

Thinking about school start times....

I like the idea of transportation savings coming from changing school start times. When I created a proposal earlier this fall I even had a 7:20 school start time in the mix for 1/6 of all students who needed transportation. When I did that I imagined students coming from the 7:15 start time and the 7:30 start time, not from 9:30. For some families going from a 9:30 start time to a 7:15 start time is too big of a change. I think it was easy for BPS to get excited by the possibility for huge savings and over reached with the current proposal because of that.

I would like to offer a compromise solution that might work better for families, and not save as much money for BPS. First change the times to ones that would be more popular for parents. A little later in the morning and a little earlier in the afternoon would get schools closer to popular middle 8:00 times that parents preferred in surveys. Those times would be 7:30, 7:40, 8:20, 8:30, 9:10, and 9:20.

The current BPS proposal is so intertwined that changing one school effects all other school times. My suggested times would be easier to make small changes to. Three schools could rearrange their times as a group. However this would be harder to do with high schools part of the mix. Also, I expect that with my new times, updates could happen more often than every five years if desired.

The MIT tool is brand new. It would have been crazy lucky if it was implemented perfectly the first time. I think deciding to redo the school start times should not be considered a failure. The implementation just needs refinement. I would recommend that my times get paired with the MIT algorithm. The mix of more family friendly times, with efficiency would be a workable combination.

New variables for the algorithm could be:

1. Use the proposed new times for bus routes
2. No changes in school start times that are more than an hour for K-8 aged students
3. Have more autistic, special education, medically fragile students, and students with emotional impairments have either preference to the 8:20 and 8:30 school start times or keep students at close to their current time. Generally families of students with special needs choose a time on purpose and have worked hard to make it work.

For timeframe a redo could be done for the 2019-2020 school year so there is time to tweak the times for the different schools. For the 2018-2019 year the times could stay the same. Another possibility would be to use the new proposed times which are mainly 10-20 minute changes for K-8 students and 1 hour changes for high school students and that could be put in place without much disruption.

I would also recommend that there be a clear plan on how money will be reinvested. Without that it is hard to motivate families to make changes. Right now many families are being asked to give up sleep, convenience and money without a clear plan on how it will benefit BPS students.

Attached is my proposal. I also tweak it regularly. The latest version lives at the following website address:

<http://ljgraf.com/BPS/schools2.pdf>

New School Start Time Proposal by Lisa Jeanne and Bea Graf

Earlier this year my daughter and I worked on a school start time proposal for the BPS transportation challenge which MIT students won. In hearing feedback from parents in response to the new BPS plan for changing school start times I decided to update my proposal to address parent's concerns better.

In surveys for preferred start times the middle 8:00 school start times were the most popular. To address this I tried to move all the times closer to those times. The 7:15 time has been removed. The 7:30 time remains and a 7:40 time is added. For the middle times I offer 8:20 and 8:30 times. For the last time, the 9:30 time is removed and replaced with 9:20 and 9:10.

For this proposal, I list the times that a bus drops off a student as well the time that school starts. For efficiency, most buses have three routes in the morning. In the afternoon the routes have less schools per bus. Many middle school and high school students were given later school start times so that they could get more sleep. Most of these times are at a 8:30 school start time so students will still have time for extracurricular activities and/or jobs.

Schools would fit into 6 groups, and for the most part have 6 start times. There is a bigger range of times for non-BPS schools but some use these same times.

Bus Drop off Time	School Start Time	How times are filled	Amount of students
7:15 7:00 & 7:10	7:30 mix of times	BPS: Filled with schools currently in the 7:00-7:15 times 1 Charter at 7:00 and two at 7:10	1/6 of riders
7:25 mix of times	7:40 mix of times	BPS: Filled with ELCs , & schools currently with 7:15 times Many Non-BPS schools at this time	1/6 of riders
8:05 mix of times	8:20 mix of times	BPS: filled mainly with schools currently at the 8:15 time, and middle school students Non-BPS schools	1/6 of riders
8:15 mix of times	8:30 mix of times	BPS: filled mainly with schools currently at the 8:15 time, middle school students and high school students Non-BPS schools	1/6 of riders
8:55 mix of times	9:10 mix of times	BPS: Schools that currently have the 9:15 time, and middle school and high school students that would prefer this time Non-BPS schools	1/6 of riders
9:05 mix of times	9:20 mix of times	BPS: Schools that currently have the 9:15 time Non-BPS schools	1/6 of riders

Most of the schools would have their start times changed by 20 minutes at the most. The exception is Middle and High School students that have been moved by an hour. If families want their schools to change their start times they could request a change. If a school in another time is willing to do a trade then changes could be made. There would need to be an eye kept on keeping the percentages in each group close to 2/6s to allow for the most efficiency in the bus routes however.

I think this version works well because:

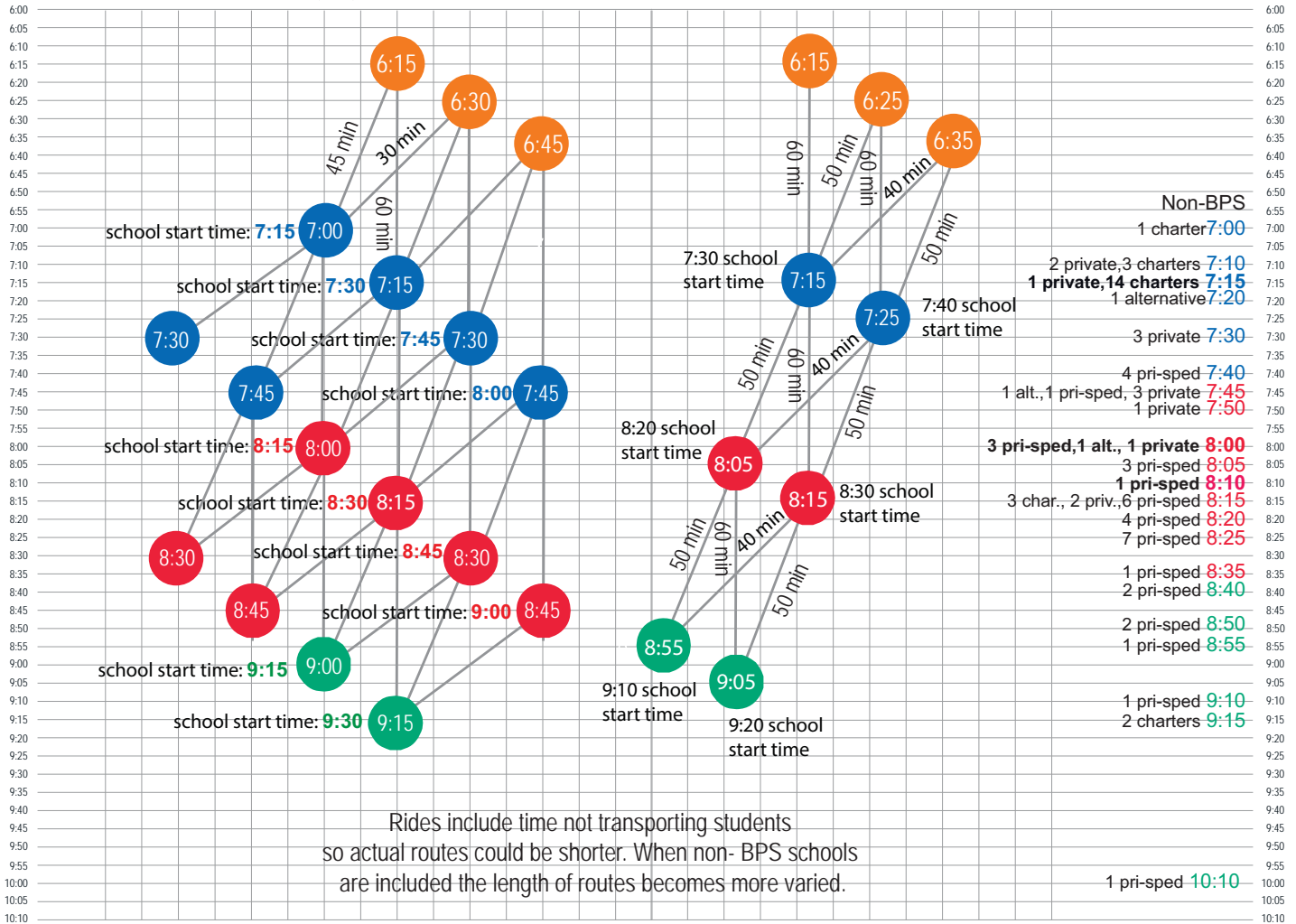
This proposal is flexible in that it allows for longer routes where needed.

- The 8:30 school start time works well for moving up high school and middle school students that have early start times to a later time without impacting afterschool activities.
- 5/6 of the school start times are at 9:10 or sooner
- The changes are small for most families with young children and not too disruptive.
- It works well with non-BPS schools. Non BPS schools could adopt the BPS times for more consistency.
- The BPS times link up well with one another as well as many of the non-BPS times
- The earliest and latest times make it possible to have three routes in the afternoon in places. Without those times, many buses would only be able to have two routes.
- Most of the savings will be able to go directly to reinvestment, as schools would not have to create new programming before or after school.
- Parents would not have to spend as much extra money on before or after school care. If BPS saves money but BPS families struggle financially that's not fair. Also it would impact student learning.

Times that BPS drops off students at schools

Current Proposal from BPS
BPS 30, 45, and 60 minute routes

New Proposal from Lisa Jeanne Graf
BPS 40, 50 and 60 minute routes



If one school wanted to change it's time it would affect all the other schools.

If one school wanted to change it's time it could be addressed by adjusting two other school's times.

Routes would be decided by an algorithmn that would consider every school location, time and traffic and how each option affected the other choices.

Depending on the location of schools to one another different routes would be available. Routes would start with a blue time, then go to a red time and end with a green end time. The MIT algorithmn could be used wth this proposal if desired.

Non BPS schools would be part of deciding the choices for school start times. It would be one of the factors.

The 7:15 time is used by many Charter schools. Charters and private schools could pair with BPS well.

When working on this issue I choose different start times for all the schools that BPS provides busing for. I attempted for the early, middle and late times to each have one third of all the riders on buses. I largely kept school start times at times close to what now exists for a minimal change for parents. I picked a few schools with bigger populations that were somewhat open to changing their start times, and moved them to other times. I also tried to avoid putting the schools with longer days in the last time. It might make sense as well to keep the schools with longer commutes away from the earliest times and latest times. In the morning if a student would have a long commute they might need to get on a bus very early and that is not ideal. In the afternoon a long commute would turn into rush hour traffic. I think community involvement would be best for determining which schools go with which times.

Also I could share the school start times I chose with anyone who is interested. I showed my ideas to BPS already.

The afternoon routes are more complicated to organize largely because different schools have different school lengths and some schools have their busing not after when school gets let out, but when after care ends for the day. I would be interested in seeing an excel document of each school's school length and the before and after school offered for each day. That might make the afternoon busing easier to plan.

The reason BPS is working on this issue is to save money on transportation that can be reinvested in the schools. Below is my wish list of how that money could be spent.

Changing how Schools are Funded

1. First have schools receive money based on student weighted funding.
2. Second have each school receive money to hire a nurse, librarian, social worker, substitute teacher and a psychologist. Currently these positions are funded by schools if there are enough funds in the school's budget. If a school has low enrollment they get less money and often have to cut one or more of these positions. This approach would add more equity between schools in a clear and simple way.
3. Third initiatives would be funded with the remaining money.

Ideas for New Initiatives

1. Right now if a school has a need to strengthen a safety plan no extra funds are available for the school. Although money for support can come from student weighted funding this doesn't help if a family doesn't agree to an IEP. If there was a fund set up in the BPS safety department that schools could tap into quickly when needed, that would be helpful for addressing safety issues. One use of this fund would be to add an additional teacher or para to a classroom. Another use of this fund could be to pay for bus monitors.
2. Money for therapy for students that have undergone trauma and/or abuse. Even help with an insurance copay would be useful.
3. Support for students in abusive situations. Having guidelines to help students who are in unsafe living arrangements get into safe environments.

Restoring Full Funding

1. Restoring the earlier funding for students with autism and emotional impairments would be appreciated.

I welcome emails about this process:

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