

Date: June 18, 2018

Subject: Implementing High School Late Start

To Ruth Goldman – Chair, and the Members of the Newton School Committee:

We thank you for the careful consideration you have given the issue of High School late start time. We are aware that the issue is now tied to the High School Redesign project. We certainly think it makes sense to review the High School week as a whole and make sure that our District is making the best use of our students' and faculty's time each day. We appreciate that both late start and schedule are to be viewed in the light of the latest social and scientific research available, as we know that biology plays such a critical role in students' learning and social-emotional wellbeing.

Therefore, the Newton South School Council would like to emphasize and reiterate our emphatic continuing request that a High School start time of *8:30am or later* be a major priority for the School Committee and that the start time be instituted at the earliest possible opportunity. We request that tying the late start time to the Redesign Committee NOT be allowed to further delay implementation of the Late Start already approved by the School Committee and the Community. If necessary, they must be separated.

As you know, our School Council has been working for over 3 years researching and educating ourselves and the community on the benefits of a later high school start time. We started this exploration in response to the alarming increase in stress and mental health issues that we continue to see among our students. The more that we have learned about the issue and heard from experts in the field, the more convinced we are that starting high school after 8:30 am would have a lasting impact on students. The scientific evidence demonstrates, without a doubt, that adjusting school start times benefits students physically, intellectually, and emotionally.

We have all worked so hard to make this urgent priority a reality. The Superintendent, his staff and the Late Start Working Group researched this issue and solicited feedback from constituencies within the school community through questionnaires and several community meetings. We know that the School Committee, spent countless hours assessing the information and the various scenarios. While we know that the high school schedule is complex, there is overwhelming support in the community for changing the start time soon to benefit today's high schoolers as well as those in the future.

Please know that the Newton South School Council stands ready to support the School Committee in whatever ways would be helpful in moving this issue forward.

Thank you.

NSHS School Council

May F. Chiu and Martha Hausman, co-Presidents

NSHS School Members

Deb Youngblood, Helen Haley, Risa Shames, Sue Flicop, Didem Vardar Ulu, Peter Meyer, Jessica Basile, and Xiaoguang Zhen