

RSSU/MRUUSD School Hours Plan – 2016-2017

Frequently Asked Questions

Why are we changing school start times?

We have a goal to become the best place in Vermont for students to learn and educators to work. To accomplish that goal, we realize that some of our structures and routines as they currently exist require change. One key area that we can address with a tangible impact is the amount of time we spend with students at school to allow us to provide more class options, more direct support in all areas, and more access for all students to their learning. We wish to make every minute count within the school day.

Our elementary school students currently have inequitable access to learning time based on where they live. Our middle school and high school students have less access to instructional time and courses than their regional peers because of where they live.

What is the current reality at Mill River Union?

MRUHS has the shortest school day of any high school in our region:

1. Rutland HS	7 hours, 15 minutes	7:55 am start time
2. Proctor HS	7 hours	7:45 am start time
3. Fair Haven Union	6 hours, 55 minutes	8:15 am start time
4. West Rutland HS	6 hours, 55 minutes	7:45 am start time
5. Black River Union	6 hours, 45 minutes	7:45 am start time
6. Otter Valley Union	6 hours, 30 minutes	8:00 am start time
7. MRUHS	6 hours, 25 minutes	7:50 am start time

What are the other factors in this decision?

Busing System - We have a consolidated busing system; which means that our elementary and high school start and finish times are staggered. We could have all of our schools start and finish at the same time, but it would require double the number of buses, drivers and fuel or it would require elementary students to ride the bus with high school students in order to keep the same number of buses and drivers (and maintain costs as they are). Other districts do this, but it would require a significant shift to our culture and parent expectations in the RSSU. We require roughly 45-60 minutes to run one set of routes and be ready for the next set of routes.

What about the research about school start times for adolescents?

We do know that research establishes that a later start time is better for high school students. We also know that shifts to start and end times affect younger students and

younger families most significantly and we should minimize that impact if possible. If students must be on buses prior to 7:00 am we prefer to have older students on the buses early in the morning rather than younger students.

What about athletics and extra-curricular activities at Mill River?

Extra-curricular/athletic offerings at the high school require that students be available by 2:30 in order to travel to away events. We seek to have them miss class as little as possible. Creating a later start to the high school day would require athletes to miss class time consistently in order to depart for events, particularly in the fall and spring due to limited daylight hours. Neighboring schools with later start times face this challenge daily and the cumulative loss of instructional time is considerable.

Would changing start time for Mill River affect my family's morning routine?

All MRUHS buses currently drop students at MRU between 7:25-7:40 am. At 7:30 am each day there are approximately 150 students gathered in the cafeteria waiting for class to start at 7:50 am. At the elementary level we will see a slight shift to morning and afternoon times.

What is the overall plan?

1. Add twenty (20) minutes to the MRU schedule without impacting morning bus route times at all. A 7:45 start time creates a five-minute shift from the current start time without busing impact and adding 15 minutes to the end of the day increases class time and structural opportunities with very minimal outside impact.
2. Elementary school days will be expanded to 7 hours at CES, TES and WES. SMS already has a 7-hour student day in place. Start times will be staggered based on location – with SMS and TES starting and finishing ten minutes sooner than CES and WES.

What are the exact start and finish times for next year?

Mill River Union

MRUHS 7:45 am start with 2:30 pm finish (6 hour, 45 minute school day)

Shrewsbury and Tinmouth Elementaries

Elementary 8:20 am start with 3:20 pm finish at SMS and TES (7 hour school day)

Clarendon and Wallingford Elementaries

Elementary 8:30 am start with 3:30 pm finish at CES and WES (7 hour school day)