



STATE COLLEGE AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT

Office of the Superintendent

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V-F

To: Board of Directors
From: Robert O'Donnell, Vern Bock, Will Stout, Randy Brown
Re: Supplemental information for the student day proposal
Date: October 6, 2017

“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.”

—[*The National Center on Time and Learning*](#)

During its Sept. 25 meeting, we provided the Board with a detailed update to the student day proposal that included the history of the planning process and a timetable for future steps. Since then, we have continued to update the plan, and we wish to share the new information with the Board to help with the decision on whether to further develop the student day proposal. Although this document includes a timeline with key actions to occur over the next two months, we hope that our discussion on Oct. 9 enables to Board to identify any desires beyond what we have included.

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](#)

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 proposed strategic plan.

Below (Exhibit A) is the timetable, originally shared on Sept. 22, that contains key actions and decisions that would need to occur for implementation during the 2018-2019 school year. In this memo, we are also outlining specific updates to these important components. Additionally, we have noted all communication opportunities for parents since the initial proposal last spring.

For your consideration and discussion on Oct. 9, we have organized our update around the following subjects:

- A. Transportation
- B. Student achievement (K-5)
- C. Student learning time
- D. Proposed fifth special (K-5)
- E. Music ensembles (K-5)
- F. Recess policy development
- G. Homework policy (K-5)
- H. Athletics
- I. High school: flexible scheduling, hybrid and online learning, and zero period
- J. Equitable opportunities
- K. Outreach feedback
- L. Cost implications (staffing & transportation)

A. Transportation

During recent weeks, we have had face-to-face meetings with non-SCASD schools for which SCASD is required to provide transportation. Our solicitor's investigation reaffirmed that the district cannot require public charter schools nor non-public schools to adopt the district's school times or calendar.

During the summer months, the district administration was informed by several non-SCASD schools that they would be willing to adjust their student day to align with our proposed day, which would not require more buses (increased cost to SCASD community). However, this fall, those schools reported they were unwilling to make those changes for a variety of reasons.

At this time, our transportation department is developing bus route scenarios. The most likely scenario includes running exclusive morning bus routes that include all non-SCASD students. This would result in all non-SCASD students to arrive on the State High campus by 7:35 a.m. and would enable those students to be shuttled/bused to their respective schools before 8 a.m. Because these buses would be covering our entire 150 square mile district, those students may experience longer busing times than if riding with our high school students. This is due to the number of buses involved with these routes. Should those schools desire shorter busing times, they will continue to have the option to ride our bus routes serving our high school students (current practice for most non-SCASD schools).

Under the new scenario, the bus routes for SCASD students will not be longer in duration than the current routes. By removing the non-SCASD students from our secondary buses, routes for SCASD students will change; however, the overall duration does not change.

B. Student achievement

Over the past three years, 72-85% of district students are leaving kindergarten through second grades having met grade-level, nationally-normed literacy benchmarks (as measured by early literacy assessments AIMSweb and Fountas & Pinnell).

Dating back to 2011, student performance on the MAP mathematics and reading assessments has remained fairly consistent. That is, 53-64% of our students in second through sixth grades met the projected growth measures in reading and mathematics relative to their national peer groups; prior to 2015-2016, second grade students did not participate. Conversely, 37-44% of our students are making less than the projected growth in reading and mathematics relative to their national peer groups.

Mathematics

- 23% of 2nd to 6th grade students scored below the 50th percentile when compared to the national norm group on the MAP mathematics assessment
 - 13% performed between the 25th and 50th percentiles
 - 10% performed below the 25th percentile
- In the spring of 2017, 59% of students in 2nd to 6th grades met the annual growth projection (or at least one year of growth) according to the NWEA MAP mathematics assessment.

Reading

- 23.6% of 2nd to 6th grade students scored below the 50th percentile when compared to the national norm group on the MAP reading assessment
 - 13.6% performed between the 25th and 50th percentiles
 - 11% performed below the 25th percentile
- In the spring of 2017, 63% of students in 2nd to 6th grades met or exceeded the annual growth projection (or at least one year of growth) according to the NWEA reading assessment.

Of students in grades 3 through 8, 78% and 61.7% perform at the proficient and advanced levels on state reading and mathematics PSSA assessments, respectively.

PSSA Performance by SCASD Student Demographics 2016 (2017 reports not yet available)

English Language Arts Performance by Group

Percentages and Total Number by Group*	Total Tested	Below Basic	Basic	Proficient	Advanced	Percentage of Students Below Basic and Basic in English Language Arts			Percentage of Students Proficient and Advanced in English Language Arts		
						Percentage	Count	Count	Percentage	Count	Count
All Students	2736	4	19	44	34	22.3	19	44	34	77.7	
Historically Underperforming	733	13	38	36	13	50.6	38	36	13	49.4	
IEP-Special Education	296	23	45	25	6	68.2	45	25	6	31.8	
English Language Learner	42	33	52	10	5	85.7	33	10	5	14.3	
Economically Disadvantaged	534	11	34	40	15	45.1	34	40	15	54.9	
Male	1402	5	23	45	26	28.8	23	45	26	71.2	
Female	1334	2	13	43	41	15.4	13	43	41	84.6	
Asian (not Hispanic)	214	2	13	30	55	15.0	13	30	55	85.0	
Black or African American (not Hispanic)	66	14	44	29	14	57.6	14	29	14	42.4	
Hispanic (any race)	88	11	20	41	27	31.8	20	41	27	68.2	
Multi-Racial (not Hispanic)	145	3	30	37	30	33.1	30	37	30	66.9	
White (not Hispanic)	2217	3	18	46	33	20.9	18	46	33	79.1	

*Demographic groups of less than 10 students are not included in the data

PSSA Performance by SCASD Student Demographics 2016 (2017 reports not yet available)

Mathematics Performance by Group

Percentages and Total Number by Group*	Total Tested	Below Basic	Basic	Proficient	Advanced	Percentage of Students Below Basic and Basic in Mathematics			Percentage of Students Proficient and Advanced in Mathematics		
						Percentage	Count	Count	Percentage	Count	Count
All Students	2749	17	21	29	33	38.3	21	29	33	61.7	
Historically Underperforming	737	41	28	18	13	68.5	28	18	13	31.5	
IEP-Special Education	294	59	22	11	8	81.0	22	11	8	19.0	
English Language Learner	48	46	31	15	8	77.1	31	15	8	22.9	
Economically Disadvantaged	536	39	27	20	13	66.6	27	20	13	33.4	
Male	1409	19	22	26	33	40.2	22	26	33	59.8	
Female	1340	15	21	32	32	36.3	21	32	32	63.7	
Asian (not Hispanic)	216	8	13	19	60	21.3	13	19	60	78.7	
Black or African American (not Hispanic)	66	58	23	9	11	80.3	23	9	11	19.7	
Hispanic (any race)	90	31	23	21	24	54.4	23	21	24	45.6	
Multi-Racial (not Hispanic)	145	22	26	28	25	47.6	26	28	25	52.4	
White (not Hispanic)	2226	15	22	31	31	37.5	22	31	31	62.5	

*Demographic groups of less than 10 students are not included in the data

C. Student learning time

By increasing our elementary student day, we expect this plan would result in improved student learning. This is consistent with research focusing on extending learning time beyond the average 6.5 hour elementary student day; our current elementary student day is six hours and six minutes. The proposed student day schedules are included on the next page.

Example elementary schedules

Current Student Day		Proposed Student Day 2018-19	
Time	Student Schedule	Time	Student Schedule
8:44 - 10:24	Core Instruction (100 mins)	8:10 - 10:10	Core Instruction (120 mins)
10:24 - 10:54	Recess (30 mins)	10:10 - 10:40	Recess (30 mins)
10:54 - 11:24	Lunch (30 mins)	10:40 - 12:10	Core Instruction (90 mins)
11:24 - 12:04	Specials (35 mins + 5 min. transition)	12:10 - 12:40	Lunch (30 mins)
12:04 - 2:50	Core Instruction (166 mins)	12:40 - 1:40	Specials (50 mins + 10 min. transition)
2:50	Dismissal	1:40 - 3:00	Core Instruction (80 mins)
6 hours 06 mins		3:00	Dismissal
		6 hours 50 mins	
		(additional daily 44 mins = 24 min core + 15 min add'l special + 5 min add'l transition)	
266 instructional mins		290 instructional mins (+24 mins)	

Example secondary schedules

Middle School Student Day		High School Student Day	
Current	Proposed	Current	Proposed
8:10 a.m.	8:40 a.m.	8:10 a.m.	8:40 a.m.
3:12 p.m.	3:42 p.m.	3:16 p.m.	3:40 p.m.
7 hours 2 mins	7 hours 2 mins	7 hours 6 mins	7 hours

D. Proposed fifth special

Pending Board support to further develop the proposal, we plan to create a stakeholder steering committee, with a representative from each school, that will help facilitate a process to educate and survey parents about potential options. Within this process, we would utilize a focus group process that will inform the parent survey. That is, the survey will be developed with parent and teacher input.

The results would be shared with the Board and community along with our recommendation for a fifth special in grades K-5.

E. Music ensembles

During the past few weeks, we have interacted with our music faculty and had follow up conversation with our music coordinator, Mr. Paul Leskowicz. Our hope is to realize a K-12 approach to student access and participation in our music program, including ensembles. That is, we desire music programming for band, orchestra and choir be accessible by all students during the school day. This would be similar to our approach in our secondary schools.

F. Recess policy development

The district recognizes the importance of recess. This proposal provides for an additional 30 minute recess each week resulting in consistency across all elementary schools, as well as 10 minutes more of physical education (PE) weekly.

Our Board has discussed the development of a stand alone policy for recess. Currently, recess occurs in grades K-6. The discussion to date has included a plan to conduct recess in every elementary school for a minimum of 30-minutes each day per week. Additionally, we are exploring the possibility of an extra recess opportunity for our K-2 students and scheduling recess at developmentally appropriate times.

We propose the Board develops a draft policy by early December 2017. However, we suggest that the policy is finalized once the Board determines whether the K-5 student day expands or remains the same.

G. Homework policy

At this time, our Board committee for Culture, Climate and Learning (CCL) has begun reviewing our current homework policy, including a reflection on updated pertinent research.

For K-5, we are exploring the reduction or elimination of daily homework. However, regardless of any changes, evening reading would continue to be part of student routines, as well as weeklong or project-based learning to occur at both home and school.

H. Athletics

Currently, Athletic Director Chris Weakland is exploring scheduling changes that would reduce the amount of missed class time for student-athletes travelling to away contests. For the spring of 2018, Mr. Weakland is working to adjust non-conference competitions to Saturdays. He is also collaborating with Mid Penn Conference athletic directors to shift start times in an effort to reduce class time missed by student athletes; additionally, he is working to shift competition dates that fall on the same high school cycle day (e.g. - Tuesday and Thursday competitions cause the same class to be missed).

During this week's Mid Penn athletic director meeting, Mr. Weakland obtained agreement from other athletic directors to collaborate on changes to the 2018-2020 draft league schedules. Additionally, he is working to schedule future multi-team conference competitions for applicable teams on Saturdays.

I. High school: flexible scheduling, hybrid and online learning, and zero period

State High and Delta Program High School counselors currently respond to student requests for schedule changes when concerns about co-curricular and extracurricular activities arise (where possible). We will increase our communications with students and parents regarding this annual scheduling resource.

Additionally, the district is planning to offer high school students both online and hybrid course offerings for 2018-2019. These courses will provide greater scheduling flexibility for students. The majority of these online/hybrid course offerings would be scheduled during the last block of the day, thereby minimizing the amount of instructional time missed for internships and extracurricular (e.g. - clubs or athletics) early dismissals. We plan to ensure that the participating faculty members are available to meet with students during that time period, as well as other times during the school day.

Because some families desire that we continue to offer our zero period option, we will do so for some course options during a 45-minute period that would occur before 8:40 a.m. Our transportation update includes bus service for high school students who desire courses offered during this time. The early morning bus service would be the routes that transport all non-SCASD students.

J. Equitable opportunities

When considering feedback and questions regarding the proposal (and current practices), we'd like to address a common question pertaining to equitable opportunities.

The first question includes access by all students to online learning tools from home. That is: "What does the district do to support students who do not have Internet access at home?" In December of 2014, our high school surveyed all 9-12 students regarding this matter. Ninety-eight percent of

students stated that they do have Internet access at home. Nonetheless, we do communicate Comcast's low-cost program for families struggling to afford Internet access. The program costs

\$9.95 per month. At this time, we are exploring the cost of securing mobile hotspots to support families.

K. Outreach feedback

We hosted two informational sessions in which we obtained participant feedback (view list of feedback: bit.ly/2z3NXbH). The first session was held at PFMS on Tuesday, Sept. 19, and the second session was held at MNMS on Wednesday, Sept. 27. We had approximately 26 individuals aside from SCASD employees attend the first session, and 21 attended the second session; four individuals attended both sessions.

The goal of the sessions was to share an overview of the proposal and receive participants questions and feedback regarding the proposal. The notes from their groups is attached.

L. Cost implications (staffing & transportation)

For this plan to be realized, we have estimated required staffing increases. Due to the addition of a fifth elementary special, we estimate the need for 8 to 10 additional teaching positions. Also, we anticipate a need for an increase in support staff hours to support the new elementary student schedule. Collectively, we anticipate increased staffing costs to be approximately \$1 million, including salary and benefits expenses.

The proposal projected annual transportation costs to increase by up to \$550,000. With the new information noted above in the transportation section of this document, we believe the cost increase will remain within this estimate. That said, we continue to look for ways to decrease our costs as well as improve/reduce the longest bus routes for SCASD students. To that end, the administration has obtained a proposal from School Bus Consultants (SBC) to take an additional look at our transportation system. A contract and proposal document from SBC is provided under separate cover. The intent of this request is to allow an external party to provide the district with an assessment of the impact of student day time changes on the cost and efficiency of transportation services.

Exhibit A

The time table in Exhibit A outlines the key actions and decisions that would need to occur for implementation during the 2018-2019 school year.

Dates	Actions
April 2017 to September 2017	<p>A. Outreach:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Public forums at all elementary schools, both middle high schools and the high school. b. Principal-led PTO informational meetings at all elementary schools. c. Two radio appearances by Dr. O'Donnell. d. Two district emails about the proposal and updates. e. Virtual town hall Facebook Live event regarding proposal. f. Informational sessions at both middle schools. g. One coffee & conversation meeting with board members & administrators h. Revamped and updated the website presence (www.scasd.org/studentday) and information including a one-page summary sheet also given to informational meeting participants. i. Created kindergarten video (https://youtu.be/Q_0Cor3RDdM) and an accompanying in-depth look at our kindergarten program to showcase our innovative classrooms with dynamic movement.
October 2017	<p>A. Outreach:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Two coffee & conversation meetings with board members & administrators b. Board and administration continue discussions with stakeholders and share collective feedback and questions with Board. c. Explore options for fifth elementary special via PTSO meetings and surveying families. Pending Board direction on proposal, administration will formulate a stakeholder advisory team and utilize parent focus groups to assist in developing a parent survey. d. Continue meetings with nonpublic and charter schools regarding development of transportation plan for their students. e. Continue conversations with Athletic Directors & coaches in the Mid Penn Conference regarding alternate scheduling for competitions. f. Adjust CEEL programs to align with new elementary schedule and to extend to 6th grade students. Due to close proximity of MNE and PFE to our middle schools, we are currently exploring the expansion of CEEL offerings to 6th grade students at these

	<p>sites. This consideration includes Delta 5th and 6th grade students.</p> <p>B. Transportation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Understand cost impact for transporting students under charter and nonpublic school schedules. This includes developing multiple transportation scenarios for both SCASD and non-SCASD bus routes; we are currently building these different routes. b. Further develop SCASD student bus routes to improve efficiency, cost and timeliness. c. Ensure entire SCASD transportation operation is supported by engaging independent, evidence-based evaluations to ensure maximizing community resources and reducing duration of bus routes. Although our system evidences accurate times utilizing GPS, including stops, we are investigating the use of a different algorithm to analyze and improve our transportation system. <p>C. Budget: Refinement of estimates for cost of professional and support staff, as well as transportation.</p> <p>D. SCASD Board Committee for Culture, Climate and Learning conducts second meeting to refine Policy 130-Homework with the goal of reducing required daily elementary homework. The discussion thus far maintains daily reading expectations at home.</p> <p>E. Action: Board direction on Oct. 9, 2017 to continue developing the proposal for 2018-2019. The reason we are requesting this action is to understand the Board’s desire regarding the proposal. This would enable the Board to consider a more complete proposal for approval, including the currently outstanding items, during December 2017.</p>
November 2017	<p>A. SCASD administration presents to Board a) updated costs for staffing and transportation, b) refined transportation times for SCASD and non-SCASD student routes, and c) proposed fifth elementary special.</p> <p>B. SCASD Board conducts first reading of revisions to Policy 130-Homework (Nov. 13, 2017).</p> <p>C. Outreach:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Engage elementary parents regarding options to schedule music ensembles during school day (band, orchestra, choir). b. Engage secondary parents regarding more flexible scheduling options, including extracurricular programming.
December 2017	<p>A. SCASD administration presents Board with listing of course options in online and hybrid learning format for 2018-2019. This includes whether year one for these courses will include constraints due to limited space (e.g. - students scheduled for internships, co-curricular and extracurricular conflicts, employment.).</p> <p>B. Begin curriculum development for fifth special.</p> <p>C. SCASD Board conducts second reading of Policy 130-Homework and</p>

	<p>takes action to approve revisions (Dec. 18, 2017).</p> <p>D. SCASD athletic department provides update regarding scheduling competitions that reduce missed student learning during 2018-2019.</p> <p>E. Outreach: Further engage elementary parents regarding efforts to schedule music ensembles during school day (band, orchestra, choir).</p> <p>F. Actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Board takes final action regarding proposed student day changes for 2018-2019. b. Board takes action regarding fifth special for elementary students.
<p>January - June 2018</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. District begins curriculum development process for fifth elementary special. B. District begins search and hiring process for fifth special faculty members (two for hire and training in April, which is consistent with how Delta Middle Level began). C. District teachers continue development of online and hybrid courses. D. Outreach: Parent/community workshops regarding best practices to support children through the changes in sleep patterns due to school time shifts (<u>Dr. John Solic</u>, <u>Dr. Orfeu Buxton</u> & <u>Dr. Anne Marie Chang</u>).