

For Immediate Release

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Advisory Committee to Consider a Later Start Time for Masconomet

Start time for high school students has recently emerged as a significant issue on the national level and across Massachusetts. While a topic for two decades in Massachusetts, few school systems had moved high school start time to later in the morning. A large number of medical and scientific studies have emerged in recent years identifying the medical and developmental reasons that explain why high school age students are better served by later start times. The American Academy of Pediatrics and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control recommend a start time no earlier than 8:30 a.m. Accordingly many districts nationally and a growing number in Massachusetts have made schedule adjustments to start high school later. As reported in the Boston Globe and other media, Masconomet now joins many of its neighbors, including Newburyport, Georgetown and North Reading, in actively studying a change in high school start time.

During the 2014-2015 school year, a joint advisory committee comprised of School Committee members from Boxford, Middleton, Topsfield, and Masconomet was charged by the full Committees to investigate potential school calendar changes that could provide a more family-friendly schedule. Part of its work included a survey on opinions and perceptions of when school should start, when it should end, and what holidays it should observe. Questions were also posed about participants' thoughts on starting Masconomet at a later time. 2,300 people across the Tri-towns participated in the survey. Nearly 70% of those surveyed indicated a later start time would be beneficial for our students.

In recent weeks, the Masconomet, Boxford, Middleton, and Topsfield School Committees appointed member representatives to a School Start Times Advisory Committee (STAC). STAC will investigate the feasibility of a later morning start time for Masconomet and consider the options that exist and what the impacts may be for students of all ages, kindergarten through grade 12. STAC was expanded to include parents and educators, and is chaired by Masconomet School Committee member Teresa Buono. STAC met for the first time on Monday March 28th. The committee will be issuing a survey in the coming months to solicit input from the community and will continue to meet throughout this school year. Information on the Committee and its progress is available on Masconomet's website at: www.masconomet.org/domain/173 .

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