



# LITTLE SILVER PUBLIC SCHOOLS

124 Willow Drive, Little Silver, NJ 07739

Dr. Carolyn M. Kossack  
Superintendent of Schools

Tel: 732-741-2188  
Fax: 732-741-3644

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Dear Parents/Guardians,

Almost four weeks have passed since school let out – it’s hard to believe how quickly time flies! In another eight weeks, students will be returning to school. **The purpose of this letter is to inform you of some changes to the start and end times of the school day.**

As you’ve heard me say many times before, with the implementation of the Common Core standards, educational demands are increasingly more rigorous than they were in the past. Since Little Silver is a community that places a high value on education, there is an expectation that our school district effectively deliver 21<sup>st</sup> Century readiness skills to our students in order to prepare them to compete in a global economy. As a result, we are constantly examining educational practices as well as the efficient use of time.

After a close examination of the schedules at both Point Road and Markham Place, we have come to the realization that we can better meet the needs of your children by slightly altering the students’ school day. The change at Markham Place will be nominal. Currently, the student day at Markham Place begins at 8:15 AM and ends at 3:00 PM. In September, the start time will change to 8:10 AM, with the first bell ringing at 8:07 AM. Dismissal time will remain the same – 3:00 PM.

The Point Road schedule will be altered at both ends. Previously, the student schedule ran from 8:15 AM to 2:45 PM. Beginning in September, students will be gaining twenty additional minutes - ten extra minutes at both ends. The Point Road school day will now begin promptly at 8:05 AM and end at 2:55 PM.

We are excited about providing additional time for students! As US Secretary of Education Arne Duncan has indicated, the performance of American students relative to their peers in other countries should be a wake-up call for the nation. According to the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the United States has fallen to “average” in international rankings. Out of 34 OECD countries, the United States recently ranked 14<sup>th</sup> out of 34 OECD countries for reading skills, 17<sup>th</sup> for science and a below-average 25<sup>th</sup> for mathematics!

When I was conducting public meetings regarding full-day Kindergarten, some community members suggested that we were already a high-performing district and full-day Kindergarten wasn’t necessary. I worked to explain the need for additional instructional time for our students. For those individuals that vocalized that we are already doing well, I would challenge you to reflect on the global picture. While we may be doing relatively well as compared to other NJ school districts...and while NJ is academically more competitive than many other states...as a nation we continue to decline.

I am thrilled that with these time changes we will be doing a small part to enhance the academic opportunities for the children of Little Silver.

Sincerely,

Carolyn M. Kossack  
Superintendent of Schools