



EASTON, REDDING, AND REGION 9 SCHOOL DISTRICTS

654 MOREHOUSE ROAD, P.O. BOX 500 EASTON, CONNECTICUT 06612

OFFICE (203) 261-2513 FAX (203) 261-4549

bjosefsberg@er9.org

BERNARD A. JOSEFSBERG, ED.D.
SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

February 3, 2012

Dear Redding Parents and Guardians:

Yesterday, I met with PTA leaders Sara Sobel and Allyson Florkowski to ask them to facilitate a community forum on the topic of start times in the Redding schools. I'm pleased that they agreed to do so and that I can therefore invite you to participate on **Wednesday, February 29th at 7:30 PM in the JRMS Community Room.**

The forum is intended to provide the community an opportunity to respond to the rationale for a later start time at RES and an earlier one for JRMS. In brief, such a change would align the start times in the Redding and Easton school districts. Doing so would improve opportunities for faculty communication, collaboration and coordination, as well as create possibilities for more shared after school programming for the youth of both communities. Because it would reverse the elementary and middle school bus runs, doing so also would reduce afternoon pick-up delays at JRMS.

The question is whether these benefits offset the inconveniences and losses that can be cited as reasons to forego the change. Different people will answer this question differently – and all with legitimate reasons to support their conclusion. As someone responsible for securing the conditions for effective and efficient schooling, I am disposed to value certain considerations over others. But I also acknowledge the significance of those other considerations. For example, the current schedule accommodates important activities before and after school at both RES and JRMS. To the extent that such activities can be reconstituted with a different schedule, then the loss is minimized. The loss grows to the extent that they cannot be. And for some, that loss would be too much.

In the same vein, I recognize that common information will be filtered through our individual circumstances. This is most evident, perhaps, in how we respond to the sleep research that argues for later school start times --- for high school and middle school age students. Or, is it simply for high school age students? I think the research is persuasive as it applies to post-pubescent teenagers and much less so for their younger counterparts. [I've attached a listing of some useful sleep research websites.]

Lastly, I've been asked why Redding and not Easton? It is true that a change in either community will produce alignment. Were the Easton schools to change, however, they would join Redding as a regional anomaly with respect to elementary and middle school start times. Moreover, Helen Keller Middle School would also experience the afterschool busing delays now confined to JRMS.

I wouldn't bring this idea forward if I didn't believe it was, on balance, a good one for Redding students. But as is the case with all matters of policy and governance, final authority rests with your Board of Education. This is why my self-described "good idea" is not "a done deal." Further, this is why we are having a community forum. Once again, I invite you to attend.

Sincerely,

Bernie Josefsberg