

To: Watertown School Committee
From: John R Brackett, Interim Superintendent
Date: June 19, 2017

RE: Recommendation to Accept the Report of the School Start Time Implementation Task Force.

I am happy to present, for School Committee acceptance, the Report of the School Start Time Implementation Task Force dated Jun 19, 2017.

The Task Force, chaired by Dr. Kimo Carter and comprised of parents, students, staff, and town officials, has been meeting since April. I charged the Task Force to build off the 2016 review of the research regarding school start times for students. I asked that they start with a goal of moving the start time for the high school to 8:30 AM (based on the research). Further that they develop and debate the logistics of making such a change, including start times for the other district schools, the sequencing of start times, the budget, contractual implications, child care, transportation and a myriad of other implications and ramifications that I knew would arise from their work. Tonight, Dr. Carter presents the results of their work.

Tonight is only the first step in a process toward making a decision. I suggest the following:

- The report be assigned to a subcommittee for deeper study and development of a process and timeline.
- This process should include public meetings with parents and community members to inform of the recommendations, and the dissemination of information about a start time change in 2018.
- The school committee will need to identify one preferred scenarios from those presented (or a modified version)
- The administration will engage the Unions in a conversation, if applicable, about mandatory subjects of bargaining that may be contained in the recommendation
- A final decision on making the change should be made in the fall to allow parents, staff, students, and community members to adjust and make accommodations for the change in 2018.

Finally, this is a complex issue with overwhelming research about the benefits of more sleep for teens; but also an issue that collides with a number of adult and logistic factors. The Task Force in crafting the report, and the School Committee is taking future action, must make difficult choices and consider a number of dilemmas involving benefits for students and the disruption of routines or personal impacts on adults. I applaud Dr. Carter and every member of the Task Force for committing to this challenge, to remaining focused on what is best for students, for gaining a deep understanding of the many factors involved, and participating in a civil discourse of educational policy and student growth. My sincere thanks goes out to each member.