



# NOVATO UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**For more information:**

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## **NUSD Board Approves a Later Start Time for NUSD Schools**

Novato...The Board of Trustees approved a later start time for NUSD schools starting in the 2017-18 school year at its April 25, 2017 meeting. Currently, both Novato High and San Marin High Schools begin first period at 7:26 am on Monday, Thursday and Friday, 7:15 am on Tuesday, and 8:20 am on Wednesday. The approved start times are:

High Schools:	8:00 am
Middle Schools:	8:20 am
Elementary Schools:	8:40 am

On April 7, 2015, three local physicians presented to the Board their concerns about high school start time and recommended that high schools start later. They shared research on the impact school start times have on the brain and behavioral physiology of students as well as their capacity to get the most out of their learning environment.

Beginning in October 2016, Ivan Chaidez, Assistant Superintendent Education Services, convened a Later Start Committee comprised of students, parents, teachers, administrators and community members to explore the feasibility of a later start time. The Committee met monthly until March 2017 reviewing research, administering surveys to the community, understanding public transit and school bus needs, and reviewing possible middle and high school bell schedules.

On March 21, April 4, and April 25, the Later Start Committee presented to the Board of Trustees an update on the process and recommended to start high schools at 8 am. A later start time at the high schools would affect both the middle and elementary schools and the Superintendent recommended a start time of 8:20 am for middle schools and 8:40 am for elementary schools after surveying elementary and middle school staff and parents.

“Starting high school 45 minutes later to give students extra time to sleep and be prepared for school is the right thing for kids,” commented Jim Hogeboom, NUSD

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Superintendent. "The subject of a later start time was brought to our attention two years ago and I'm thankful to Ivan Chaidez for convening a Committee to review the research and surveying our students, parents and staff. Now all Novato schools will have consistent start times."

A survey to high school students, parents and staff was administered in late December 2016 to early January 2017 with 2,844 respondents. The following percentages of stakeholders that support a later start time are:

- 76% Students
- 74% Parents
- 71% Community
- 58% Staff
- 80% Students (Spanish survey)
- 61% Parents (Spanish survey)

In addition, both Novato High and San Marin High Schools surveyed their teachers and students. At both high schools over 75% of students prefer to start school at or after 8 am. At San Marin 85% of teachers prefer to start school at or after 8 am and at Novato High 78% of teachers prefer to start school at or after 8 am.

In March 2017, elementary and middle school staff, parents and students were surveyed on their preference between 8:20 am and 8:40 am start time.

Of the 190 staff responses:

- 78.4% prefer or are ok with an 8:20 am start time for middle school
- 66.9% prefer or are ok with an 8:40 am start time for elementary school

Of the 483 parent responses:

- 68.2% prefer or are ok with 8:20 am start time for middle school
- 67.9% prefer or are ok with 8:40 am start time for elementary school

Bell schedules for the high schools are currently being considered.

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