

# The Public Schools of Sharon, Massachusetts



Barbara J. Dunham, Ed.D.  
Superintendent of Schools

Mr. Timothy Farmer  
Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum & Administration

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April 30, 2010

Dear Glenn Allen and Members of the Sharon School Committee,

The Task Force on School Start Time was formed as a result of School Committee General Management Goal #4A and the Community and School Relations #6A. These two goals established both the Task Force and the need for a public Forum (that was held on April 7, 2010). The Task Force included representative from the Sharon Teachers, district wide, parents at all levels and students who were not seniors. There was a concerted effort to locate members who opposed the idea of School Start Time based on last year's initiative that similarly looked at this issue. The group developed a Mission Statement and a singular goal of making a recommendation to the School Committee.

#### Mission Statement:

The Start Time Task Force has been formed to study the available research regarding adolescent sleep and high school start time and to consider whether a change in school start time at Sharon High School should be recommended. The Task Force will make a proposal to the School Committee after examining the impact of such a change on educational, extracurricular activities, and start times for other schools in the district.

Goal: The Start Time Task Force will make a recommendation to the Sharon School Committee regarding school start times.

#### The Start Time Task Force has included the following members:

Alison Rutley - School Committee	Alexandra Mellman, Art teacher, Heights Elementary
Stacey Simons - Parent	Jane Sullivan, grade 5 teacher, East Elementary
Patricia Bluestein - Parent	Cheryl Harris, School Psychologist, High School
Netti Sternklar - Parent	Christopher Brilliant, Foreign Language teacher, High School
Liz Dichiaro - Parent	Amy Strasnick, English teacher, High School
Dr. Elizabeth Englander- Parent	Kathleen Turner, Foreign Language teacher, High School
Robert E. Sondheim, Director of Athletics	Josh Levitan - student, grade 10
Fran Derry, Supervisor of Transportation	Laura Green - student, grade 11
Jose Libano, Principal, High School	Hadley Chase- student, grade 11
Dr. Barbara Dunham, Superintendent of Schools	

#### Dates of Meetings:

January 12, 2010; February 8, 2010; February 22, 2010; March 1, 2010; March 10, 2010; March 22, 2010, April 5, April 7 staff and community forum/meetings with Dr. Carskadon and representatives from the Hingham and Duxbury Schools, April 8, online survey development with Task Force members during the week of April 12 and again on April 29<sup>th</sup> to review survey results and vote a recommendation.

#### **Sharon Public Schools**

**Administration Offices: 1 School Street, Sharon, MA 02067    Tel 781-784-1570    Fax 781-784-1573**  
Cottage Elementary 781-784-1580    East Elementary & Sharon Alternative 781-784-1551    Heights Elementary 781-784-1595  
Sharon Middle School 781-784-1560    Sharon High School 781-784-1554

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The Sharon Public School System does not discriminate on the basis of age, race, color, national origin, sex, disability, religion, or sexual orientation.

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## Recommendation:

On April 29, 2010, after reviewing the surveys and all data to date, the Task Force took a vote that resulted in a 13-1 to send a recommendation to the School Committee to change the start time at the high school for the upcoming school year. There was a corresponding consensus that the start time for the high school should not be earlier than 8:00 AM. Five members were not in attendance. The student who dissented will bring speakers for the Open Forum this Wednesday. Also, at the request of the one dissenting student voter, the administration will be surveying the high school student body again on Tuesday and those results will be made available to the School Committee Wednesday night.

Issues still to be resolved include the sports schedule where some early dismissals (approximately 3 per sport) might be necessary for sports like golf, sailing, or field hockey, when the competitions are at more distant locations. Survey results clearly show that concerns about sports remain. The Task Force is confident that these issues can be worked out over time and the membership bases this thinking on the fact that other schools have gone before and report that the issues can be resolved.

Surveys: Please see attached summary of the surveys done over the past two weeks. The full survey will be made available on the school website sometime this weekend. Approximately 6-8 student surveys were pulled and discarded due to foul language that bore no relationship to the questions at hand.

## The Meeting:

The Task Force plans to attend the meeting Wednesday night and that is the reason that the venue has been moved to the Sharon High School Library. Mr. Libano was “drafted” to make a PowerPoint presentation summarizing the work and the findings of the Task Force. Others will be available to answer questions if needed.

Dr. Barbara Dunham  
School Superintendent

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