



# Middle School Start Times - Next Steps

School Board Work Session  
February 18, 2025

# Background

- Current situation: MS - 7:30a, SS - 8:00a, HS at 8:10a.
- The primary objective of the RFP that led to this project is:
  - Develop an Action Plan to help the FCPS School Board attain its goal of starting MS at/after 8:00a while keeping SS/HS at/after 8:00a
- The 2015-16 MS/SS/HS start time changes resulted in high school students getting more sleep, but middle schoolers getting less.
- Since 2014's Blueprint work, the body of research around sleep science has grown. The adolescent circadian rhythm differs from adults'. The American Academy of Pediatrics and other science-driven organizations have come out in favor of not starting secondary school until 8:30a or later.
- Nationally, 66% of MS start at 8:00a or later.
- Substantial community input was provided in developing options for this project via interviews, Spring forums, and surveys.

# Options Summary

School Start Time Options – Revised 2/6/25							
Level	Current <sup>1</sup>	A	B	C	C2	D	E
ES	8:30a-3:15p thru 9:20a-4:05p	7:45a-2:30p or 8:15a-3:00p	8:00a-2:45p or 9:20a-4:05p	8:00a-2:45p or 9:00a-3:45p <sup>2</sup>	8:00a-2:45p or 9:10a-3:55p <sup>4</sup>	8:30a-3:15p or 9:20a-4:05p	9:00a-3:45p to 9:50a-4:35p <sup>3</sup>
MS	7:30a-2:15p	8:45a-3:30p	9:00a-3:45p	9:30a-4:15p	9:40a-4:25p	9:00a-3:45p	8:00a-2:45p
SS	8:00a-2:45p	8:15a-3:00p	8:30a-3:15p	8:30a-3:15p	8:30a-3:15p	8:00a-2:45p	8:30a-3:15p
HS	8:10a-2:55p	9:15a-4:00p				8:10a-2:55p	8:40a-3:25p
Run Time	110	90	80	90	100	80	110
Buses	783	+0-25	+20-30	+0-15	-10-0	+75-150	+0
Cost		+\$0-1.8M	+\$1.4-\$2.1M	+\$0-\$1.1M	+\$0	+\$6.4-\$17.3M	+\$0

<sup>1</sup>Start times of several specialty and a few regular schools not shown.

<sup>2</sup>ES begin at 9:30a.

<sup>3</sup>All ES shift by 30 minutes from current SST.

<sup>4</sup>Seven ES begin at 9:05a

# Office of Transportation Services Recommendations

- Option C2
  - Change concentrated at the middle school level
  - Incremental changes to high school and elementary school
  - Cost neutral
  - Achievable run time
- Option E
  - Continues current release pattern
    - Allows for families to keep current childcare options for older siblings
  - Easiest to communicate and implement
  - After-school activities and sports should adjust for high schoolers
  - Cost neutral
  - Run times remain the same

# Prismatic Recommendations

- Options B, C, and C2 meet FCPS criteria and American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recommendations. All are similar in terms of:
  - Cost
  - Number of ES that will change School Start Time (SST) by more than 30 minutes (either earlier or later)
  - Number of ES at the earlier versus the later SST
  - Average ES SST Change
  - Maximum number of minutes an ES will go earlier than current
  - Maximum number of minutes an ES will go later than current
- Options A, D, and E are not recommended
  - They do not meet AAP recommendation to not start MS/HS before 8:30a

# FCPS Response to Prismatic Recommendations

- Option B, C, & C2 - Prismatic Recommended
  - Option C2 - Office of Transportation Services (OTS) also recommends
  - Option B & C - OTS does not recommend due to potential cost and reduced run time risk
- Option E - FCPS Recommended
  - OTS recommends based on 30 minute later middle school start time (from 7:30a to 8:00a), childcare options, and cost neutrality, along with relative ease of communication and implementation

# Start Times and Boundary Work Implementation

- Options: Parallel or Sequential
- Recommendation: Parallel with Boundary Adjustments in SY 26-27
  - Enhances integration and alignment between the initiatives
    - Allows boundary review scenarios to inform start times change
  - Single disruption to the community
  - Full year to implement and refine new routing software
  - Stakeholder engagement
    - Allows time for successful coordination with child care providers
  - Staffing and resource allocation
    - Extends preparation time for optimizing staffing in transportation
    - Extends preparation time for school staff to adapt to change
  - Communication Consolidation
    - Mitigates message fatigue - the two initiatives can be communicated together
  - System testing and validation
    - Relieves pressure on systems by allowing time to correct issues