

School Day Taskforce Recommendations

Extending the School Day

Issue: It is difficult to meet the required attendance days and hours required by law due to the required start and stop dates and unscheduled days off due to inclement weather. BCPS has one of the shortest school days in the state. The state superintendent has directed BCPS to review its length of school day to ensure students are in school the required hours and days.

Recommendation: Extend the school day by 15 minutes. Add 5 minutes to the beginning of the day and 10 minutes to the end of the day. Elementary schools will add additional daily recess for students. Secondary schools will add additional instructional or acceleration/enrichment time depending on student need and programs.

Rationale/Background Information:

Adding 15 minutes each day will result in an additional 45 hours per year. These additional hours will make it possible to meet the state hour and day requirements and to reinstate the week-long spring break.

It will cost approximately \$24 million dollars to pay 9000 teachers and 10 month staff to work an additional 15 minutes each day.

Public comment at board meetings and through the taskforce email address supports elementary schools increasing daily recess time for students.

The sub-committee members unanimously supported adding 5 minutes before the start of the day and 10 minutes at the end of the day to the bell schedule for next year. They considered the options in the chart below.

Option	Advantages	Drawbacks
15 at end of day	Lowest impact on high school sleep cycles	Too late for elementary Large number of stakeholders opposed
Split 5 before and 10 after	Less impact on high school	Too late for elementary Large number of stakeholders opposed
Split 10 before and 5 after	Less impact on elementary	Too early for high school

Secondary Schedules

Issue: Secondary schools were operating under multiple schedules. BCPS directed secondary schools to operate under more consistent guidelines. The Board directed the Superintendent to review the recent changes to secondary schedules to see if greater flexibility was possible.

Recommendation:

High Schools

- Students should be provided the opportunity to earn 8 credits each school year.
- High Schools should implement a 4 period AB schedule.
- Schools may offer a limited number of semesterized classes using the following guidance:
 1. Courses should not be offered in a semesterized format across entire contents or courses.
 2. AP courses should not be semesterized.
 3. Courses may be offered in a semesterized format to meet the needs of small groups of students. Some scenarios might include:
 - ELs who enroll in BCPS late in the year or close to graduation
 - Students who are identified for intervention (i.e., Critical Reading in the fall and English 9 in the spring with the same teacher)
 - Students who are identified late for advancement (Students who may not have received advanced math in MS but could be accelerated in Grade 9 to reach AP courses)
 4. Prior to offering a class in a semesterized format school staff must:
 - Meet with Executive Directors and/or Community Superintendents for approval of the identified group of students and the course(s) to be offered
 - Demonstrate there will be no impact on or request for additional staffing
 - Demonstrate how the school would support students who enroll after the start of the school year
 - Meet and communicate with parents regarding the potential credit loss consequences of transferring while enrolled in a semesterized course

Middle Schools

- Middle Schools should implement a 5 period AB schedule.
- 5 period AB schedules allow for world languages, elective courses, clubs/enrichment and interventions in Math and ELA.

Rationale/Background Information:

High Schools

Some school communities have advocated to return to a 4 period semesterized schedule. The subcommittee reviewed the benefits and disadvantages of semesterized classes and has recommended a hybrid approach. Consistency in schedules was a priority to the taskforce subcommittee. Semesterization at the high school level may be allowed when it does not cause the loss of credit when enrolling late or transferring mid-semester, and does not require additional staffing.

Middle Schools

Current middle school schedules are not aligned in the number of core classes and elective classes that are offered resulting in inequitable middle school options and experiences. Consistency in scheduling was a priority to the taskforce sub-committee. The sub-committee offers the following information to support its recommendation:

5 Period Bell Schedule Pros:

- Provides additional opportunities for intervention and exploration
- Magnet schools can provide consistent magnet experiences
- Provides consistency and equity across BCPS for students
- Provides consistency for curriculum development
- Allows for easier articulation with elementary and high schools
- Allows schools to have additional flexibility in terms of elective/magnet offerings

In the sample schedule below individual options are classes that are unique to each student. They may be intervention classes, magnet classes, electives, etc.

The bell schedule is not the actual times of any school and doesn't include any additional minutes that may be added.

5 Period AB: 65 Minute Classes			
Meeting Time	Class	Meeting Time	Class
HR 8:00 – 8:10		HR 8:00 – 8:10	
1A 8:10 – 9:15	Language Arts MS6	1B 8:10 – 9:15	Mathematics MS6
2A 9:20 – 10:25	World Cultures MS6	2B 9:20 – 10:25	Science MS6
LUNCH 10:30 – 11:00		LUNCH 10:30 – 11:00	
3A 11:05 – 12:10	Spanish MS6	3B 11:05 – 12:10	Fine Art MS6
4A 12:15 – 1:20	PE and Health MS6	4B 12:15 – 1:20	Individual Option
5A 1:25 – 2:30	Individual Option	5B 1:25 – 2:30	Individual Option

Start of School Day

Issue: Research supports starting high school at 8:30 a.m.

Recommendation: No recommendation at this time. The subcommittee would like to delay any recommendation until after the implementation of the extended day.

Rationale/Background information: The impact to transportation, child care, athletics, after-school jobs, and cost is difficult to measure. Several studies as well as the workgroups from other counties were examined. The taskforce found the educational benefits of moving high school start times were limited and the costs of the additional transportation required unrealistic. Current family, work and community schedules are not aligned to making a change for starting high schools later. The taskforce opposes flipping the elementary and high school schedules.