

**Conference Record:** Telephone Interview between Shannon Bingham, Western Demographics on behalf of Littleton Public Schools, and Dr. Scott Siegfried, Deputy Superintendent, Cherry Creek School District

**Topic:** CCSD School Start Time Change – Implementation for Fall of 2017 – Seven Weeks Into Deployment

**Time/Date:** 3:00 p.m., October 11, 2017

- 1) **How has the change in start times gone for Cherry Creek School District?**
  - a) This has been the best operational change I have seen in my 23-year career in education. Students are describing the change as “life-changing.”
  - b) Many students are offering tearful accounts of how much better their school experience and life in general is now that the change has occurred.
  - c) The change in student atmosphere and energy levels was apparent on day one with students observing both mental and physical improvements in wellbeing.
  
- 2) **What aspect of the change has produced challenges?**
  - a) Logistics, especially transportation, have presented the most tangible challenges.
  - b) Traffic patterns in the western portion of the district have been a challenge, including bus egress off of our own sites, which was somewhat a problem before.
  - c) In general, getting 8,000 staff members, 45,000 students, and 300,000 parents to change routines has resulted in the normal effort and angst associated with change.
  - d) Our bus driver shortage has presented challenges as well.
  
- 3) **What school level has experienced the most challenges?**
  - a) The elementary level had the largest change associated with going earlier and morning daycare has diminished to near zero while afternoon needs have grown, and we are working to help provide childcare opportunities.
  - b) There has been limited observation of the loss of supervision of elementary students by older students who are now still in school.
  - c) There have been no real challenges observed in middle school and high school; challenges are limited to few extracurricular changes where students have become more prone to missing last class for athletic events.
  
- 4) **What school level has experienced apparent benefits?**
  - a) High school has benefited the most, although the student benefits are apparent at all levels, and the challenges have been associated with operational and family adjustments and the need to change.
  - b) High school students in general are more socially engaged, communicative, and alert in school.
  - c) The life-changing anecdotal accounts are striking.
  - d) Middle school students have realized the next level of benefit with less rushing and conflict in what is typically the most defiant age category (in the morning).
  - e) Elementary school students are described as more energetic with most already “up and going” in the morning.
  - f) The elementary school day is now better aligned with this energy pattern. Since students are done with school at 2:30, we are hearing anecdotal comments that they are “going

outside to play.”

- 5) **Were the middle school study halls deployed?**
  - a) Yes, in 10 schools and we will add an 11<sup>th</sup> location when middle school 11 opens next fall.
- 6) **Which schools are hosting morning study halls?**
  - a) All 10 middle schools.
- 7) **How are these scheduled and funded? How much participation are you seeing?**
  - a) They run from 8:00 a.m.–8:40 a.m. and we have between 3 and 110 students participating depending upon the location and the day.
  - b) We expect more participation on days with winter weather challenges.
  - c) The .1 FTE per school staffing has flexed a little and our total budget for the program has been about \$55,000.
  - d) The fractional FTE associated with the program do not receive benefits.
  - e) There are no facility costs associated with the program.
- 8) **Any traffic/transportation/operations challenges?**
  - a) Yes, these have been the primary challenge and our driver shortage was already presenting challenges before the change.
  - b) We have the most significant traffic issues on the west side and our school sites do not necessarily work well from an ingress and egress perspective.
  - c) Since elementary school students are delivered first, our late bus occurrences are now concentrated on middle and high school routes involving students more able to cope with associated challenges.
  - d) We are working with the city traffic engineering departments to address traffic challenges.
- 9) **What parent feedback have you received?**
  - a) Now that the change has settled in, I am getting one phone call per week addressing the start time issue.
  - b) Elementary childcare redeployment is the primary issue.
- 10) **What impacts to extracurricular activities have been observed?**
  - a) Elementary: There has been some interest in moving elementary activities to before school (such as band and choir).
    - i) We have resisted these requests in favor of scheduling them in the afternoon in order to retain the benefits of the later start.
    - ii) We are requiring these program sponsors to demonstrate that compelling reasons to schedule in the morning before conceding them to early time slots.
    - iii) Many of our elementary school choir and band classes are taught by high school teachers.
  - b) High School: We have received some anecdotal comments that highly-scheduled students have more difficulty fitting everything in.
    - i) Some students have had to miss last period classes in order to attend competitions.
  - c) Given the new schedule, non-participating students are attending events more frequently in order to support peers. Participation in events in general is up.
- 11) **What has feedback from staff been like?**
  - a) Mostly personal logistics and scheduling issues have been noted.
  - b) The obvious benefits to students have made these issues secondary.

c) Teachers have been described by a few as more energetic and rested.

**12) What has feedback from coaches been like?**

- a) The most committed coaches who did not have to respond to scheduling imperatives have remained.
- b) Others have responded to life responsibilities and made changes.
- c) The later secondary times have resulted in more coaches with private sector employment being more able to coach and we have gained a few coaches in response.
- d) In general, we do not have a coaching shortage after the change.

**13) What have elementary parents had to say about going to school earlier?**

- a) Most elementary concerns have been limited to afternoon childcare needs and changes in personal schedule and logistics.

**14) What follow-up research will you support?**

- a) We will be working with Lisa Meltzer (via the National Jewish Hospital Network) again this spring to do another survey that will be tied naturalistically to our prior survey work.
- b) We have had an amazing level of cooperation from our parents and extensive permission to conduct pre- and post-event research.
- c) The effort will be tied to performance, behavior, and attendance and will be stratified by economic and other indicators (in schools ranging from 2%–90% free and reduced lunch).

**15) What advice do you have for Littleton Public Schools?**

- a) We recommend that you move forward acknowledging the work necessary to be successful.
- b) The stakeholder involvement and logistics requirements are significant. We put a significant amount of energy into a stakeholder process and this became a tremendous component of my job – almost 100% during the six months prior to final Board decision. We conducted an extensive, completely transparent stakeholder input process and involved as many parents in our survey process as possible.
- c) We had a last-minute petition which garnered 270 signatures against the change, but this effort was eclipsed by the approximately 25,000 favorable responses on surveys.
- d) Transportation and logistics changes will be significant, and this effort, along with addressing afternoon childcare (elementary students) and extracurricular changes (for middle and high school) should lead district efforts to facilitate the change.