



January 14, 2019

Mr. Tom Parrish, President
Dr. Amy Davis
Mr. John Williams, Esq.
Mr. Paul Pitton
Mr. Doug Levinson
MCVSD 51 Board of Education

VIA E-MAIL

Dear Members of the Board of Education:

We write to you today on behalf of the business community here in the Grand Valley to voice our support for changes in the calendar for District 51 schools that we believe can substantially improve our business climate for employers, small businesspeople, and the overall workforce. We understand from news accounts that you will soon hear from a community working group considering a variety of proposed changes, some of which would be particularly helpful to the business community. Specifically, we want to voice our strong support for the following three concepts:

An annual school calendar with far fewer interrupted weeks. This current academic year has been an unnecessary imposition on our workforce and we want to strongly urge you to select a calendar that has the fewest possible “broken weeks” (i.e., days off of school scattered frequently and unpredictably throughout the year). We believe this simple change will improve business productivity, and reduce workforce disruptions.

A more consistent daily/weekly schedule that allows for working families and employers to plan ahead and maintain a reasonable and consistent schedule. This means the Board should strongly consider changing and/or eliminating elementary school “early release” that currently creates childcare and workforce challenges *every week*—needlessly, in our view. A more consistent 8am-3pm or equivalent schedule is far preferable to the business community.

Later start times for secondary schools. Research journals and news outlets, including the Daily Sentinel, have demonstrably shown the scientific benefits to our students starting their school day later. But there is also the benefit to the workforce of better aligning the start of the school day with the work day, allowing a more reasonable way for working parents to get kids

to school and then begin their work day. We would strongly urge the Board to adopt a schedule that allows students to begin the school day no sooner than 8am.

We understand that anytime changes are made to public policy, there are careful considerations that must be given. Our view, however, is that the Board can make a meaningful improvement to our school system and our community's economy by making the positive changes we have outlined above. We thank you for your time and attention, and would be happy to visit further with the Board about these or any other issues facing the business community.

Warmly,



Diane Schwenke
President/CEO
Grand Junction Area Chamber of Commerce



Robin Brown
Executive Director
Grand Junction Economic Partnership