



MERRILLVILLE COMMUNITY SCHOOL CORPORATION

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Pre-K - 12

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Director Transportation

Amy Beckham
Co-Athletic Director
Director Wellness Services

Brad Best
Director Security

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Building and Grounds

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April 22, 2020

Dear Parents and Students,

I want to thank all of you for your efforts to make eLearning and remote learning work for the rest of the 2019-20 school year. We really appreciate all of your hard work to keep your children on track, and we cannot wait until next year when we can get back into the classroom with them. We miss them!

As we begin to plan and look ahead to next year, I want to inform you that the School Board recently approved my recommendation for new start times beginning the 2020-2021 school year. The reason for this recommended change is the safety of our students. Our current bus routes and start times have high school and middle school students being dropped off to school before the staff members were on duty. This resulted in large numbers of students, almost 1,500 students at the high school and 500 middle school students, waiting with minimal supervision for almost 45 minutes before school began. This presents a significant safety issue for our students. Also, both the high school and middle school students had to wait a significant amount of time at the end of the day for the buses to arrive. This resulted in students standing outside or waiting in the gym for more than 30 minutes for the buses.

These new start times have a minimal effect on the elementary and intermediate students' day. The new start times primarily affect the high school and middle school students. I hope giving you this information now will allow you enough time to adjust your schedules and make necessary accommodations for the start of next school year.

For the 2020-21 school year, students in elementary schools and Merrillville Intermediate School will begin their school days at the same time as last year, 7:55 a.m., with an additional 10 minutes for drop off. Dismissal, however, will be 10 minutes earlier, 2:15 p.m. I have included a chart with all details at the end of this letter.

Middle and high school students' start times will change with a later start time of 8:35 a.m. and 8:30 a.m., respectively. Drop-off times will be after 8 a.m. and schools will be dismissed after 3 p.m. Please refer to the chart. The later start times for the high school and middle school students solves the issue of students being dropped off before staff is on duty for supervision. This later start also provides the students a larger portion of the day in sunshine waiting for the buses than currently occurs.

The schedule changes for buses, Adventure Club, sports practices and additional programs will be announced as we get closer to the new school year.

"Every child. Every day. Whatever it takes."

It is not our intention to create any hardships with schedule adjustments, as we do not take these changes lightly. We understand families are busy with all sorts of schedules and that routines help to keep everyone organized and energized. We make these changes out of great concern for the safety of your children, our students.

As we wind down this year remotely and with heavy hearts, the hope we have for next year keeps us moving forward with plans for an amazing year with our Pirates! We can't wait to see all of you again!

Regards,



Nicholas G. Brown Ed.S
Superintendent

School Board Approved March 17, 2020 MCSC School Start & Dismissal Times Current start times in RED <u>New start times in PURPLE</u>		
	START	DISMISSAL
Elementary Schools & Merrillville Intermediate School	7:55 a.m.	2:25 p.m.
Elementary Schools	7:55 a.m.	2:15 p.m.
Merrillville Intermediate School	7:55 a.m.	2:15 p.m.
Merrillville High School & Pierce Middle School	7:45 a.m.	2:48 p.m.
Merrillville High School	8:30 a.m.	3:15 p.m.
Pierce Middle School	8:35 a.m.	3:20 p.m.