

<b>Topic:</b>	<b>Daily Sessions/School Start and End Times</b>
<b>Effective:</b>	<b>March 2014</b>
<b>Cross-Reference:</b>	<b>Education Act: Regulations 298 (3); HSTS Policy HS-3-015 – School Bell Time Review</b>
<b>Revision Date:</b>	<b>March 2021</b>
<b>Review Date:</b>	<b>December 2023</b>
<b>Responsibility:</b>	<b>Superintendents of Education</b>

**INTENDED PURPOSE:**

The Halton District School Board (HDSB) is committed to providing the best educational opportunities and learning environment for its students. All schools have unique start and end times but the length and schedule of the school day must be compliant with the Education Act. There are occasions where schools and their communities may request a change to the start and end (bell times) of their school day. This administrative procedure outlines the parameters required for daily school sessions and the procedure required for school communities to request a change to the start and end times of the school day.

**SCHOOL HOURS PARAMETERS**

The length and parameters of the instructional day are outlined in the Education Act, Regulation 298 (3). HDSB schools are to be consistent with these parameters.

- The length of the instructional program of each school day for pupils of compulsory school age and pupils in Kindergarten shall be not less than five hours a day excluding recesses or scheduled intervals between classes.
- The instructional program on a school day shall begin not earlier than 8 a.m. and end not later than 5 p.m. except with the approval of the Minister of Education.
- The board may reduce the length of the instructional program on each school day to less than five hours a day for an exceptional pupil in a Special Education program.
- Each pupil and each teacher shall have a scheduled interval for a lunch break
- A pupil's interval for a lunch break shall be not less than forty consecutive minutes and need not coincide with the scheduled interval for the lunch break of any other pupil or any teacher.
- A teacher's interval for a lunch break shall be not less than forty consecutive minutes and need not coincide with the scheduled interval for the lunch break of any other teacher or any pupil.
- In the intermediate division and the senior division, a principal may, subject to the approval of the board, provide for recesses or intervals for pupils between periods.
- Every board shall determine the period of time during each school day when its school buildings and playgrounds shall be open to its pupils, but in every case the buildings and the playgrounds shall be open to pupils during the period beginning fifteen minutes before classes begin for the day and ending fifteen minutes after classes end for the day.

In addition,

- The instructional portion of the day commences with the Opening Exercises or the beginning of the first lesson of the day. Entry time of up to 15 minutes is not included as part of the instructional day.

- Supervision will be determined as necessary by the principal, but in all cases shall coincide with the arrival of transported students or fifteen minutes prior to the entry bell, whichever is earliest.
- The length of the school day in secondary schools must be such as to ensure compliance with the requirements for instructional time related to the credit needs of students and the required instructional time of staff.

### **CHANGE IN SCHOOL HOURS (BELL TIMES)**

There are numerous stakeholders that may be impacted by the start and end times of a school. These include students, staff, parents, feeder schools, co-terminus boards (pertaining to transportation) and the Halton Student Transportation Services (HSTS). Appropriate consultation is required to ensure any changes are positively received by the school community.

Bell times can change as a result of HSTS conducting annual reviews of bus routes and identifying efficiencies, as well as a result of the transitioning over time of all HDSB elementary schools towards an instructional day with two 40 minutes nutritional breaks. These are part of the annual HSTS review of bus routes.

For bell time changes initiated at the school level, including secondary school moves from a common lunch to multiple breaks and vice versa, the following process will be followed by the school prior to recommending a change in bell times. This process includes but is not limited to:

- The principal will seek input from the school community through the School Council.
- The principal will solicit input from the student body. Possible methods for this input could include: school wide or grade assemblies, student focus groups, social media, student town hall, polling of students, access to a link on the school's website.
- The principal will solicit input from staff. Possible methods for input could include: internal messaging such as school leadership team, staff meetings, polling staff.
- The principal will solicit input from the local trustee.
- Consultation and approval of the recommended change, by the Family of School Superintendent must occur prior to submission to the HSTS.
- The principal will inform feeder schools of the recommended change prior to submitting the request.
- The request will be submitted by the principal to HSTS **no later than February 15th** of the school year prior to the September implementation of the following school year. The submission will identify the parameters that will be used to calculate the financial impact of the requested change.
- HSTS consortium will undertake an analysis of the impact of the suggested bell time changes, including the effect on existing routes, the bell times of affected schools, and any additional transportation charges.
- Where a school consists entirely of a student population within walking distance, the principal may determine school hours in consultation with their community and Superintendent within the above parameters.

*Results of the cost analysis prepared by the HSTS consortium will be reviewed by Administrative Council before the end of May. The Director will bring this request to the attention of the Board of Trustees by the first Board meeting in June, with a recommendation in response to the request.*