

## Letter Regarding Bell Schedule Updates for SY26

Erin Martin • 8 hours ago • Wednesday, Jan 15 at 4:22 PM • **6th Grade, 7th Grade, 8th Grade**

Dear Takoma Park Middle School Community,

The purpose of this message is to update you on the topic of the adjustment of bell times at Takoma Park Middle School.

As I have shared with you on November 21, 2025 and in subsequent meetings, through advocacy from the Takoma Park Middle School Instructional Leadership Team, which is comprised of staff leaders from TPMS, our school engaged in an instructional bell schedule review process. The staff and school followed the requirements of the Montgomery County Educational Association (MCEA, teacher's union) negotiated agreement, which resulted in a majority vote from MCEA members to move to a schedule in which teachers engage in instruction 5 out of 7 periods of the day instead of the current 6 out of 8 period day.

Since this process was communicated, I have received numerous concerns from community members as well as staff about this change. I want to thank the PTSA for facilitating a question and answer session that elevated community questions to provide greater clarity around the process and next steps. One of the concerns that has been shared and was elevated at last night's PTSA meeting, was the lack of communication and opportunities for community input. Understanding the perspectives of all community members is extremely important to me and a reflection of my values. As a result of the feedback that we have received, **we are pausing on making a final decision about the bell schedule for next school year. We want to continue to receive feedback from stakeholders as well as working with staff from MCPS central office to come up with a plan that will best meet the needs of students and staff at Takoma Park Middle School.** If you would still like to provide feedback on the bell schedules, please do so using [this link](#). I have extended the window to respond through Friday, January 17, 2025.

When I submit the proposal, please know that all feedback from each stakeholder group will be included to ensure the input of the full community is taken into consideration prior to any final decision being made. Additionally, we are also looking at additional instructional structures for the school day that are used at different schools across the district. Our plan is to further engage in additional research before making a final decision.

Once a final decision has been made, I will be back in touch with you. I appreciate your patience and understanding through this process. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to reach out to me directly.

Sincerely,

Erin L. Martin