



Dr. Brian Harris is the Superintendent of Barrington 220 schools.

Creating Optimal Time for Learning

THE INPUT 220 ADVISORY COUNCIL WEIGHS SCHOOL START TIME OPTIONS

SINCE MAY 2015, the Input 220 Advisory Council has spent countless hours studying whether Barrington 220 should and could optimize the defined time and configuration of an instructional day based on student and organizational needs, while understanding the system-wide impact on grades pre-K through 12.

The Input 220 charge regarding later middle and high school start-times originated with the school district's strategic plan, which was created by 330 community members in 2008 and 2009. This is the third and most complex part of that plan to create optimal time for student learning.

Improving the school-year calendar and implementing kindergarten enrichment have already been accomplished.

We asked Superintendent of Schools Dr. Brian Harris questions about the potential change in school start-times, and what it means for not only the students in Barrington 220, but the greater Barrington area.

QB: *Who is part of the Input 220 Advisory Council?*

BH: The council includes 35 members from all 12 schools in the district and a variety of community

stakeholder groups. The board of education commissioned the committee to represent as many voices as possible within Barrington 220 and its communities.

QB: *The Input 220 group has met more than 40 times over the course of 10 months. What have its members learned through this process?*

BH: Research from reputable sources, such as the American Academy of Pediatrics, the American Sleep Association, the American Medical Association, Harvard University, and Oxford University overwhelmingly support a later start-time for adolescent students.

The group spent a great deal of time understanding the sleep studies that exist and the implications for Barrington 220 students of all ages. Research proves adolescents tend to fall asleep later at night and thrive on sleeping later in the morning. When they are forced to wake up and make it to school as early as 7:20 a.m., many of our students become sleep-deprived. And sleep deprivation means more than just being tired.

The group learned that sleep deprivation is connected to mental health problems, substance abuse, teenage car accidents, lower test scores, obesity, athletic injuries, and diabetes. These health concerns convinced the group a later start time for our adolescent students is important.

QB: *There are other issues to consider when looking at changing start-times, especially in a large unit district like Barrington 220. What other things did the group consider when creating its recommendations to the Board of Education?*

BH: Getting adolescent students the sleep they need is more complicated than just changing school start-times. The group also studied variables related to transportation and traffic in the Barrington, sports and extra-curricular activities, and other school districts already having made similar changes.

Because our district is Pre-K-12 and covers 72-square-miles, the multi-tired bus system is the most complex and costly component of changing start times. To keep busing costs similar to what

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Dr. Brian Harris visits with students in Barrington 220.

they are now, the district needs to maintain a specified timeframe between the start of its earliest school and the start of its latest school. Input 220 worked hard to create different scenarios that worked within these constraints.

With the intent to limit the earliest time a student of any age would be picked up by a bus, in light of the current labor agreement and considering the impact on extra-curricular activities and sports, Input 220 recommended no school start before 8 a.m. or end after 4 p.m.

QB: *What about sports and extra-curricular activities? Would those be impacted by a later end-time at BHS and throughout the community?*

BH: Many schools in the same athletic conference as BHS have already moved to a later start-time and end-time, meaning athletic events may shift later in the evening regardless of any change in Barrington 220. The Input 220 group recently held several meetings with local youth sports and community organizations to better understand that if changes were made, what the impact new end-times would have on these local programs. We are committed to work with our community partners to coordinate efforts if school times change.

QB: *What did the group learn from studying other districts that have made the change to a late start?*

BH: Input 220 studied about 70 benchmark high schools nationwide that have made this change already. The group found a majority of these schools experienced increased academic performance, reduced absenteeism, and better quality sleep among students. Input 220 found no benchmark school that reverted back to a pre-8 a.m. start.

QB: *What happens now that the board has heard the recommended start- and end-time scenarios from Input 220?*

BH: The board of education will discuss these recommendations over the next several weeks, and will likely determine next steps later this spring. If the Board decides to make a change in school start- and end-times, that change could be implemented as early as next school year or may be delayed to accommodate a future, more feasible timeframe. U

INPUT 220 START- AND END-TIME RECOMMENDATIONS

SCENARIO 1

Pre-K-5 Schools: 8 a.m. to 2:40 p.m.

Middle Schools: 8:50 a.m. to 3:45 p.m.

High School: 9 a.m. to 3:18 p.m.

Pros:

- Aligns with research on adolescent sleep needs
- Maintains most parameters of the current labor contract
- Preserves classroom time for grades Pre-K-8
- Provides more time for high school staff development

Cons:

- Requires 48 additional buses
- \$831,309 estimated annual added transportation costs based on current state reimbursements
- Adjusts high school classroom minutes

SCENARIO 2

Pre-K-5 Schools: 8 a.m. to 2:40 p.m.

Middle Schools: 8:50 a.m. to 3:45 p.m.

High School: 9 a.m. to 3:56 p.m.

Pros:

- Aligns with research on adolescent sleep needs
- Maintains most parameters of the current labor contract
- Preserves classroom time for grades Pre-K-8
- Provides more time for high school staff development
- Recovers some high school classroom minutes

Cons:

- Requires about 50 additional buses
- \$845,309 estimated annual added transportation costs based on current state reimbursements

SCENARIO 3

Pre-K-5 Schools: 8 a.m. to 2:40 p.m.

Middle Schools: 8:50 a.m. to 3:45 p.m.

High School: 9:30 a.m. to 3:48 p.m.

Pros:

- Aligns with research on adolescent sleep needs
- Maintains most parameters of current labor contract
- Preserves instructional time for grades Pre-K-8
- Provides more time for high school staff development
- Lowest cost option, requires no additional buses

Cons:

- Latest start-time for BHS
- Adjusts classroom minutes at BHS
- \$58,309 estimated annual transportation costs based on current state reimbursements