms. Perry left the meeting at 8:08 p.m. and was not present for the vote.).