



STATE COLLEGE AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT  
 PANORAMA VILLAGE ADMINISTRATIVE CENTER  
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To: Board of Directors  
 From: Robert O'Donnell, Vern Bock, Will Stout, Randy Brown  
 Re: Proposed student day changes for 2018-2019 school year  
 Date: Dec. 1, 2017

Since April 2017, our Board has been engaged in several aspects of our student day proposal, which is intended to improve student learning experiences at the elementary and secondary levels. We have continued to refine the plan, and we wish to share updates with the Board to help regarding your decision.

This proposal contains the latest information for you to review before your anticipated vote on Dec. 18. For your consideration and discussion on Dec. 4, we have organized our update around the following subjects:

- I. Proposal Purpose/Process
- II. Elementary
- III. Board Policy Development: Recess and Homework
- IV. Secondary
- V. Athletics
- VI. Transportation
- VII. Cost Implications

### **I. Proposal Purpose and Synopsis of Process**

The student day proposal represents a significant step toward making progress in attaining three important district goals: Engage and support the whole student, foster continuous growth for every child, and close individual achievement and opportunity gaps. Moreover, the daily experiences of students will more tightly align with our district's mission: To prepare students for lifelong success through excellence in education. Consequently, we propose the evaluation for the student day change should include the measures and benchmarks outlined in the approved [strategic plan](#).

The primary reason for this student day proposal is to extend the elementary student day from among the shortest in our entire state. According to the [National Center on Time and Learning](#): "Both research and practice indicate that adding time to the school day and/or year can have a meaningfully positive impact on student proficiency and, indeed, upon a child's entire educational experience."

A recently suggested alternative to the proposal has been to add more interventionists to support underperforming students. This would require these students to miss significantly more grade-level

learning to receive interventions. Such an approach is contrary to leading research, and would only enhance learning experiences for a portion of our student body.

For reference, here are links to the student day information presented to the Board:

- ❖ [Initial proposal, April 24, 2017](#)
- ❖ [Refined proposal, Sept. 11, 2017](#)
- ❖ [Update and requested Board direction, Sept. 25, 2017](#)
- ❖ [Board action on Oct. 9, 2017 to further develop the student day proposal \(including sample schedules\)](#)

To view the variety of information pertaining to the proposal, including its history, please visit our student day proposal [website](#).

## **II. Elementary**

The details pertaining to the proposed elementary fifth special are contained in an attached memo.

We are developing a plan with our music teachers for music ensembles (band, orchestra, choir) to occur during the school day in grades 4 and 5. This would allow us to realize a consistent K-12 approach to student access and participation in our music program. Consequently, music programming for band, orchestra and choir would be accessible by all elementary students during the school day — a similar approach to our secondary schools.

Should the student day proposal be approved, the district would continue offering the Community Education Extended Learning (CEEL) program as per current practices. However, we would explore whether or not to continue the morning option. Regardless of the student day proposal, we expect to begin programming for grade 6 students in the fall of 2019.

## **III. Board Policy Development: Recess and Homework**

On Nov. 27, the SCASD Board conducted a first reading of [Policy 130-Homework and Policy 142-Recess](#). The Board is planning to take action on Jan. 8, 2018.

## **IV. High School**

As presented earlier this fall, our secondary curriculum director and coordinators are leading the development of three flexible learning options: hybrid learning (partially online), online learning, and zero period courses for students who desire more flexible learning options.

Currently, our curriculum department has identified 23 courses for consideration to be offered in one or more of these formats. Prior to the winter break, the curriculum department will collaborate with prospective faculty members to finalize options that will be included in the 2018-2019 course selection process.

The 2018-2019 course selection guides will be shared with students and parents in mid-January and further explained during the curriculum showcase to be held on Jan. 17, 2018. During the spring

semester, we will identify which courses include enough student enrollment to justify implementation. We expect these course formats to be refined on an annual basis.

The high school guidance counselors will also support students with individual scheduling needs by collaborating with students, parents and program leaders (athletic director and coaches, program/club advisors, and internship and cooperative education coordinators) to identify and help resolve scheduling conflicts.

## **V. Athletics**

In an effort to keep student-athletes from missing valuable classroom time, the SCASD athletic department has developed a plan to help minimize the impact of leaving school early for competitions. Below are some changes to be implemented for 2018-2019. Regardless of the proposal's outcome, the department will continue to look for ways to assist student-athletes with scheduling.

- ❖ The athletic department is working to shift the start of all home competitions for soccer, tennis and field hockey from 4 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. For away events, we are requesting opponents shift to 4:30 p.m. starts; however, this is out of our control. This will result in moving several competitions to Memorial Field later in the fall season to utilize the lights.
- ❖ For all sports, we are prioritizing the scheduling of non-conference games on Saturdays.
- ❖ For Mid Penn Conference competitions, we are working with other athletic departments in an attempt to shift Thursday events to Saturdays (for sports that compete twice per week in a Tuesday-Thursday manner). This would help students miss less of the same class with our A/B block scheduling.
- ❖ This winter season, our junior high and high school wrestling teams are combining several home meets to include side by side competitions. We are requesting Mid Penn opponents consider this approach. This will reduce transportation costs by requiring fewer buses.
- ❖ Counselors will continue to work with student-athletes to ensure the most effective class scheduling for a balance of school and athletics.

## **VI. Transportation**

Though we initially projected longer bus routes with the proposal, after further research and analysis from School Bus Consultants (SBC), we have eliminated this aspect. Bus routes now will remain the same as before. Additionally, as part of the proposal, transportation would be available for high school students who choose to enroll in zero period courses.

Overall, the proposal calls for three additional bus routes and increased driver hours each day costing \$350,000, and the replacement of six buses at a net one-time cost of \$200,000. These updates resulted from SBC further reviewing and analyzing the district's current operations, including the ability to transition to the proposed schedule times. A presentation with SBC's findings to date is included in a separate attachment.

We will continue to look at reducing the duration of our bus routes, but we would need additional resources to shorten times.

## VII. Cost Implications

### Staffing and Curriculum

For this plan to be realized, we have estimated required staffing increases in two areas.

Due to the addition of a fifth elementary special, we estimate the need for 10 teaching positions. The breakdown for these positions is as follows: seven positions for the fifth special and one position each for art, music and physical education. The additional art, music and physical education positions are due to the longer classes for special area subjects. The costs for these positions is estimated at \$850,000, including all salaries and benefits. The projected year one costs for curriculum and professional development for the new fifth special is \$300,000; as you can see below, we are estimating that \$50,000 of this would recur annually. We will search for related grant resources in an effort to reduce the related curriculum cost to the school district.

To achieve proposed changes, we will need to increase hours of paraprofessional staff for providing recess supervision and additional support time for elementary students with special needs. Collectively, these changes would result in an annual cost of approximately \$205,000, including salary and benefits.

### Summary of Costs

<b>Recurring Expenses</b>	<b>Recurring Cost</b>
Transportation (annual)	\$350,000
Fifth Special (staffing – \$850,000 and curriculum – \$50,000)	\$900,000
Support Staff (including special education and recess supervision)	\$205,000
<b>Total Estimated Annual Cost</b>	<b>\$1,455,000</b>

<b>Non-Recurring Expenses (first year only)</b>	<b>Year One Cost</b>
Transportation (vehicle replacement in excess of proposed budget)	\$200,000
Curriculum (resources for fifth elementary special)	\$250,000
<b>Total Estimated One-time Cost</b>	<b>\$450,000</b>

Of the costs listed above, \$1.4 million has been included within our budget projections. In the summer of 2016, the district received an unexpected annual increase of \$644,000 in state funds. We placed the 2017-2018 amount in our capital reserve fund, and are proposing this annual subsidy revenue be used to support the student day proposal beginning 2018-2019 budget. Pending

Board approval, we will designate these funds to offset the costs of changing the student day. Subsequently, the budget development process would need to identify a plan to fund the remaining \$450,000 one-time costs for us to realize the student day changes as presented.

**Requested Next Steps**

Due to necessary planning, actions and communications pertaining to this potential change, we request the Board takes action on the proposed student day changes for 2018-2019 during its Dec. 18 meeting.