

SAU 39 Start Time Survey

Executive Summary

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qualtrics

Table of Contents

Executive Summary.....	4
• Response Rate.....	4
• Results Review	5
• Findings	4
Comprehensive Report	6
Response Rate.....	6
Results.....	7
• Impact of Current Start Times	7
• Consideration of an 8:00 AM Start Time	8
• Overall Start Time Preference.....	8
Appendix (Background & Methodology)	9

Executive Summary

The SAU 39 administrative team, in conjunction with Isobar Public Sector, designed and deployed a start time survey in Spring of 2024. For information regarding background information on IPS and the survey methodology used, please reference the appendix at the end of the report.

Response Rate: 2423 stakeholders participated in the survey, split across four types: students in grades 7-12, staff, parent/guardians of current students, and parent/guardians with a pre-enrolled child. The response sample was both valid and reliable.

Results Summary: Results can be interpreted across three primary areas:

Area #1: Impact of Current Start Times

The first series of questions focused on stakeholder perception related to the impact of current start times. Stakeholders focused on areas such as impact on routine, participation in athletics and activities, and academics. Overall, families had a favorable to neutral view of the impact of current start times, while students and staff had a negative to neutral view. The most negatively viewed areas were “Your family’s morning routine” and “Your child’s sleep” (each was 27% very or somewhat negatively), “Your participation in sports after school (34% very or somewhat negatively), and “After school activities (50% very or somewhat negatively).

Area #2: Consideration of an 8:00 AM Start Time

Stakeholders were provided context related to costs associated with consideration of an 8:00 AM start time, and asked if it was something they wanted considered. Respondents were largely opposed to consideration of an 8:00 AM start time, with nearly 70% of respondents saying no.

Area #3: Overall Start Time Preference

Stakeholders were asked to choose their start time preference between three options, 7:30 AM, 8:00 AM, and 8:30 AM. Overall, respondent preferences were relatively balanced, with 32% choosing 7:30 AM, 27% choosing 8:00 AM, and 41% choosing 8:30 AM. Analysis of the start time preference data revealed a split amongst stakeholder groups, with 45% of current families and students preferring 8:30, 44% of preregistered families preferring 8:00, and 52% of staff preferring 7:30.

Findings:

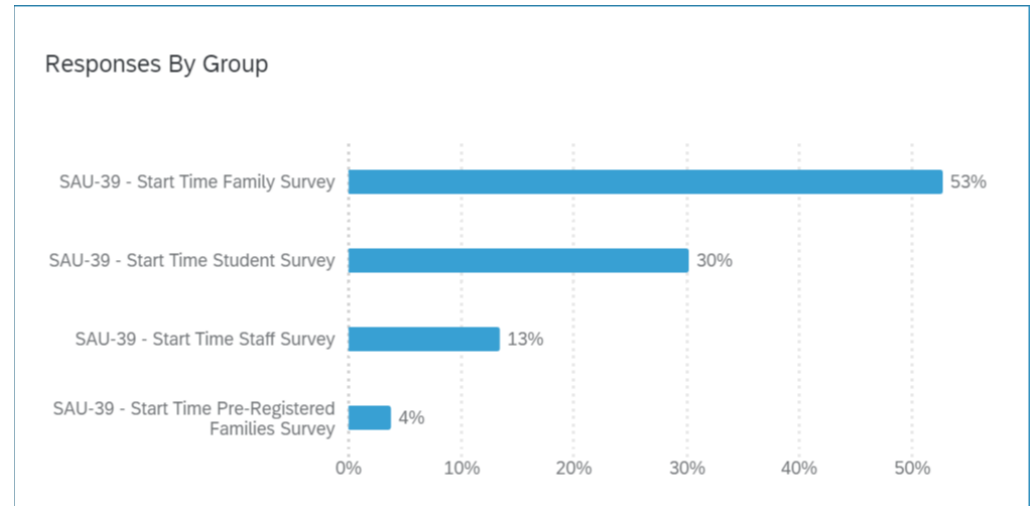
- Preference are split across respondent group with staff largely preferring an early start time, and students/families preferring a later start time.
- Younger grade levels (6th and below) were fairly evenly split across all three options, while older grade levels (7th and up) were largely in favor of an 8:30 start time.
- Analysis of the open-ended comments revealed that those who prefer a later start cite the lack of sleep/readiness to learn for students with the earlier start, and those who prefer an early start citing issues related to extra-curricular participation and having to wait in the morning with the later start.

Comprehensive Report

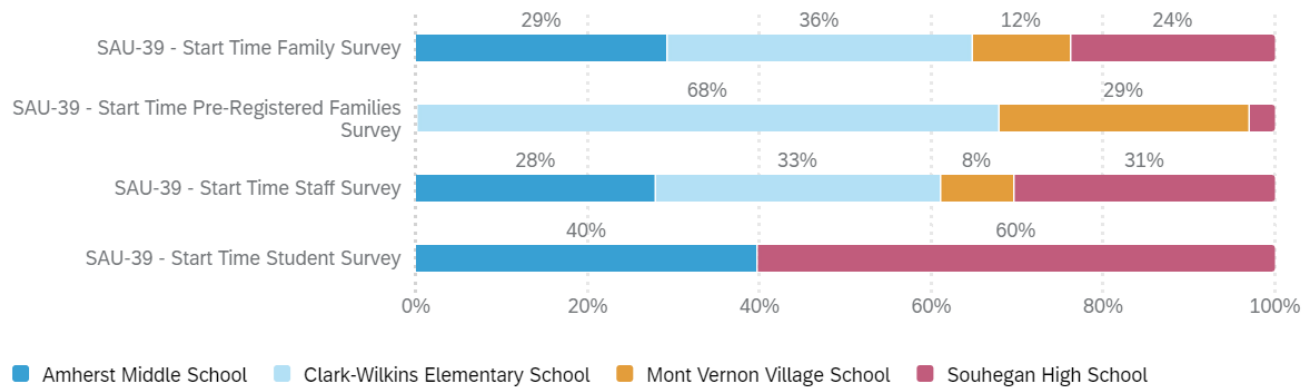
Response Rate

The SAU 39 start times survey was conducted this spring, with 2423 stakeholders participating. Respondents were connected to SAU 39 in a variety of ways, with the percentage by type of connection shown in the chart to the right, and school distribution shown in the chart below.

The number of responses represented a valid and reliable sample, with reasonable expectation that the responses collected are representative of the views of the broader population group.



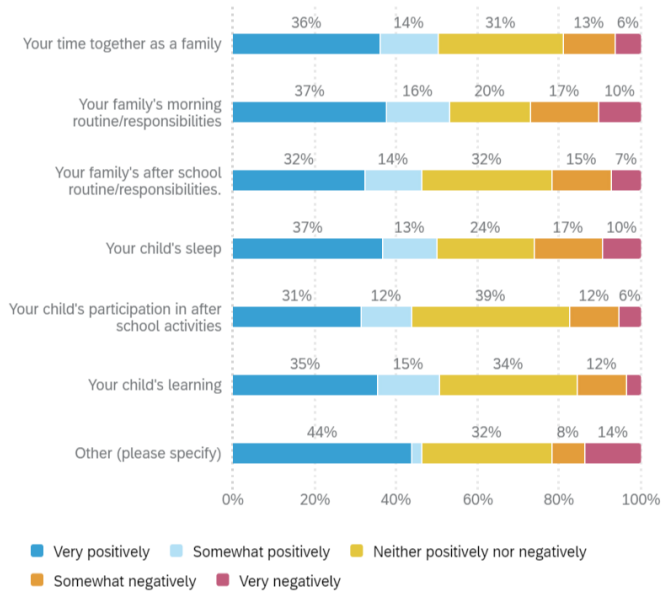
Respondents By School



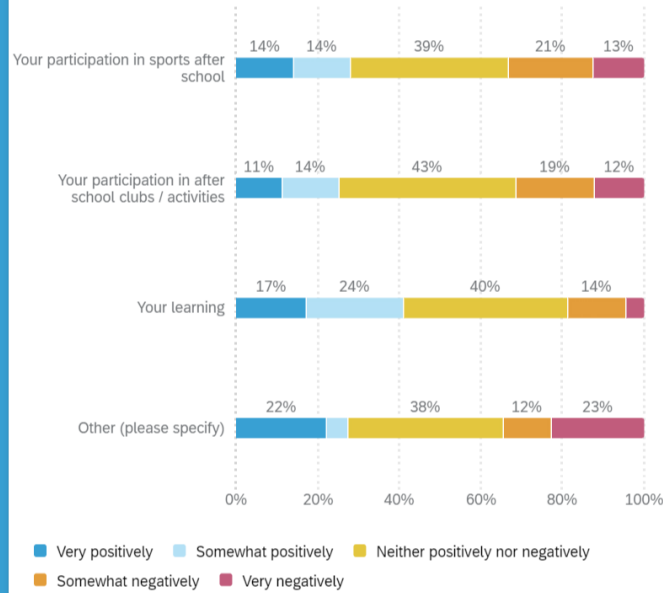
Results

Impact of Current Start Times: Respondents were asked about the impact of current start times on a variety of factors. Results across stakeholder groups can be seen in the charts below.

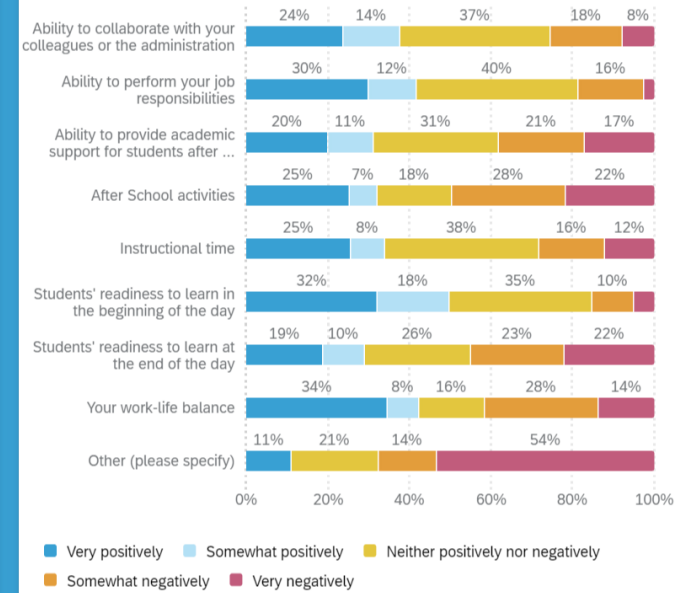
Family Results 1,097



Student Results 699

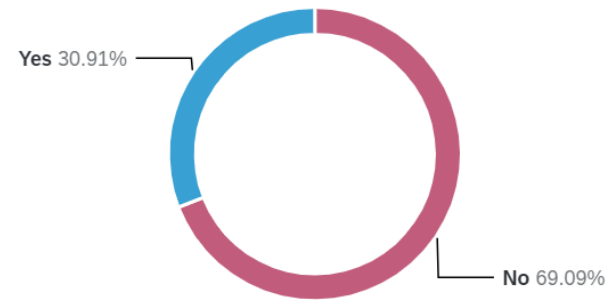


Staff Results 292

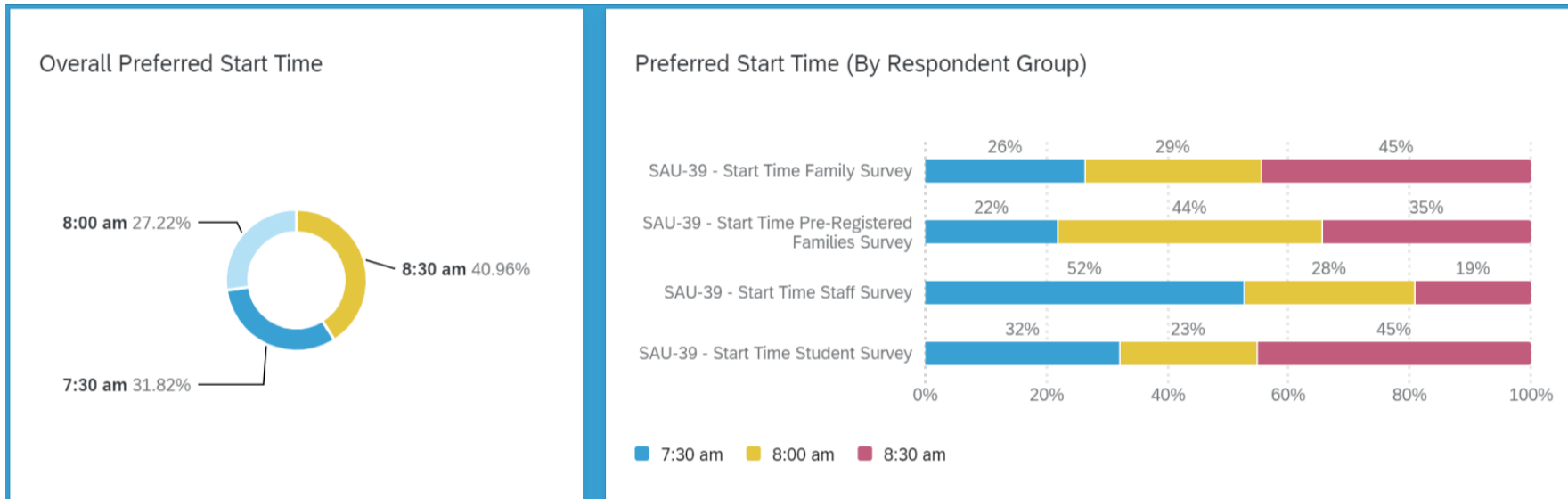


Consideration of an 8:00 AM Start Time: Respondents were asked about their desire to entertain an 8:00 AM start time. Results can be seen in the chart to the right.

In Favor of Having an 8:00 Option



Overall Start Time Preference: Respondents considered which of three provided options they preferred. Overall responses, including a breakdown across stakeholder groups, can be seen in the charts below.



Appendix

Isobar Public Sector Background

Isobar Public Sector is an industry-leading digital agency (ranked as a leader on the Gartner magic quadrant for digital agencies) serving both commercial and public sector organizations. The firm specializes in experience strategy and design, secure cloud solutions, engineering, strategy and advisory, adoption, cybersecurity, and data modernization.

Isobar Public Sector implementation team leaders all have direct K-12 experience, having served as educators, administrators, trainers, engineers, and presenters. We have worked in schools, districts, education-based non-profits, and in higher education. Our team can provide thought leadership around your project needs, and offer ideas, resources, and subject matter training related to these projects. In addition to Qualtrics technical training, we offer advisory services related to:

- Research Services (survey design, focus groups, etc)
- Program Evaluation
- Employee Engagement
- Data Analysis and Action
- Strategic Planning
- High Performing Teams

In addition to our subject matter expertise, Isobar Public Sector team members are certified Qualtrics implementers, with years of experience in the Qualtrics platform. We can help you maximize your use of the platform to design and deploy projects, build efficiencies, and reach desired outcomes. Our team will handle all desired aspects of training, as well as project design and deployment, including:

- **Platform Setup:** adding users, contacts, custom domains, and custom themes.
- **Project Design & Deployment:** Surveys, forms, workflows, dashboards, ticketing, and site intercept.
- **Technical Support:** Project troubleshooting, and post implementation resources.

Consultant Background



The lead consultant on this project was Dr. Nick Kohn, Account Manager with Isobar Public Sector. Nick has over 18 years of experience in K-12 education. Nick specializes in coaching around continuous improvement systems, data analytics, program evaluation, and Qualtrics design, implementation and use. For this project, Dr. Kohn advised on question set design, deployment, and results analysis

Design Methodology

There are several design considerations when thinking about survey administration. The following section details key methodological decisions that were made during the survey design process.

<p>Question Types</p> <p>The insights gained from a survey are only as valuable as the questions chosen. All questions used in the surveys were evidence-based and developed using best practice design methods.</p>	<p>Likert Scales</p> <p>Likert questions make up the majority of most climate surveys. There are various scales that can be chosen, all of which impact the way results can be displayed. Careful consideration was given to the scale chosen for these surveys.</p>
<p>Confidential vs Anonymous</p> <p>Survey data can be collected on a continuum from identifiable to completely anonymous. Design decisions for these surveys include an evaluation of whether to collect data confidentially or anonymously.</p>	<p>Distribution</p> <p>Surveys can be distributed in a variety of ways, all of which can impact user experience, response rates, and quality of data. Careful consideration was given to the ways in which these surveys were distributed.</p>

Question Types

The following question types were used throughout the start time survey:

Open Ended Comment Questions:

Benefits of including open-ended questions in a stakeholder engagement survey:

- **They provide richer and more detailed feedback.** Open-ended questions allow stakeholders to share their own experiences, thoughts, and ideas, which can provide deeper insights into their needs and concerns.
- **They help to identify new and unexpected issues.** Open-ended questions can help to uncover new or emerging issues that may not have been identified through closed-ended questions or other research methods.
- **They allow for more nuanced and nuanced responses.** Open-ended questions allow stakeholders to express the full range of their views, even if those views are complex or contradictory.
- **They show stakeholders that their input is valued.** Open-ended questions demonstrate to stakeholders that their individual perspectives and experiences are important and valued.

A 2021 study published in the journal *Stakeholder Management International* found that open-ended questions can be particularly useful for identifying and understanding the needs and concerns of marginalized or underserved stakeholders. The study also found that open-ended questions can help to build trust and rapport between stakeholders and the organization conducting the survey.

Another study, published in the journal *Public Administration Review* in 2020, found that open-ended questions can be used to identify new and innovative solutions to complex problems. The study found that open-ended questions can also help to build consensus and support for new policies and programs.

Overall, the research suggests that including a few open-ended questions in a stakeholder engagement survey can be a valuable way to collect richer, more detailed, and more nuanced feedback. This feedback can be used to improve the organization's decision-making, to develop new and innovative solutions, and to build trust and rapport with stakeholders.

Likert Scales

The following Likert scales were considered for all multiple choice questions.

Scale Options:

4 Point Scale

5 Point Scale

Why pick one over the other?

The best practice research on the difference between using a 4-point and 5-point scale on an engagement survey is mixed. Some studies have found that 5-point scales are more reliable and valid than 4-point scales, while other studies have found no significant difference between the two scales.

One study, published in the journal *Personnel Psychology* in 2019, found that 5-point scales are more reliable than 4-point scales. The study found that 5-point scales are less likely to be affected by random measurement errors, which can lead to more accurate and reliable results.

However, other studies have found no significant difference between 4-point and 5-point scales. A study published in the journal *Social Indicators Research* in 2018 found that 4-point and 5-point scales produce similar results in terms of reliability and validity. Ultimately, the best way to decide whether to use a 4-point or 5-point scale on an engagement survey is to consider the specific needs of the organization.

The main differences in the scales relate to the type of analysis desired by the organization. Five- point scales can provide a mixed sentiment option, but do allow for statistical analysis and averages since the distance between scale points is equivalent. Mixed sentiment options also may increase response rates, as respondents may not want to be forced to agree or disagree on a particular option and abandon the survey. Four-point scales on the other hand, require the respondent to choose a sentiment, but the distance between points is not equal. Therefore, statistical analysis and averages cannot be used.

SAU 39 Decision: 5 Point Scale

Confidential v. Anonymous

For each survey, consideration was given to the level of anonymity needed to ensure stakeholder confidence in the survey process.

There are two main reasons why a survey might be distributed confidentially or anonymously:

- 1. To encourage honest feedback.** Respondent members may be more likely to provide honest feedback if they know that their responses will be kept confidential. This is especially important for sensitive questions about job satisfaction, workplace culture, or leadership.
- 2. To protect respondents from retaliation.** If respondents know that their responses will be anonymous, they may feel more comfortable reporting concerns or problems without fear of retaliation.

Research supports the use of confidentiality and anonymity in stakeholder surveys. A 2022 study published in the journal *Educational Leadership* found that teachers are more likely to respond to staff engagement surveys and to provide honest feedback when the surveys are confidential or anonymous.

Another study, published in the journal *Personnel Psychology* in 2020, found that staff members are more likely to report concerns about workplace culture or leadership when surveys are anonymous.

However, it is important to note that confidentiality and anonymity are not mutually exclusive. Surveys can be designed to be both confidential and anonymous. For example, a survey could be distributed electronically, and respondents could be asked to provide a unique identifier code. This would allow the organization to track responses and identify trends, while still protecting the confidentiality of individual responses.

Ultimately, the decision of whether to distribute an engagement survey confidentially or anonymously depends on the specific needs of the organization. If the organization is primarily interested in collecting general feedback, then confidentiality may be sufficient. However, if the organization is interested in collecting sensitive feedback or if there is a risk of retaliation, then anonymity may be the best option.

SAU 39 Decision: Confidential

Distribution Options

The following distribution methods were considered for this project:

Anonymous Link: For those organizations looking to lean more into the anonymous side than the confidential side, an anonymous link may be preferred. An anonymous link is a single link or QR code that is generated within the Qualtrics platform and provided to survey respondents by the organization. Anonymous links by default do not capture additional respondent data, however they can be paired with an authenticator (explained below) to attach data from a contact list to a respondent.

Authenticator: Embedding an authenticator into a survey requires the survey respondent to enter in an ID number or email address tied back to a specific contact list in the directory. Once authenticated in, the respondent can complete the survey as normal. The response will be tied to the contact via authentication, and automatically pull in specified respondent data such as demographics that can be used in results reporting.

Qualtrics Mailer: For organizations looking for a more precise way to capture respondent data tied to a contact list, distribution via the Qualtrics mailing platform may be preferred. Using this system, Qualtrics will connect the survey to a contact list, and generate a unique link for each respondent. Links can then be mailed from Qualtrics to the individual respondents. Since the links are unique to the respondent, they can only be used once, and should not be shared with anyone else. Once the survey is completed, the response will be tied to the contact via the unique link, and automatically pull in specified respondent data such as demographics that can be used in results reporting.

SAU 39 Decision: Anonymous Link Plus Authentication for Students and Families; Individual Links Using the Qualtrics Mailer for Staff.