

# *Anchorage School District School Start Times – Research, Potential Changes & Survey Results*



Western Demographics, Inc.  
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# Introduction

- In 2014, the American Academy of Pediatrics recommended that U.S. middle and high schools start at or after 8:30.
- Research indicated that early school start times restrict the sleep opportunity of adolescents, and healthy school start times are associated with increased sleep duration, decreased daytime sleepiness, increased attendance and graduation rates, fewer tardies and increased GPA, improved health outcomes, and fewer automobile crashes.
- Since 2014, many districts have explored changing start times with a significant number of those making changes.
- Additional research, both pro and con, has been published
- Opposition research tends to suggest benefits for middle and high school students with later starts are minimal and emphasizes potential negative effects on elementary school students of earlier starts.





Current	Start	End
High	7:30	2:00
Middle	8:15	2:45
Elementary	9:00	3:30

Scenario 1	Start	End
Elementary	7:30	2:00
Middle	8:15	2:45
High	9:00	3:30



Research  
Compliant

Scenario 2	Start	End
Elementary	7:45	2:15
Middle	8:30	3:00
High	9:15	3:45



Scenario 3	Start	End
Elementary	7:45	2:15
High	8:30	3:00
Middle	9:15	3:45



3 Current and Research-Compliant Scenarios



Current	Start	End
High	7:30	2:00
Middle	8:15	2:45
Elementary	9:00	3:30

Scenario 4 - 2018 Recommendation	Start	End
High	8:00	2:30
Elementary	8:45	3:15
Middle	9:30	4:00



Scenario 5 - Research Compliant Order Starting at 8:00	Start	End
Elementary	8:00	2:30
High	8:45	3:15
Middle	9:30	4:00



# CaSTLES – Changing Start Times Longitudinal Effects Study

- Recently, ASD heard a presentation by Dr. Lisa Meltzer, a well-regarded sleep researcher with a National reputation. This is one of the best pre / post change studies.
- Dr. Meltzer and her team conducted pre and post change research in a school district that changed start times in Colorado.
- Cherry Creek School District (CCSD - Colorado) began a two-year process of considering the benefits and challenges of changing school start times.
- The BOE voted to implement new school start times for the 2017-2018 academic year. Elementary schools moved from 9:00 am to 8:00 am, middle schools moved from 7:50-8:10 am to 8:50 am, and high schools moved from 7:10 am to 8:20 am.
- Most expected benefits resulted including student performance benefits along with benefits for teachers and parents (more sleep, other wellness improvements).



# Professional Learning Community (PLC)

## Monday

- PLCs are a means to support major ASD initiatives
  - College, Career, Life Ready
  - Curriculum implementation and goal monitoring
  - Social, emotional learning and student mental health services
- A nationally recognized model of job-embedded professional development for staff
  - Provides time for professional educators to develop and refine instructional strategies
  - Addresses various student needs (i.e. attendance, achievement, etc.)
  - Prioritizes data-driven decision making to improve student outcomes
- Districtwide at all levels in Fall 2024
  - Continue in comprehensive ASD High Schools (since 2006)
  - Adjust Middle School PLC model
  - Implementation at Elementary Schools and Alternative Programs next year
- 60 minute student late start on Monday mornings





PLC Adjustment - Monday

Current	PLC Monday Start	End
High	8:30	2:00
Middle	9:15	2:45
Elementary	10:00	3:30

Scenario 1	PLC Monday Start	End
Elementary	8:30	2:00
Middle	9:15	2:45
High	10:00	3:30

Scenario 2	PLC Monday Start	End
Elementary	8:45	2:15
Middle	9:30	3:00
High	10:15	3:45

Scenario 3	PLC Monday Start	End
Elementary	8:45	2:15
High	9:30	3:00
Middle	10:15	3:45



PLC Adjustment - Monday

Current	PLC Monday Start	End
High	8:30	2:00
Middle	9:15	2:45
Elementary	10:00	3:30

Scenario 4 - 2018 Recommendation	PLC Monday Start	End
High	9:00	2:30
Elementary	9:45	3:15
Middle	10:30	4:00

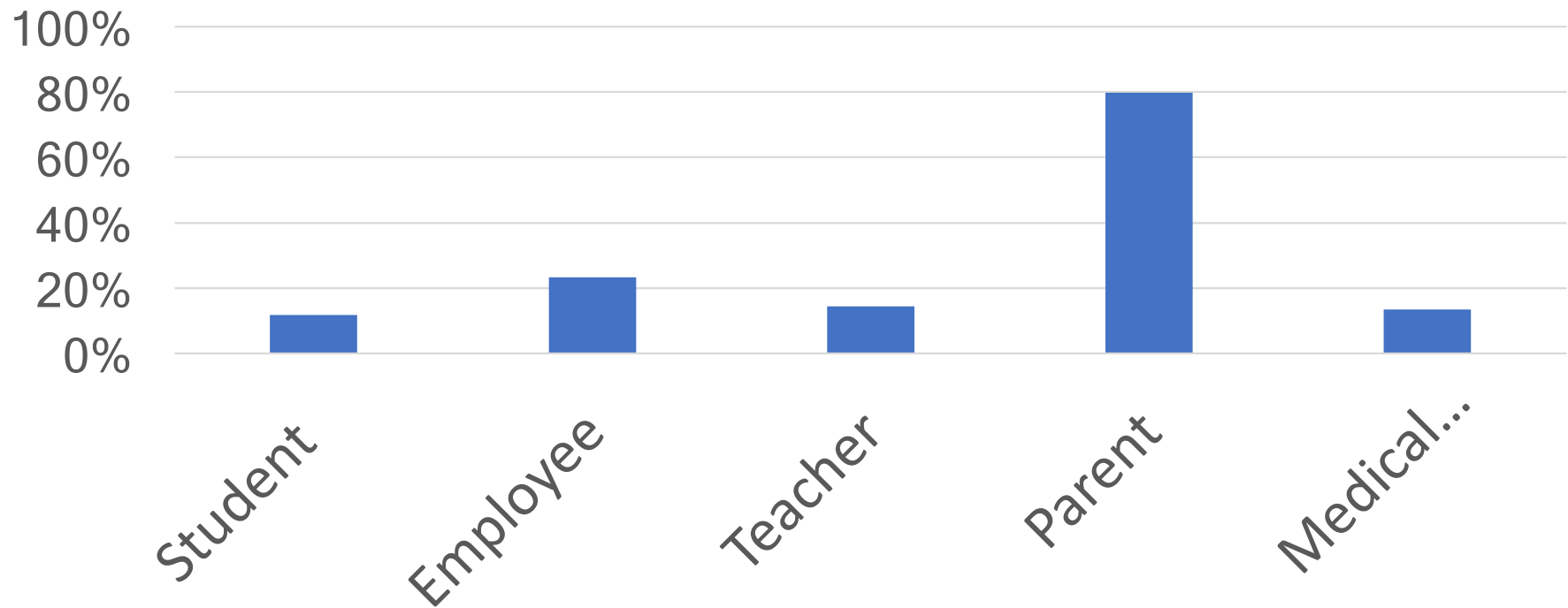
Scenario 5 - Research Compliant Order Starting at 8:00	PLC Monday Start	End
Elementary	9:00	2:30
High	9:45	3:15
Middle	10:30	4:00

# Survey Responses

- Nearly 10,000 survey responses were received (total = 9,926).
- Most responses were from parents (80%).
- Employees 23%.
  - 62% of the employees were teachers
  - Teachers 14% of all responses.
- Students represented about 12% of the responses.
- Principals less than 1%.
- Medical Professionals 13%.
- A separate survey conducted with 65 transportation personnel.



# Percent of Survey Responses by Role



# Level of Agreement on Four Issues

Issue #1: Middle and high school students should start later; not harmful for elementary students to start earlier

Issue#2: Cold, dark winters with snowy, icy roads in Anchorage reduce the benefits of start time changes.

Issue#3: In the wake of the pandemic, *now is the right time to change start times*.

Issue #4: Spend funds to pay for buses and drivers.



# Percent Somewhat or Strongly Agree (Focus Groups)

	Teacher	Principals*	SAB**	Town Halls
1. Middle & High students should start later; earlier Elem start times not harmful	61%	79%	70%	54%
2. Cold, dark winters with snowy, icy roads here reduce benefits of school start time changes	38%	31%	28%	34%
3. In wake of Pandemic, now is the right time to change start times	51%	63%	61%	49%
4. Additional Funds Should be Spent to Pay for buses & drivers	50%	57%	50%	52%

\*Principals responses were all collected at focus group sessions, so there is not a difference for them on the two tables .

\*\* SAB – Student Advisory Board



# Percent Somewhat or Most Likely to Support Start Time Changes by School Level (Focus Group Respondents)

	Teacher	Principals*	SAB	Town Halls
Earlier start times than current for elementary	70%	92%	78%	60%
Later start times than current for middle school	72%	85%	89%	67%
Later start times than current for high school	79%	95%	89%	69%

Green/Shaded cells indicate 55% or more somewhat likely or most likely to support. Totals may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

\*\* SAB – Student Advisory Board



# Percent Somewhat or Strongly Agree (All Respondents)

	Teacher	Principals	Students	Parents	All
<b>1. Middle &amp; High students should start later; earlier Elem start times not harmful</b>	56%	79%	63%	50%	52%
<b>2. Cold, dark winters with snowy, icy roads here reduce benefits of school start time changes</b>	37%	31%	24%	32%	31%
<b>3. In wake of Pandemic, now is the right time to change start times</b>	44%	63%	60%	44%	45%
<b>4. Additional Funds Should be Spent to Pay for buses &amp; drivers</b>	50%	57%	62%	54%	54%

Green/Shaded cells indicate 50% or more agree or strongly agree. Totals may not sum to 100 due to rounding.



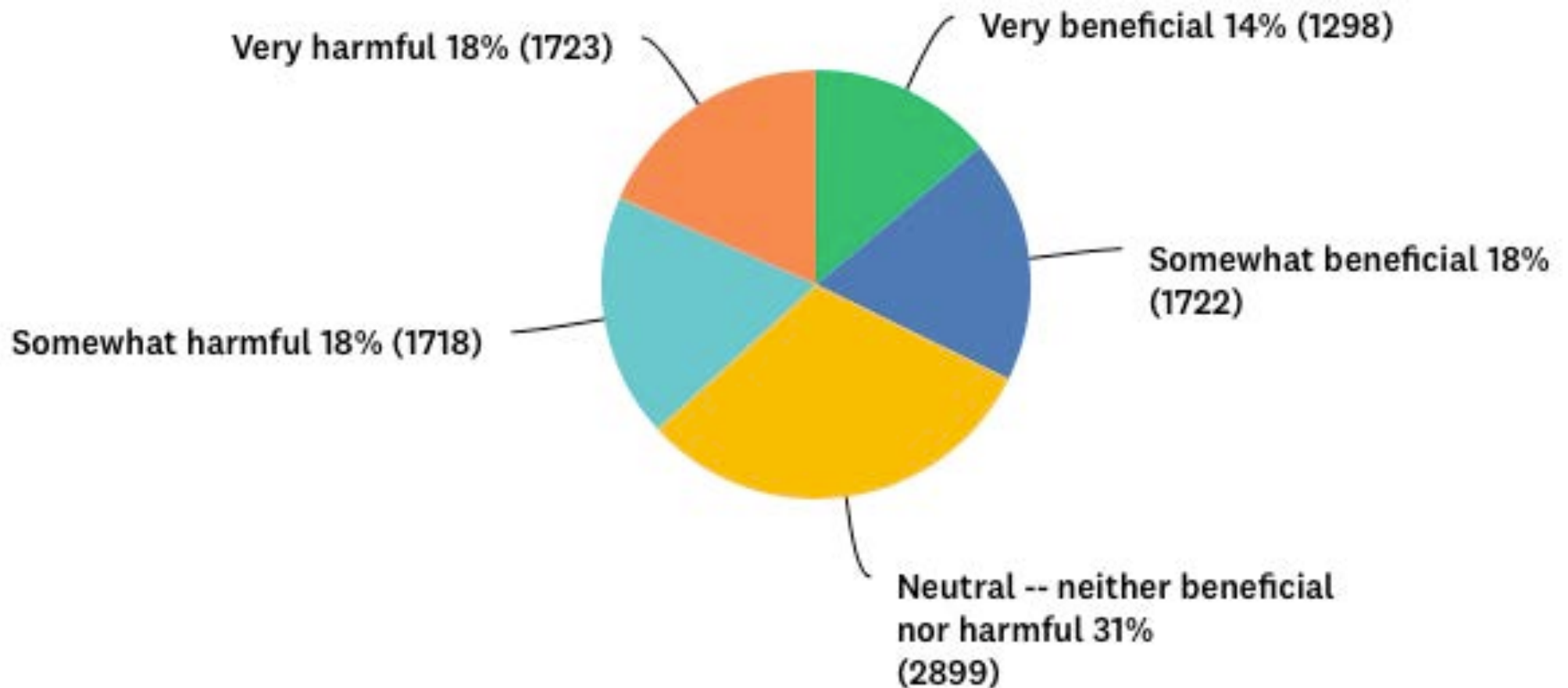
# Percent Somewhat or Most Likely to Support Start Time Changes by School Level (All Respondents)

	Teacher	Principals	Students	Parents	All
Earlier start times than current for elementary	66%	92%	64%	55%	57%
Later start times than current for middle school	68%	85%	72%	65%	66%
Later start times than current for high school	74%	95%	76%	69%	71%

Green/Shaded cells indicate 55% or more somewhat likely or most likely to support. Totals may not sum to 100 due to rounding.



Percent of all responses to:  
“Do you think earlier start times would be beneficial,  
neutral, or harmful for elementary students?”



# Highest Ranking Concerns

1. Elementary students walking in the dark of early morning. (59%)
2. Middle and High school students in sports and extracurricular activities. (52%)
3. After school childcare scheduling for younger students. (50%)
4. High school students with after school jobs. (47%)
5. Older students who need to be available early in the afternoon to provide childcare for younger siblings (42%)

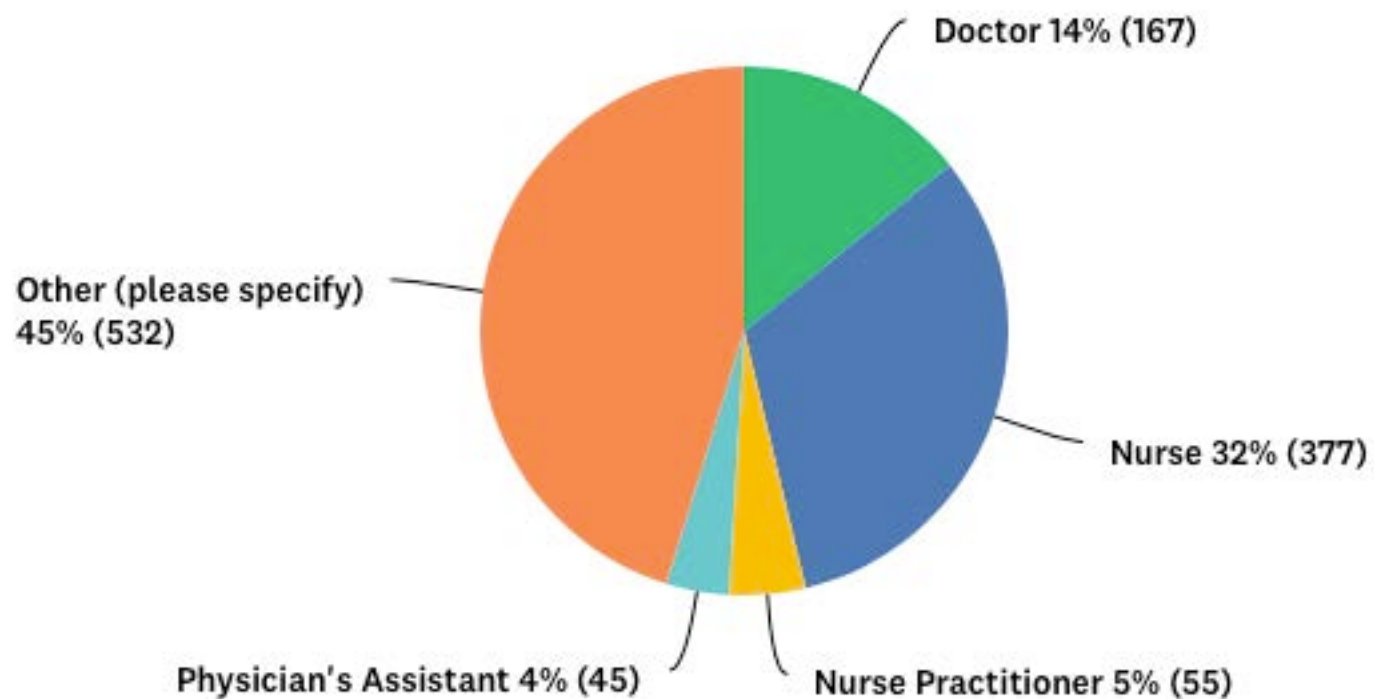


# Concerns by Group

- Parents highest ranked concerns were consistent with those that emerged for all as concerns.
- Teachers also ranked *changes in work schedules for teachers* a concern (44% listed it).
- Students did not rank *after school childcare scheduling for younger students* as high (35% listed it).
- Principals were not as concerned with *high school students with after school jobs* (21% listed it).



# Medical Professionals



Total = 1,203



# Other Medical Roles Listed

Medical Laboratory Scientist  
Optometrist therapy NCMA Administrative Public Healthcare coordinator  
Clinical Social Worker Management Technologist Behavioral health  
Speech Language Pathologist EMS Occupational therapist Pediatric office  
Researcher EMT Administration Dental Hygienist Psychologist Veterinary  
Emergency SLP Physical therapist Technician Admin LPC  
LMT Social worker tech Therapist Medical Clinical MA Respiratory  
Midwife Counselor CMA Radiology  
clinic Mental health Pharmacist PCA Paramedic Supervisor  
X-ray Support Dental Dentist PT Pharmacy Medical assistant Certified  
LCSW hospital Nurse assistant CNA Administrator Director  
Certified medical assistant OT Pharmacy Technician health Clinician  
Psychotherapist Office Manager nursing student coordinator  
Licensed Professional Counselor Exercise Physiologist Health Practitioner



# Pediatric and Sleep Expert Opinions on School Start Times

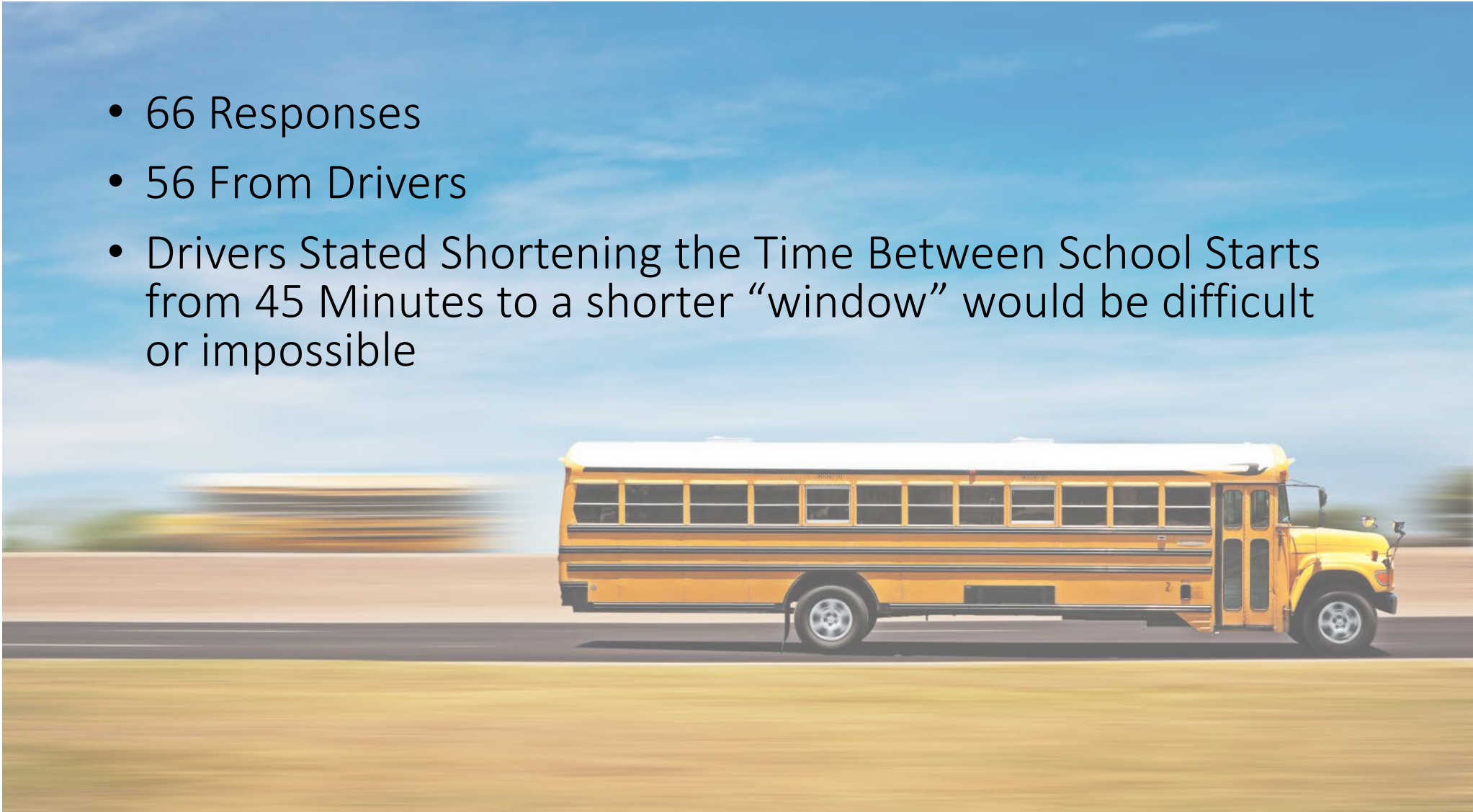


	Pediatrics	Sleep Specialists	All
Earlier start times than current for elementary	66%	42%	57%
Later start times than current for middle school	65%	75%	66%
Later start times than current for high school	72%	67%	71%



# Transportation Staff Survey

- 66 Responses
- 56 From Drivers
- Drivers Stated Shortening the Time Between School Starts from 45 Minutes to a shorter “window” would be difficult or impossible



# Summary

- Survey participants support changing school start times, especially to move middle and high school students to later start times.
- Support for moving elementary students to an earlier start time, support is not as strong.
- Support for changes persist across groups examined. Students, teachers, principals, parents, pediatric specialists all support a change.
- Focus group & town hall participants supported at higher rates.

