

A Timely Conversation with Dr. Brian Harris

One hundred eighty days per year. Three hundred minutes per day. Barrington 220 is committed to maximizing student learning during the school year as parameters are set forth by the State of Illinois.

To ensure that time in the classroom is spent wisely, the Barrington 220 Board of Education has included several time-related topics on its Strategic Plan. Two of these issues include the discussion of offering full-day kindergarten and adjusting the start times for some grade levels.

Quintessential Barrington (QB) asked Barrington 220 Superintendent of Schools, Dr. Brian Harris (BH), a series of questions related to these “topics of time,” and what they mean for the future of the school district.



QB: *Let's start with full-day kindergarten. What are some of the advantages of offering this program to the Barrington 220 families?*

BH: There is great deal of good that would come from offering a full-day kindergarten program here in Barrington 220. Many families desire more options for a longer school day, and providing it here would also align us with many other comparable school districts.

In addition to community support for a full-day kindergarten option, there is also an academic component to consider. Learning standards continue to rise each year, and meeting those expectations can be difficult in our current half-day model. Research also shows that students are capable of learning more at an earlier age. Doubling the instruction for our youngest learners will have a positive short-term and long-term impact on student achievement.

QB: *What are the drawbacks to having full-day kindergarten?*

BH: Our most immediate obstacles are having enough classroom space to house full-day kindergarten classrooms and budgeting for the additional staff while estimating the transportation costs the district could incur.

The Board of Education is also concerned with the impact it would have on area preschools and park districts that currently offer full-day kindergarten or kindergarten-extension programs. We are all partners in this community.

QB: *How would these additional expenses be paid for?*

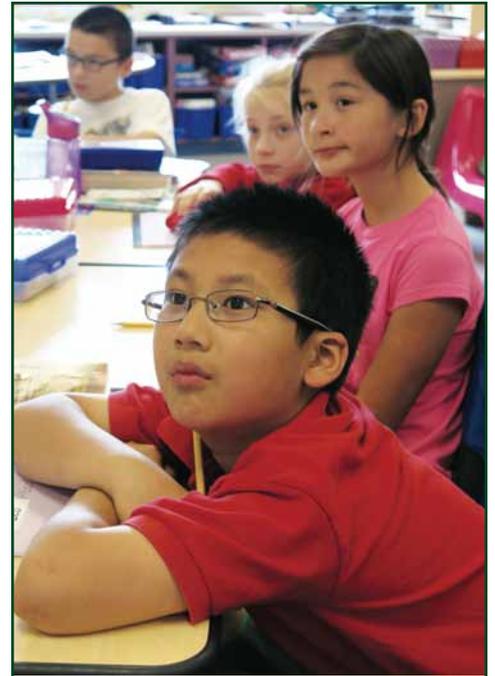
BH: The budgetary details are still being discussed. One option would be a tuition-based enrollment plan for those families interested in the full-day kindergarten. The Board is also examining the district's budget to see if a tuition-free option would be feasible.

Community Conversation Dates:

Thurs., Nov. 13: Public meeting hosted by The Garlands of Barrington and the Barrington Area Council on Aging, from 4 to 5 p.m. at 1000 Garlands Lane.

Wed., Dec. 3: Public meeting hosted by the Hough Street Elementary PTO, from 9:15-10 a.m., at Hough Street School, 310 S. Hough Street.

Fri., Dec. 5: Public meeting hosted by the North Barrington Elementary PTO from 9:15-10 a.m., at 310 IL Rte. 59.



QB: *If Barrington 220 decides to move forward with full-day kindergarten, when would the program begin?*

BH: If the Board comes to a consensus on the topic by the end of the calendar year, full-day kindergarten could be offered as early as the 2015-16 school year.

QB: *Adjusting the school start times at the high school has also been a topic of discussion with the Board of Education. What is driving this conversation?*

BH: There has been plenty of research to prove that adolescents do not get enough sleep. A recent study by the American Academy of Pediatrics shows that teenagers' natural sleep cycles make it difficult for them to fall asleep before 11 p.m. and wake-up in time to make it to school by 7:20 a.m. the next day.

Shifting the start time at Barrington High School may address some of the sleep deprivation and other health-related problems that can go along with that. It also should improve student achievement if we are maximizing their cognitive functioning.

QB: *What are some of the obstacles that the district would encounter if the school start times are adjusted?*

BH: A major challenge involved is the cost and planning around the bus routes. Our buses are currently triple-tiered and run consecutively, meaning a driver will transport high school students first, then re-route to pick-up middle school and elementary students. If all of our schools started and ended at approximately the same time, we would be

running overlapping routes and would need to purchase more buses and hire additional drivers. The estimated cost for this would be about \$1,000,000.

Changing the start time would also impact before- and after-school activities. If high school students are released after 3 p.m., practices, games and other extra-curricular activities would end later in the evening. There are also concerns regarding students who need to work after school or care for younger siblings.

QB: *If the Board decides to implement a later start time at Barrington High School, when would the change happen?*

BH: Altering the school start times is something that will involve a great deal of community input and research. The Board is considering whether a process such as Input 220 would be useful in the decision-making process. Input 220 is a community committee that serves in an advisory role to the Board. The group was most recently used in making the decision to realign the district calendar.

The 2016-17 school year would be the earliest timeframe a change like this could be made.

QB: *How can community members share their ideas and opinions on these topics with you and the Board of Education?*

BH: The Board of Education and I will be hosting a series of community conversations this fall that the public is invited to attend (see box). We welcome questions and comments about all topics related to Barrington 220. 

Barbara B. Rose Elementary School Named 2014 National Blue Ribbon School

The Barbara B. Rose Elementary School has been named a 2014 National Blue Ribbon School by the United States Department of Education. The South Barrington school is one of 337 nationwide to be given the prestigious award, which distinguishes and honors schools for helping students achieve at very high levels and for making significant progress in closing the achievement gap. The school will be honored by the United States Department of Education on November 10-11, in Washington, D.C.

