

FAQ – LATE START WEDNESDAYS

Q. How does late start Wednesdays work?

A. All Palos 118 schools will start 30 minutes later on Wednesdays with the exception of the first and last week of school. Dismissal times remain the same.

Palos South will start at 8:45 a.m. and end at 2:40 p.m. No zero hour on late start days.

Palos East and Palos West will start at 9:25 a.m. and end at 3:25 p.m.

Q. What about kindergarten and preschool?

A. Kindergarten and preschool schedules will also be modified on late start Wednesdays.

Full-day kindergarten will start at 9:45 a.m. and end at 3:00 p.m.

Half-day am kindergarten will start at 9:45 a.m. and end at 12:00 p.m.

Half-day pm kindergarten will start at 12:45 p.m. and end at 3:00 p.m.

Half-day am preschool will start at 9:45 a.m. and end at 12:00 p.m.

Half-day pm preschool will start at 12:45 p.m. and end at 3:00 p.m.

Q. Will transportation be provided on late start Wednesdays?

A. Yes, transportation will be provided and stop times will be modified to accommodate the 30 minute late start.

Q. My child is transported to school in the morning by a private daycare provider. How will late start Wednesdays affect them?

A. Palos 118 will contact private daycare providers to inform them of the change in next year's Wednesday schedule. Private daycare providers will be asked to accommodate students for the additional 30 minutes.

Q. What if there is a two hour delay for inclement weather on late start Wednesdays?

A. If there is a two hour delay for inclement weather on late start Wednesdays, the late start time will be cancelled and the district will operate on the regular two hour delay schedule.

Q. Did you gather parent input before considering this late start schedule?

A. Yes. The Board of Education has been studying late start for more than a year. Administration has been studying late start for approximately two years. As part of this exhaustive examination of late start, last spring more than 500 parents responded to a community survey regarding this issue. The key takeaways from the survey are below.

- Parents overwhelmingly selected a 30 minute late start every Wednesday over a proposed 1 hour late start every other Wednesday. Parents indicated the every other Wednesday schedule was too confusing.

- Nearly 80% of respondents said the late start schedule would have “no impact” or a “minor impact” on their morning schedules.
- A third of respondents said they would need before school care on late start days. Some of these respondents already require daycare on school days. Half of those respondents said they would take advantage of a district sponsored before school child care program if it was inexpensive.

Palos 118 used this feedback from parents to craft its late start schedule. The late start schedule will be 30 minutes every week rather than 1 hour every other week. Parents indicated the weekly schedule was more consistent and less confusing than the every other week schedule. Additionally, the school district has worked with a third party vendor to provide parents an onsite option for daycare on late start Wednesdays.

Q. Why did the school district pick Wednesdays for late start?

A. Wednesdays have fewer scheduling conflicts and align with Consolidated High School District 230’s late start Wednesday schedule.

Q. Did the school district consider early release days in lieu of late start?

A. Yes. Late start days have fewer scheduling conflicts with extracurricular, co-curricular and athletic activities. Additionally, the school district wanted to coordinate with Consolidated High School District 230, which also has late start Wednesdays.

Q. Is the school district pursuing late start Wednesdays as a cost saving measure?

A. No. The school district anticipates nominal savings in substitute costs.

Q. Do other school districts utilize late start for collaboration and/or professional development?

A. Yes. Many school districts in Illinois utilize late start (or early release) days for teacher collaboration and/or professional development. Consolidated High School District 230 has a late start on most Wednesdays with classes beginning at 9:30 a.m.

Q. Are students going to lose valuable instructional time during late start Wednesdays?

A. No. The school district currently has four early release School Improvement Days and one early release Teacher Institute Day.

Q. How will the additional time be used during late start Wednesdays?

A. Teachers will utilize this time for collaboration using the Professional Learning Communities (PLC) model. Specifically, teacher teams will study student achievement data; deconstruct learning standards, develop instructional strategies, create shared lessons and assessments, and develop plans to ensure mastery of essential learning standards at each grade level. Late start

days will also provide time for grade level, department, interdisciplinary, building and districtwide team collaboration.

Collaboration time will be structured and focused on student achievement. This time will not be “free” time for teachers to complete tasks such as grading papers or planning daily lessons. Teachers will continue to have individual plan time weekly to engage in these tasks.

Q. Can teacher teams collaborate during the school day or after school in lieu of late start days?

A. No. Team collaboration time during the school day is not possible for the following reasons.

Not all members of a professional learning team are available at the same time to collaborate during the school day. Professional learning teams consist of general education teachers, special education teachers and specialists. They all must be available to collaborate at the same time, which is impossible to accommodate during the school days without loss of instructional time or reduced student services.

It is increasingly difficult to staff substitute teachers. Staffing substitute teachers to cover entire professional learning teams for collaboration time during the school day would be nearly impossible.

Some teachers are not available to participate in after school collaboration because of their own family or professional commitments. We respect and understand that teachers have personal and professional commitments outside the work day.

Q. Why do entire teams of teachers have to collaborate at the same time?

A. In our school district, we believe that every staff member shares responsibility for the academic success of every student. Students are significantly more likely to make greater academic gains if teams of teachers are there to support them rather than a single teacher working in isolation.

Your child may be assigned each year to a single classroom teacher, but that may not be only person available or appropriate to support your child’s individual needs. Late start Wednesdays provide the necessary time to bring together professional learning teams that include general education teachers, special education teachers, specials teachers, ALPs teachers, reading specialists, EL teachers, speech pathologists, occupational therapists, school psychologists, social workers, counselors and others to collaborate to ensure student success.

Q. Is teacher collaboration really that important?

A. Research demonstrates that a collaborative working environment is key to building and sustaining successful schools. Collaboration builds an environment of shared responsibility for student growth and achievement. It helps ensure our curriculum is aligned, instructional practices are meeting the needs of all students and all students are provided a guaranteed and viable curriculum regardless of their teacher assignment.

The University of Chicago has conducted decades of study on the topic of school improvement and has identified five essential components of organization and climate related to improving schools. Collaborative teachers is one of the five identified components. The Illinois State Board of Education has adopted UC's philosophy of teacher collaboration as an essential driver to school success and measures the level of collaboration in all public schools every other year through its 5Essential Survey.

Just adding collaboration time for the sake of adding collaboration time will not improve student outcomes. Palos 118 is implementing a very specific research based collaborative model called Professional Learning Communities. Our teachers are being training throughout the 2018-2019 school year on the Professional Learning Communities model and will be well prepared to implement the model during late start Wednesdays next year.

Q. This all sounds great but how will late start Wednesdays really help my child?

A. Every child will benefit from having a team of teachers and specialists collaborating on a weekly basis to ensure that they are achieving at a high level.

Q. Will the district provide an option to families in need of supervision for their children during late start?

A. At the January board meeting, the school board directed administration to provide morning supervision of children of families with no other option for care during late start. The school district is formulating plans for supervision and will communicate those plans once they are final. Please Note: No transportation will be provided.