

December 22, 2017

Dear Boston Public Schools Community:

The holiday season is a time for reflection and a time to make commitments. I know we all share a collective desire to improve the quality of our schools. To achieve this, we must build a sustainable school system that addresses head-on the structures that drive inequity.

We took a step in that direction with the passage of a new policy last month by the Boston School Committee that seeks to correct inequities that exist within our current start and end times due to a legacy of historical decisions. It also aims to improve the academic outcomes of our high school students by shifting secondary schools to later start times, ensuring an earlier release for elementary students, and prioritizing our most medically fragile students.

Over the past few weeks, we have heard from families, staff, and stakeholders that there are concerns with the implementation of the new start and end times policy. After reflecting on this feedback, we understand that while the new schedule would achieve our goal of supporting academic success for all ages, the shifts to many school start times caused a more significant disruption to family schedules than we intended. That is why I have decided not to implement the new start and end times that we have proposed for the 2018-2019 school year.

As Superintendent of the Boston Public Schools, I am deeply committed to joining together with the broader community to get this right and to invest our time in solving these complex issues.

Going forward, we will focus our efforts on continued and improved engagement with all of our families and community members to solve the problems necessary to build a more coherent school system. This includes developing a new schedule of start and end times for future school years that is grounded in equity and better meets the needs of our students and families. We must share a collaborative spirit, and work together to find solutions to repair the institutional inequities that persist.

We will now have an opportunity to bring more people to the table to create stronger schools that prepare our students for college, career, and life. I look forward to gathering a wider circle of voices from across the city. We want to provide greater opportunities for everyone to share their viewpoints, expertise, and experiences and offer concrete solutions to this challenge as well as the many others that face us.

There is a deep desire throughout the BPS community to solve problems. We will be asking for your help in building a more effective, equitable, and sustainable school system for our great City of Boston. In the coming months, we will be building on the current engagement process that will allow us to address start and end times as well as other strategic priorities we hope to achieve in the near future.

I wish you and your loved ones a joyful and restful holiday break. I look forward to further working together in the new year.

In partnership,



Tommy Chang, Ed.D.
Superintendent