



EARLY RELEASE

FREQUENTLY-ASKED QUESTIONS

RELEASED: 2/12/21

Q1: What does the district's weekly early release proposal include?

A weekly 70-minute early release on Mondays has been proposed in order to provide teachers and staff with more time to:

- **collaborate with one another;**
- **plan intentionally;**
- **and grow professionally.**



Our highest priority as a school district is to ensure learning for our students. With our current early release/professional development schedule, staff members receive a large chunk of development before school starts, and then sporadically throughout the school year. This leaves little time for them to implement new teaching approaches and curriculum, discuss whether it is making an impact, and make any necessary adjustments in real-time.

We believe the weekly early releases would give staff an opportunity to plan and develop on a more frequent, consistent basis, which in turn will directly benefit our students as their teachers are fully equipped to meet their needs in the classroom. Weekly early releases are commonly utilized by districts comparable to our size across the state.

Q2: If the weekly early releases are approved, what time would my student's school dismiss?

Schools would dismiss 70-minutes earlier than the standard dismissal time:

ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

NORMAL DISMISSAL

2:45PM



MONDAY DISMISSAL

1:35PM

MIDDLE SCHOOLS

NORMAL DISMISSAL

3:50PM



MONDAY DISMISSAL

2:40PM

HIGH SCHOOLS

NORMAL DISMISSAL

3:40PM



MONDAY DISMISSAL

2:30PM

Q3: Why were Mondays chosen instead of, for example, Fridays?



Mondays were chosen because there are a number of federal and state holidays that fall on Mondays when schools are already closed. This will allow students, staff, and parents to get into a good rhythm by ensuring we do not have many, if any, four day weeks that also include an early release.

LABOR DAY



Monday,
9/6/21

MLK DAY



Monday,
1/17/22

PRESIDENTS DAY



Monday,
2/21/22

Q4: Why were early releases chosen instead of, for example, late starts?



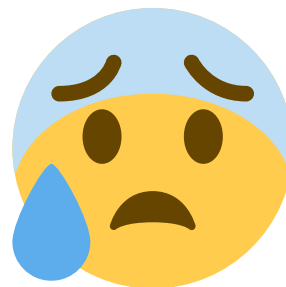
Research shows that morning is prime instructional time for student learning, particularly for younger students. Students' energy and attention tends to lessen as the day goes on. This decrease is especially significant for younger learners.



The district did try late starts in the past, and they proved to be problematic for students, staff, and families.

Some parents ended up needing childcare before school when they typically only had after-school childcare.

Some staff members ended up feeling anxious to get their day started as students arrived early, and the time ended up not being used as intended.



Q5: How will the weekly early releases impact after-school care for elementary students?

The Boys & Girls Club and YMCA have indicated after-school care will be provided on weekly early release days.

The district has been working with these after-school providers to develop solutions to ensure adequate staffing for these programs during the 70-minute early releases.



The structure during the 70-minute time period will follow the after-school programming currently utilized by YCare and Boys & Girls Club. Supervision will be provided at the existing sites. Both organizations have indicated they have additional capacity available if enrollment increases.

While YCare has not provided after-school care on early release days this year, that has been related to COVID-19 staffing challenges, and is not anticipated to be an issue next year due to our partnership to help ensure adequate staffing.

Q6: What will students in grades 6-12 who participate in after-school athletics and activities programs do on the early release days?



The district would be able to use a model similar to that for the after-school programs at the elementary schools: paraprofessionals or substitute teachers could provide supervision at the buildings; staff members in the building could utilize a supervisory rotation, to include offering tutoring or other academic opportunities for those students.

After-school activities will take place on early release days, and in some cases, if a coach does not hold a teaching position with the district, the after school practices may begin at the time of dismissal.



Q7: How will the time during the 70-minute early releases be used?

In discussions with building principals and staff, the district has committed to three priorities for how to use the weekly early releases:

- 1 collaboration
- 2 staff development
- 3 intentional planning

The ultimate goal is for teachers and staff members to receive regular and frequent opportunities to further develop themselves in order to increase student achievement.

GREATER STAFF COLLABORATION



MORE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT



MORE TIME TO PLAN INTENTIONALLY



TEACHER SUCCESS = STUDENT SUCCESS



Q7: How will the time during the 70-minute early releases be used? (continued)

**TEACHER SUCCESS =
STUDENT SUCCESS**



The time would allow for collaboration across grade levels, across subjects, across buildings, etc. so that teachers and staff members can share best practices, develop strategies, implement and test those strategies in real-time, and then adapt quickly to ensure we are meeting student needs.

Buildings will have the autonomy and flexibility to develop their own plans that support their building goals and independently ensure they are using the time in a way that will improve the quality of instruction and increase learning for their students.

The effectiveness of this time will be measured by monitoring ongoing student achievement metrics, building goals, and staff feedback on our path to ensuring all students graduate college/career/life ready!

Q8: Are you concerned the weekly early releases will have a negative impact on student attendance or behaviors?



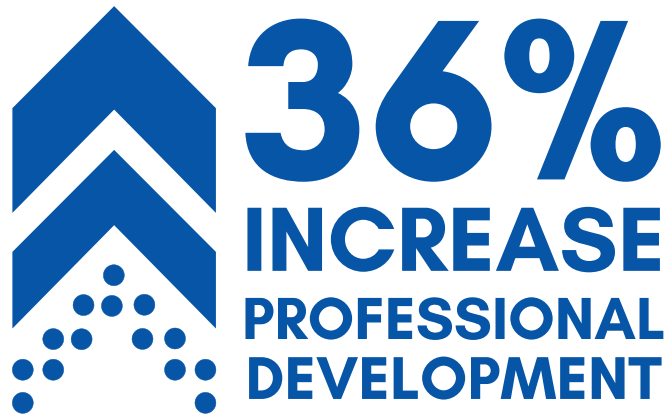
As is consistent with our current early release schedule, we are confident each building would be able to create a structure that ensures students still receive quality instruction on early release days.

Buildings will have the flexibility to make a schedule that works for their students and staff. Because the early releases would occur on a more frequent and regular basis, the goal would be for the early releases to feel routine for staff and students once a rhythm is established.

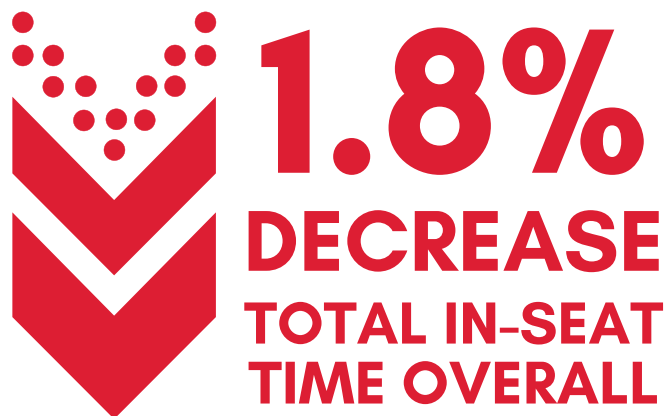
Buildings work hard to engage students and encourage student attendance on a daily basis. This would be no different with early release days.

Q9: How can the district justify decreasing the amount of instructional time for students?

The district currently has six, two-hour early releases per year, which equates to 12 hours of instruction time. The proposed calendar includes 28, 70-minute early releases, which equates to 32.7 hours of instruction time.



The weekly early releases would result in 20.7 fewer hours of instruction time for students, which is a 1.8 percent reduction in total in-seat time overall. This would also result in an increase of 36 percent in total amount of professional development time for staff.



While there is a minimal loss of overall instructional time, we believe the additional time on staff development and intentional planning will have an overall positive impact on student achievement.