



WASHINGTON TOWNSHIP PUBLIC SCHOOLS
OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT
206 EAST HOLLY AVENUE
SEWELL, NJ 08080

May 26, 2016

Dear Washington Township Middle School Parents/Guardians:

There never has been a more exciting time to be a middle school student in the Washington Township Public Schools.

Now that we have successfully addressed redistricting and have realigned resources to ensure equity across all three of our middle schools in time for the 2016-17 school year, we are turning our attention to the best way to maximize instructional time and enhance the middle school learning experience.

Careful analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of our current middle school structure and curriculum, as well as a close examination of best practices in neighboring, high-achieving school districts, reinforced our belief that the time had come to make changes in the middle school schedule and curriculum.

The Board of Education has supported the administrative recommendation to change from our existing nine-period schedule to an eight-period day. We believe that this move will prove advantageous for a number of reasons including:

- An increase in instructional time from 42 minutes to 50 minutes
- Additional time for academic support and flexibility during the school day
- Accommodating a sought-after English-Language Arts (ELA) integration that combines our current English and Reading curricula into a single ELA course of study as recommended by the New Jersey Department of Education.
- Increased opportunities for technology infusion, differentiated instruction, inquiry-based and cooperative learning for students
- Reduction of non-instructional transition times between periods
- Increased opportunities for academic interventions and support for struggling learners
- Increased class time provides an environment that will foster more meaningful teacher/student relationships

Under the new schedule, beginning on August 31, 2016, the middle school student day will begin at 7:45 a.m. (10 minutes earlier than the current schedule) and end at 2:50 p.m.

In addition to the new eight-period day, the District will be launching a single English Language Arts course, while also integrating reading, writing, and literacy across the curriculum. To this end, our middle school teachers in other subject areas, including math, science, and social studies, will be receiving professional development and review of strategies to infuse reading and writing into their content area of expertise. We believe, as do most educational innovators, that this gives our students exposure to and practical application of all types of texts (fiction, non-fiction, biographies, technical essays) and forms of writing (narrative, expository, technical and persuasive).

We invite you to learn more about the District's middle school changes by visiting our District website and accessing the resources that have been placed there for your reference (<http://www.wtps.org/Page/20142>). We are confident that these changes will help to better prepare our sixth-, seventh- and eighth-grade learners for the rigors of our high school curriculum and ultimately for successful college placements and rewarding careers.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Joseph A. Bollendorf". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Joseph Bollendorf
Superintendent of Schools