

A sunset scene with a bright sun partially obscured by a layer of clouds, casting a golden glow over a range of dark mountains in the foreground. The sky transitions from a deep orange near the horizon to a pale blue at the top.

Sharon Public Schools Late Start Task Force

**Student Assemblies
April 12, 2010**

What caused the Task Force to be formed?

- More than a year ago, members of our greater school community expressed an interest in the possibility of changing the high school start time.
- Some preliminary and exploratory research was conducted by the administration.
- Conclusions were drawn that changing the high school start time warranted further investigation and that it MIGHT be the right thing to do.
- The School Committee established a goal about considering and evaluating a later start time.

Members

Alison Rutley, School Committee Member

Dr. Barbara Dunham, Superintendent of Schools

Jose Libano, High School Principal

Robert Sondheim, Athletic Director

Fran Derry, Transportation Supervisor

Chris Brilliant , High School Teacher

Cheryl Harris , School Psychologist

Amy Strasnick , High School Teacher

Kathy Turner, High School Teacher

Alexandra Mellman, K-5 Teacher

Jane Sullivan, K-5 Teacher

Stacey Simons, Parent

Patrice Bluestein, Parent

Netti Sternklar, Parent

Liz Dichiara, Parent

Dr. Elizabeth Englander, Parent

Hadley Chase, High School Junior

Laura Green, High School Junior

Josh Levitan, High School Sophomore

Goals/Mission

- To study the available research regarding adolescent sleep and high school start times.
- To consider whether a change in the start time at Sharon High School should be recommended.
- To make a recommendation to the School Committee after examining the impact of such a change on educational and extracurricular activities, as well as on the start times for the other schools in the district.

Meeting Dates

January 12th

February 8th

February 22nd

March 1st

March 10th

March 22nd

April 5th

April 7th

April 8th

April 12th

April 29th

May 5th

Options Being Considered

No change

Start at 8:05 a.m., end at 2:40 p.m.

Start at 8:10 a.m., end at 2:45 p.m.

- These options have the smallest impact on the other schools, the buses, the athletic program, and on clubs and extra-curricular activities.
- The length of periods, as well as Eagle Block, would not be affected by any change.

Nearby High Schools with Later Start & Dismissal Times

- Arlington High School 8:00 – 2:26
- Marblehead High School 7:55 – 2:30
- Medway High School 8:04 – 2:31
- Hingham High School 8:00 – 2:32
- Needham High School 8:00 – 2:35
- Duxbury High School 8:20 – 2:45

***Silver Lake Regional, Marshfield, and
North Andover are just a few other
high schools considering a similar change.***

What would the school day schedule look like?

Current Schedule

- Block 1 7:25 – 8:20 (55)
- Block 2 8:24 – 9:19 (55)
- Block 3 9:23 – 10:18 (55)
- E. Block 10:18 – 10:57 (39)
- News 10:57 – 11:02 (5)
- Block 4 11:06 – 1:00 (86)
- Block 5 1:04 – 1:59 (55)

8:05-2:40 Scenario

- Block 1 8:05 – 9:00 (55)
- Block 2 9:04 – 9:59 (55)
- Block 3 10:03 – 10:58 (55)
- E. Block 10:58 – 11:38 (40)
- News 11:38 – 11:43 (5)
- Block 4 11:47 – 1:41 (86)
- Block 5 1:45 – 2:40 (55)

***The internal schedule is essentially the same.
Eagle Block gains 1 minute.***

Some Key Research Findings and Medical/Scientific Facts

- Most adolescents need a little more than 9 hours of sleep per night. **(Noland et. al, 2009, pg. 225)**
- Even a 20 minute delay in school start times can have a meaningful impact on sleep patterns. **(Wolfson & Carskadon, 1998, pg. 883)**
- Adolescents will generally not stay up later if school starts later. **(Wahlstrom, 2002, pg. 12)**
- An irregular sleep schedule, including a large discrepancy between sleep during the week and sleep on the weekend, has a negative impact on circadian rhythms. **(Golombek & Cardinalia, 2008, pg. 3)**

Do you know what inadequate sleep can cause?

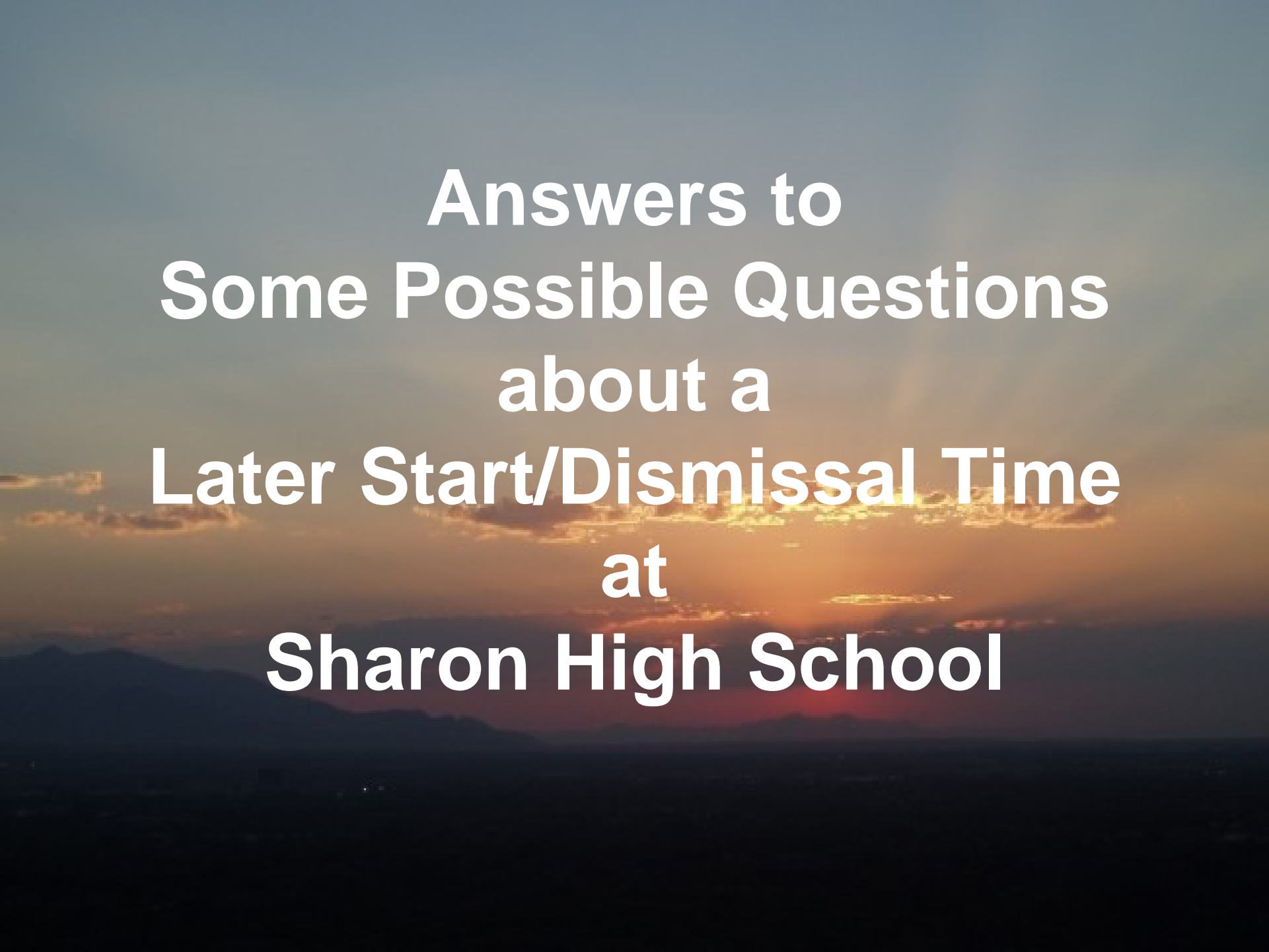
- Drowsiness and fatigue
 - Reduced alertness
 - Lapses in attention
- Concentration and problem-solving difficulties
 - Mental mistakes
- Mood/emotional swings
 - Impulsive behavior
 - Irritability
- Poor reaction times

Multiple sources, including the
National Sleep Foundation

These may also result in.....

- Increased levels of anxiety
 - Driving accidents
 - Substance abuse
 - Lower grades
- Tardiness/attendance problems
- Obesity and metabolism issues
 - Injuries
 - Depression
- A lower self-esteem

Multiple sources, including the
National Sleep Foundation

A background image of a sunset over a mountain range. The sky is a mix of blue, orange, and yellow, with the sun low on the horizon. The mountains are dark and silhouetted against the bright sky.

**Answers to
Some Possible Questions
about a
Later Start/Dismissal Time
at
Sharon High School**

What time would the building be open each morning?

- The building would be open at 6:30 a.m. each morning just like the building is now.
- The library would be open at 7:00 a.m. each morning, just like the library does now.
- One or more administrators would be on site by 6:30 a.m., just like they are now.
- Secretarial and custodial staff would be on site by 6:30 a.m., just like they are now.

How would the faculty be affected?

- The faculty at SHS is required to be at work for 7 hours, which currently means 7:20 – 2:20.
- The faculty often put in hours well above and beyond the expected work day; sometimes, however, family obligations prevent them from being here before 7:20 or after 2:20.
- If the start/dismissal time were changed, the required 7-hour work day for the faculty would probably be from 8:00 to 3:00.
- Under a later start/dismissal scenario some faculty would be able to be here before 8:00 and some faculty would be able to be here after 3:00; family obligations, however, would still determine their availability outside the expected work day.

Would Eagle Block change in any way?

(Part 1)

- There are no current plans to modify what happens during Eagle Block each day.
- Students would still be able to capitalize on the time to complete homework, conduct research, and make appointments to see their counselors, other teachers, and members of the administration.

Would Eagle Block change in any way?

(Part 2)

- Students who have chosen to use Eagle Block for music one or more times per 6-day cycle would still benefit from not having to practice after school.

Prior to the '09-'10 school year, after-school practices were an expected part of the day for students enrolled in music courses.

- Students who have chosen to use Eagle Block for music one or more times per 6-day cycle would also still be able to see teachers after school and fully participate in clubs or sports.

Most students enrolled in music courses were unable to fully access teachers, clubs, or sports prior to the '09-'10 school year because of the required after-school practice schedule.

What about extra-help?

- As the case is now, faculty will be expected to be available for assistance after school.
- As the case is now, the faculty often make themselves available well before school, as well as after the end of the required 7-hour work day; this would not change – some would continue to be here very early, while others would continue to stay much later.
- Eagle Block has been built into the schedule and allows the vast majority of students to get extra assistance during the school day from any of their teachers (*if an appointment has been made*); therefore, using this time wisely and productively would continue to be extremely important for all students, especially those who work after school, student-athletes, and those with other kinds of commitments.

What would happen to clubs and other student organizations?

- The vast majority of clubs and student organizations would still meet shortly after school ends, just like almost every one does now.
- Clubs or student organizations that have benefited from meeting at an earlier time after school during the current year would meet later in the day, as they had in prior years.*

* A prime example of this shift would be drama. Prior to the current school year and the implementation of Eagle Block, drama rehearsals started at 3:30 because many of the students attended mandatory after-school chorus and band practice.

The addition of Eagle Block has enabled band and chorus practice to take place during the school day, rather than after school; hence, drama rehearsals have been able to start at 2:30 during the current school year.

If a later start/dismissal time were to be put into effect, drama rehearsals would return to starting at 3:30, as they did prior to the '09-'10 school year.

A sunset over a mountain range with a large white question mark overlaid on the sky.

Would there still be a late bus?

Yes!

***Pick-up would probably be
between 4:00 and 4:15.***

What about after-school jobs?

Most employers would probably make the necessary adjustments to accommodate your new schedule.

In one case study conducted by two of the most prominent researchers on this subject, 14 out of 15 employers indicated that there was no negative impact from a later dismissal because businesses did not need the extra help until after school was dismissed.

(Kubow et. al, 1996, pg. 367)

What about athletics?

(Part 1)

- All practices would obviously start and end later than they currently do.
- Home contests that normally begin at 3:30 would not be changed.
- Away contests that would normally begin at 3:30 would very likely start between 3:45 and 4:00.
Ultimately, the actual starting time would depend on the site of the away contest, the needed travel time, and a proper warm-up.
- All of the other principals and athletic directors in the Hockomock League have been informed that SHS may move to a later start/dismissal time; they have assured us that they would work closely with us to resolve any unexpected scheduling or game-time difficulties.

What about athletics?

(Part 2)

- **Fall sports would see little to no impact, other than the later start time for practices and away contests, until the latter part of the season when daylight dwindles.**
 - JV field hockey, golf, sailing, and freshmen and JV football are the only sports that present some scheduling difficulties; solutions that other schools with a later start/dismissal time have implemented are already being examined and developed.**
- **Winter and spring sports would see little to no impact, other than the later start times for practices and away contests, because of indoor participation (winter) and the prevalence of light into the early evening (spring).**

What about athletics?

(Part 3)

- **As the case is now, student-athletes would still have time before practice to get extra help or to participate in clubs or other student organizations.**
For most sports (but not all), on days on which contests are not at SHS, there would be no time to access extra-help or co-curricular activities immediately after school; hence, being aware of the importance of using the time available during Eagle Block wisely and productively becomes imperative.
- **Our coaches and Athletic Director would work together to minimize the effects of any change, while continuing to support the success, growth, and improvement of all teams and individuals.**

What would likely be some of the benefits?

- More sleep
- Better capacity to retain, retrieve, and utilize knowledge and information
 - Less binge-sleeping on the weekends
 - Decline in tardiness and sick days
 - Improved metabolic functioning
 - Increased levels of concentration, efficiency, and alertness
- Quicker reaction times and less fatigue
- Reduced irritability and mood swings
 - Lower likelihood of depression
- Fewer instances of risk-taking behavior

Multiple sources, including the
National Sleep Foundation

What else is SHS examining in order to possibly alleviate some of the school-related issues that may be contributing to sleep-deprivation?

- Internal schedule (2008-2009)
 - Mid-year and final exams
 - Homework
 - Sleep education
 - School environment
 - Other policies and practices?
 - Suggestions?

These are variables that the school can control to help improve your health and well being.

What can you do to maximize the sleep that you need?

- Establish a regular sleep schedule
- Eliminate lengthy naps, or naps late in the day
- Limit your use of “screens” in the evening
- Avoid caffeine-related drinks
- Exercise regularly
- Maintain a balanced and manageable schedule of activities and obligations

What are the next steps in this process?

- On April 7th, a community forum was held.
- On April 12th, student assemblies were held.
- Later this week, surveys will be conducted.
- After the vacation, results will be made public.
- On May 5th, the Late Start Task Force will make a recommendation to the School Committee.
- Later in May, the School Committee will consider all of the information and make a decision about what to do for the 2010-2011 school year and foreseeable future.

Additional Sources of Information

- Sharon Public Schools Website
 - National Sleep Foundation
 - *Sharon Advocate*
 - *Sharon Buzz*
 - Work of cited researchers

Resources & Citations

- Bergin, C., & Bergin, D. (2010). Sleep: the e-zzz intervention. *Educational Leadership*, 67(4), 44-47.
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- Wolfson, A., & Carskadon, M. (1998). Sleep schedules and daytime functioning in adolescents. *Child Development*, 69(4), 875-887.

A photograph of a sunset or sunrise over a mountain range. The sky is a mix of blue, orange, and red, with a large, bright sun partially obscured by clouds. The mountains in the foreground are dark and silhouetted against the bright sky.

Thank you!

Questions?