

To: Board of Education
From: Dan Bridges, Superintendent
Date: March 10, 2025
RE: **REVISED** Innovative School Experience Recommendations

Administration recommends that full implementation of the Innovative School Experience recommended changes, including adjustments to start and end times at all school levels, take place at the beginning of the 2026-2027 school year.

During the February 3, 2025, Board of Education meeting the Naperville 203 Administration presented its recommendations to the Board relative to the Innovative School Experience. The outcomes of the presentation made to the Board were:

Review Stakeholder Feedback and Insights

- Present key themes and takeaways from Focus 203 and community engagement efforts regarding innovative school experience and school start and end times.
- Demonstrate how stakeholder feedback informed the decision-making process and shaped the final recommendations.

Present Final Recommendations for Board Approval

- Provide a clear and comprehensive overview of the final proposal from the ISE Design teams and Operational team that includes proposed start and end times, instructional shifts, professional learning outcomes, and measurement of success.
- Outline the anticipated benefits and challenges.

The Administration's recommendation included three components:

- The approval of Innovative School Experience learning structures, including: the Early Childhood Plan; Elementary Plan; Middle School Plan; and High School Plan.
- The approval of revised School Start and End Times.
- The implementation of the Innovative School Experience learning structures and revised school start and end times to begin with the 2025-2026 school year.

Upon consideration of feedback received regarding the initial recommendations, the Administration has modified its recommendation to the Board of Education. At the March 24, 2025 meeting the Administration recommends the following revised:

1. Approval of the Innovative School Experience learning structures and plans for Early Childhood, Elementary School, Middle School, and High School as presented on February 3, 2025 (Board presentation included in Board Docs).
2. Approval of the revised School Start and End Times as presented on February 3, 2025 (Board presentation included in Board Docs).
3. **Approval of the implementation of the Innovative School Experience learning structures and revised school start and end times, to begin with the 2026-2027 school year.**

Rationale for Modified Recommendation

Approval of the recommendations brought forward by each Design Team meets the objective of Naperville Community Unit School District 203's Strategic Blueprint. Focus 203 Strategic Blueprint Commitment 1.3 calls for an analysis of innovative school day models to support effective multi-tiered systems of support and flexible use of time and space that responds to the student of the future. This blueprint commitment has served as the backbone of the work of the Level Design Teams in their efforts to create flexible, student-centered learning environments that support effective individualized interventions and prepare every student for the future. The Design Teams have examined time, space, and the needs of today's learners. The Board's approval of the learning structures honors the work of the certified staff, educational support professionals, and administrators who collaborated to bring forward their recommendations for improved experiences in our schools and classrooms. Our report to the Board of Education on Monday, March 10, 2025 will address questions and topics that have been raised in regard to the recommendations. Those include how the recommendations made by the Design Teams will support student learning, including students who need additional support in meeting academic targets and students with Individualized Education Plans, 504 Plans, and other identified needs for additional support.

Following review of the recommendations from the design teams, it was determined that modifications to start and end times would be necessary to implement the proposals. The recommendation for adjusting school start and end times was developed by the Operational Team, Steering Committee, and our National Bus Service Consultant Firm, in close collaboration with principals, district leaders, and transportation experts. The order of start and end times was determined based on a combination of research-backed findings and operational constraints.

After careful consideration, adding buses to our fleet was determined not to be feasible due to infrastructure, staffing, financial, and partnership constraints. Minimizing gaps further between start and end times would also create significant student supervision challenges. Our transportation consultant conducted simulations that showed buses need at least 35-40 minutes between each level's bus routes, which we have already decreased with our proposal. Additionally, minimizing the gaps between start/end times further would increase supervision challenges, especially for elementary students who would require additional supervision if their start times were pushed later.

Based on stakeholder feedback, we recommend an adjusted timeline for implementation to ensure a smooth and effective transition. The recommendations from the design teams and the correlated start/end times remain unchanged. The revised plan prioritizes professional learning experiences for staff during the 2025-2026 school year, allowing educators to build foundational skills, refine instructional practices, and deepen their understanding of research-based strategies. **Full implementation of the recommended changes, including adjustments to start and end times at all school levels, would take place at the beginning of the 2026-2027 school year.** This timeline adjustment provides additional preparation time for all stakeholders to adapt to the new structures while maintaining the integrity of the proposed innovations. The updated timeline will also allow time for collective bargaining with impacted bargaining groups. Administration will collaborate with our transportation team, drivers, and educational support personnel to review how the recommended changes may impact their work. As always, our schools will continue to monitor progress through their

school improvement plans and their identified goals. Anticipated outcomes and success metrics have been provided in Board Docs.