



SCHOOL DISTRICT 27J

18551 East 160th Avenue

Brighton, CO 80601-3295

Office: (303) 655-2900 Fax: (303) 655-2870

Communications Office

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Contact: Tracy Rudnick, Public Information Officer
Office: 303-655-2905 | Cell: 561-632-6665 | trudnick@SD27J.net

27J Schools to push back start times in secondary schools to actualize the *Thinking Classroom*

BRIGHTON, COLO. (December 18, 2017) – In a continued effort to actualize the ideal classroom learning experience, the *Thinking Classroom*, all 27J middle and high schools will start no earlier than 8:30 am beginning Fall 2018. The final schedule for all school start times, including elementary, will be released by Spring Break (March 2018).

27J Schools have named the ideal classroom for learning as the *Thinking Classroom*. As its name suggests, classrooms will be places where students are actively thinking, inquiring, problem solving, engaging, self-regulating in order to prepare them for the future of 2038. Advances in technology and the continuous access to information, requires an entirely different educational experience catered to the learner and his or her learning style.

In addition, a change in start times is needed because once 27J Schools opens Riverdale Ridge High School in the Fall 2018, it will eliminate the need for split schedules for Brighton and Prairie View high schools. Split schedules caused half of 27J students, freshmen and sophomores, to attend school from roughly 7:10 a.m. to 2:30 p.m., and upperclassmen to attend anywhere from 9 a.m. to nearly 5 p.m. Now that split schedules will not be needed, 27J Schools must set new, consistent schedules to take effect in Fall 2018.

There is a considerable amount of research centered around the sleep patterns of adolescent learners and a growing trend among middle and high schools across the nation to delay school start times. Research shows that teens need 8.5-9.25 hours of sleep every night, currently 66% of high school students get less than 7 hours of sleep and 33% of teenagers report falling asleep in school. Most sources recommend that middle and high schools not start earlier than 8:30 a.m. A study of eight high schools in five school districts from three states, including Colorado, found that after implementing a secondary start time later than 8:30 a.m. - cigarette, alcohol, and marijuana use declined by 14% when teens slept 8+ each night, depression and sexual activity declined by 9-11%, car crashes decreased 13% and there was a 66% drop in tardiness.

27J Schools invited the community to participate in a survey and attend forums to discuss the change to start times. Over 2,200 people participated in the survey and many attended the forums to share their support, reservations and concerns. The District weighed community feedback and data driven research in formulating their decision.

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27J Schools does not project any additional costs to fund these start time changes. The low price tag for the changes compared to the benefits it will provide to students and their academic success is the primary reason 27J Schools will be making this change.

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About School District 27J: *School District 27J educates almost 18,000 students from Brighton, Commerce City, Henderson, Thornton, and a portion of the city of Aurora and encompasses parts of Adams, Broomfield and Weld counties. Our mission is to equip our students with the tools and knowledge to succeed now and in the future.*