

A Proposal for  
**Late Starts**  
in the  
**Amherst School District**  
**(K-8)**



# Late Starts for the Amherst School District

## Proposal

- Model the current SHS/Mont Vernon late-start schedule of 10 days

## Cost

- Reduces cost of bus transportation
- No additional costs anticipated

## Impact

- Twenty hours of instructional time will be impacted
- There is a potential for staff missing fewer school days for professional development based upon the training/information received during the late-start sessions.
- Support staff will now receive common PD alongside professional staff.

# Why a Late Start?

- Delivers common and focused PD on initiatives and goals
- Amherst School District provides less dedicated PD time for staff than surrounding districts
- There is limited time within the school day for sharing best practices, training, and discussion, particularly across schools.
- In order to affect change, there needs to be instruction, discussion, demonstration, and repetition. What is a best practice for student mastery holds true for teacher mastery.
- Improves continuity across schools and districts.
- Fosters a collaborative environment within and across schools.

# ***How will the Amherst School District structure late starts?***

Over the summer a calendar will be developed, including the following:

- Topic/Focus for the day/trimester/quarter/year
- Leadership/facilitation structure
- Teacher groupings
- Draft Agendas

# ***What will the content look like and how will it be accomplished?***

*A variety of topics may be addressed....*

*We want to pursue coordination with the other districts of SAU 39*

- *Differentiated Instruction*
- *Flexible Grouping*
- *Implementation of NELMS Recommendations*
- *Active Pedagogy Groups*
- *Implementation of Year 2 Literacy Goals*
- *Data Teams*
- *Curriculum Alignment*
- *Examination of student work*
- *Collaborative Study Groups*

# What are the benefits?

- “Improve student achievement by improving teaching quality” (Richardson, 2001).
- Team (collaborative) Learning
- Cross school/ district collaboration
- Improved teacher efficacy

# *What factors do we need to consider in the context of CBAs?*

- The question has been raised whether this should be a negotiated item into the CBA.
  - There is no impact to the teachers' workday; however, there is an impact on the amount of student-teacher interaction.

# *What parental concerns existed in the past? What exist today?*

- Based on information obtained approximately five years ago, some parents voiced a concern about morning child care. We have not surveyed parents on this issue recently.
- Some parents of high school students bring their middle-school students to AMS at 9:30 on late-start days to coordinate transportation with SHS.

## *How far in advance did the MVSD begin planning for late starts?*

- There is no specific information available at this time regarding their planning.
- They've had late starts for 4 years.
- The PTA was heavily involved, because they provided child care the first year.
- Child care is now funded through a grant.

## ***How can we pick up where we left off? Who has the old data?***

- The data that may still be available is at least five years old.
- It probably does not make sense to simply pick up where we left off.
- We recommend beginning the process again, informed with data from current staff and parents.

# *How should we facilitate late start conversations with staff and parents?*

- Discussed during the May staff meetings at Clark, Wilkins, and AMS.
- We recommend a survey of parents during the months of May/June using either Angel or Survey Monkey.

## *How will Kindergarten be addressed?*

- Our primary recommendation is to flip the morning and afternoon kindergarten on late-start days so that the time missed would be divided equally between the two programs.

# ***How will we evaluate success?***

- The SAU School Board recently learned about improved student achievement accomplished through late starts at the MVVS.
- Souhegan High School has had late starts for many years and considers it an integral part of their culture.
  - Evaluation system that has tracked data on the annual basis
  - Facilitators meet monthly to evaluate the effectiveness and success of each monthly meeting.
- It is our belief that we will more effectively engage, challenge and support all learners through
  - consistent teacher training;
  - Incorporation of best practices and common assessments;
  - ongoing review of students' work.

# Closing Thoughts

“Words such as staff development, staff training, professional development, and in-service are terms that are no longer useful. It is necessary to abandon professional development and make professional learning an everyday experience for all educators. Teachers do not need to be staff developed – something that is done to them. Teachers do need to participate in ongoing professional learning – an act of continual participation and action with others in the context of their workplace” (The NCSM Improving Student Achievement Series, 2007).