

BURNABY BOARD OF EDUCATION – BOARD CHAIR REPORT

PUBLIC BOARD MEETING – September 27, 2011

Recently, stories and opinion columns have appeared in Canadian and US newspapers with headlines such as “Later class starts in high schools worth examining”, “Grades improve when classes start later” and “Sleepyheads don’t learn as easily” ... all reporting on the research that’s been done to promote a later start in the school day for secondary students.

In research done at the University of California, Davis a study was conducted on more than 6100 high school students, assessing the effects of later class start times. Findings showed that a delay in start times by just fifty minutes resulted in substantial improvement in student performance, which tended to last throughout the day. Other US studies comparing schools with early and late start times also showed results in improved attendance, greater alertness, less tardiness, fewer disciplinary problems and fewer illness absences with the later start. Even in Canada, one Toronto high school moved to a 10:00 am start time in 2009 and saw some very positive results.

Of course, it’s not as easy as just changing a few class schedules ... with complications such as transportation, staff work schedules and keeping students motivated to be in school later in the day. Retired educational administrator, Geoff Johnson, summarized with the direct correlation between early start times and improved student performance as an “over simplification” as there are many other factors involved.

Worth looking at ... perhaps ... and the cheering ... not the yawning ... from our secondary schools could be deafening!

Larry Hayes
Board Chair / Trustee
Burnaby Board of Education SD41