



February 5, 2019

TO THE HONORABLE MEMBERS OF THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE

Approval of Recommendation of Proposal to Improve School Schedules to Advance Equity

Recommendation: That the School Committee approve the proposal to improve school schedules to advance equity.

Description: The Superintendent recommends that the School Committee support an extension of the school day and changes to professional time in order to better enable our equity-driven priorities for improvement with a focus on the following goals:

- Increase the elementary and upper school student school day by 45 minutes to support a regular school day that is 6 hours, 45 minutes long, with a weekly early release at 5 hours, 45 minutes every Wednesday for educator professional time.
- Provide regular professional time for elementary and upper school staff outside of the student school day to support high-quality collaboration among educators and between educators, families and out-of-school-time partners; this protected time can be accomplished through effective use of early release days, professional days (no-school days), and/or professional hours outside of the regular school day.
- Minimal changes to the high school schedule to accommodate more time for transitions, maximize opportunities to strengthen the school community, flexibility to better serve students needs, improved collaboration time, and protected time for students to meet one-on-one with faculty to meet their individual needs.
- Staff compensation for extended work time.

This proposed extension of the school day and changes to professional time will require changes to current collective bargaining agreements with the Cambridge Education Association Units A&B and Unit E which will require bargaining, ratification by union members of these units, and subsequent ratification by the School Committee of changes to each of these collective bargaining agreements. Accordingly, the School Committee also authorizes the creation of a negotiation team to proceed with bargaining with the CEA regarding changes to support the above detailed goals.

This is a first reading of this proposed policy.

Supporting Data: Attached

Respectfully submitted

Kenneth N. Salim
Superintendent of Schools



To: Members of the Cambridge School Committee
From: Kenneth N. Salim
Superintendent of Schools
Re:: Proposal for School Committee Action to Improve School Schedules to Advance Equity
Date: February 5, 2019

Our [District Plan](#) promises rigorous, joyful, and culturally-responsive learning experiences plus personalized support for every student. Despite a consistent focus on equitable outcomes and overall improvements that outpace the state's, CPS' stubborn achievement gaps remain. In the summer of 2018, the School Committee adopted working definitions of equity and racial equity, making clear that issues of equity are more than a strand of the District Plan - they are the core of improvement efforts district-wide.

Over the course of the last two years, I have heard a range of concerns about school schedules and ways in which time and schedules are a barrier to implementing our five equity-driven priorities, which serve as the core of every school's School Improvement plan and the foundation for district-wide efforts and capacity-building:

- Expand *rigorous, joyful, culturally responsive learning* experiences
- Develop and expand effective *inclusive practices* in all classrooms
- Implement a *social, emotional and behavioral learning* framework
- *Engage families as partners* with formal ongoing mechanisms that create differentiated opportunities for family voice and engagement
- Provide all CPS educators with *cultural proficiency training* and implement ongoing cultural proficiency professional learning in all schools

More time alone will not address the challenges in our schools or close the achievement gap. However, we have an opportunity to relieve some of the time-based pressures facing our schools, take a fresh look at how current schedules organize students, staff, instruction, and services and sharpen our focus on high-quality implementation of the strategies we know will best serve our students. Those strategies include providing educators with the protected time necessary to collaborate and plan.

GOALS: By improve school schedules, we hope to provide schools with the time and flexibility they need to support all learners, particular our most vulnerable students, through:

- Delivery of high-quality, engaging, inclusive, and tiered instruction in all content areas.
- Use of small group instruction to support students with the interventions, enrichment, or extension they need.
- Support of a school-wide culture of collaboration that provides educators the time and support they need to meet all learners' individual academic, social-emotional, and behavioral needs.
- Improvement and protection of time for transitions, recess, and lunch to slow the pace of the day, protect all scheduled time - including core class time, specials, recess, and lunch, and maximize the academic, social-emotional, health, and behavioral benefits from recess, movement breaks, and a healthy lunch.
- Increased collaboration with the Cambridge out-of-school time community to improve access to and coordination of service across the sector.
- School-specific improvements to schedules - including the organization of students, staff, instruction, and services - based on school data, school improvement priorities, and community conversations with students, educators, families and partners.

PROPOSED ACTION PLAN TO IMPROVE SCHOOL SCHEDULES

Drawing on community surveys, feedback sessions, interviews, working groups, and other research and analyses about elementary & upper school schedules over the last two years, we have developed this five-part action plan to improve school schedules and drive equity and improvement.

1. **Lengthen the regular school day for elementary and upper schools.** I am proposing an extension of the school day to 6 hours and 45 minutes, with a weekly early release at 5 hours and 45 minutes to support professional time. The lengthening of the school day provides CPS schools with a unique opportunity to reimagine the whole school day, week and year and improve how they organize students, staff, and schedules to best serve students' needs. We encourage the CPS community to focus on the possible improvements that can be made by looking at 6 hours and 45 minutes, not just the additional 45 minutes. That said, to improve consistent implementation of existing requirements, CPS will expect all elementary and upper schools to incorporate the following components into their schedules:
 - Instructional guidance that supports tiered instruction and integrated approaches to teaching & learning
 - A minimum of 50 minutes for weekly high-quality personalized learning block(s) for intervention, enrichment & extension, with frequency and time to be determined through school-based planning process.
 - Protected time for recess and lunch, including an additional 20 minutes of recess for JK/K and for grades 1 - 5, 50 minutes for recess and lunch, scheduled as recess then lunch back-to-back when feasible.
 - Transitions accounted for in schedules, to protect scheduled time and reflect school realities.
2. **Provide more dedicated high-quality time for educator planning, collaboration, and learning within and across schools and with families and partners.** Through a combination of strategic scheduling, weekly early release days, 2 additional professional days, and professional hours, and guidance to support best practices for high-quality collaboration, we can improve the time educators have for data-driven, student-centered collaboration. We will work CEA and educators through the bargaining process to determine the final amount and distribution of professional time that balances educators' diverse responsibilities.
3. **Provide a clear vision, guidance and support to continuously improve school schedules to align with our District Plan vision** for rigorous, joyful, and culturally responsive learning experiences and personalized support for all learners. Building on work our district and school teams are already working, and drawing on research and best practice from across the country, we will work with educators to develop detailed guidance and support in key areas.
4. **Improve coordination with the out-of-school time community,** including CPS's commitment to develop a workable strategy to meet family and student needs on early release days.
5. **Support a school-based design and planning process to improve each school's schedule.** CPS will require all school to participate in a data-driven, student-centered, and inclusive design process that includes the perspectives of educators, students, families and partners. We will support this process to improve how each school organizes students, staff, and time to meet all students needs with guidance, technical assistance from experts, ongoing consultation, and final approval.

My presentation on Tuesday will provide additional details on each element of this plan.

RECOMMENDATION

The Action Plan described above does not require changes to current School Committee Policies; in fact, we believe the Action Plan will help to bring school schedules in better alignment with current policies.

With the Action Plan in mind, I submit the attached recommendation for School Committee consideration. I look forward to discussing this proposal more with you and members of our community.