



**THE WINNIPEG SCHOOL DIVISION**  
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**MATT HENDERSON**  
SUPERINTENDENT

January 17<sup>th</sup>, 2024

Dear Families,

**Re: Late Start/Early Dismissal**

The Winnipeg School Division has recently made its attendance data public via the Winnipeg Free Press. Our data reveals that we have 2500 learners who are struggling getting to school for a variety of reasons. A significant amount of these learners are in our high schools.

Principals and vice-principals of our high schools have been working together to make our schools sticky – creating schools that kids want to attend and where they want to stay beyond the regular school day. The research unequivocally suggests that the longer kids are in the school the better life outcomes they experience.

Our schools have also been working hard on shifting instruction so that it is as engaging, exciting, and relevant as possible. Through rigorous and joyful academic experiences, athletics, and the arts, our schools offer amazing programming for our learners. Our focus now turns on ensuring all our learners feel that they belong, are known deeply by multiple adults, and that they can contribute to creating a powerful school community.

While schools can't do everything, they can do some things well. This means that we must ask all the adults in our schools to focus on getting kids back to school consistently. This is critical to the lives of kids who are struggling and helps us create just and sustainable societies.

As such, many of our high schools will be implementing either **Late Start** or **Early Dismissal** each week beginning in February. This means that one day per week (mostly Wednesdays), class will either begin an hour later or end an hour earlier. This will provide staff with time to come together, determine who they are missing, make phone calls, organize the home visits, and strategize about how to make schools rich, deep, and welcoming.

To accommodate for the loss of an hour per week, June exams will be pushed back to add instructional days to the calendar. Your child will receive the same amount of, if not more, instructional time.

Should you have any questions or concerns, please contact your school principal or myself, at [mahenderson@wsdl.org](mailto:mahenderson@wsdl.org). Your child's individual school will be sending families school-specific information in the coming days.

Sincerely,

Matt Henderson