Implementing Later Start Times—Getting It Done

- Dr. Ken Dragseth, Edina School District Superintendent (retired)
- Dr. Randy Zipf, South Washington County School District Assistant Superintendent (retired)

Kenneth Dragseth, Ph.D.
Superintendent (retired) of Edina School District, the first district in the U.S. to move to later start time in 1996
Key Concepts in Making This Decision

It must be:
• Based on data
• What is right for students

Essential Steps

• Plan for discussions to last over the course of a year
• Gather a team of administrators, staff, and parents
• Base discussions on data
• Get community input
Additional Considerations

• Partner with the local medical community
• Know you are in it for the “long haul”—do not think of it as a pilot
• Plan for “obstructionists”
• Confront transportation claims (verifiable data is needed)
• Involve athletics/coaches

And finally, know that this decision requires courage.
Randall Zipf, Ph.D.
Assistant Superintendent (retired) of South Washington County School District, which shifted to a later start time in 2010

Key Points to Consider

- Context
- Process
- Outcomes
- Take-Aways
Related Goals in District Strategic Plan

- Student Success
- School Culture

Focus key points on:

- Best practices for student success
- Data-driven decisions
Recommendations for Decision Process

• Gather research information
• Talk to other district leaders who have tried the change
• Involve staff at all levels
• Include range of constituents and stakeholders
• Consult with transportation

Key: Keep the school board in the loop
Helpful to make changes all at the same time, such as changes in school boundaries and grade configurations.

Outcomes—Positive

- Better start to the school day
- Fewer tardies
- Better attendance
- Fewer kids sleeping at their desks
- Teachers have slowly come to adapt
- Better building usage
Outcomes—Challenges

- Teachers who work in several buildings have less flexible time if all schools start at the same time.
- Maybe longer days for administrators—they still arrive early and may stay later.
- Athletic issues—practice times, students who are on travel teams, and conference game times.

Take-Aways

- Planning Meetings Must Address:
  - Tone
  - Tactics
  - Timing
- Collection of pre-post data
- Have a single point person for Q’s and responses
- Anticipate problems!