

ANCHORAGE SCHOOL DISTRICT  
ANCHORAGE, ALASKA

ASD MEMORANDUM #223 (2002-2003)

March 31, 2003

TO: SCHOOL BOARD  
FROM: OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT  
SUBJECT: SCHOOL START TIMES UPDATE

PERTINENT FACTS:

The High School Division has been working closely with all high schools in the ASD to identify some ways to provide later start times for students. It has been suggested that some students would improve their performance if they had the opportunity to begin classes later in the day.

A student survey in the six comprehensive high schools was completed in February of 2003. A total of 6003 high school students responded to the survey. The survey results are attached (attachment A).

About fifty one percent (51.3%) of the surveyed students indicated that they would not be interested in beginning their school day later if it meant staying later. 10.3% were undecided, and 36.3% indicated they would be interested in a later start, even if they had to stay later.

The survey also indicated that 46.7% of the respondents participate in after school activities. It was revealed that 49.4% go to and from school most often by car and 41.5% use the bus. When asked if they believed they could learn more if they were able to start the day later, 42.2% responded yes and 41.4% indicated no.

The survey results seem to support the theory that some high school students would prefer and could possibly benefit academically from a later start. The survey results also indicate that a large percentage of high school students are not interested in a later start.

Beginning with the second semester of this year, our high schools are offering courses during the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> hour time periods to provide students with a late start option. Emphasis was given to offering some required classes later in the day in an effort to give students greater flexibility in developing a late-start

schedule. These options are experiencing limited success with students desiring a late start. Most classes are being filled with students that need to recover credit from failed classes or students that want to get ahead or provide more scheduling flexibility in the future.

The West High Online program got off the ground this Spring semester and offers student the very best opportunity to start late and stay later. Because of the flexibility offered by online instruction, students were able to select from a variety of required classes during every period of the day, including 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> hours. The West High Online program was initially offered only to students that were interested in starting their school day later. After an extensive campaign to get the word out to students, counselors and parents explaining this opportunity, there were only 8 students that came forward to take advantage of the late start. The 150 West High Online program slots were then opened to any and all interested students. The slots were filled quickly.

Currently, the most popular late start option is for students that have satisfied all but five (or less) courses for high school graduation. Many of those students opt to start their school day later.

CC/JC/MH

Prepared by: Mike Henry, Executive Director, High School Education

Approved by: Jan Christensen, Assistant superintendent, Instruction