



Oakland Mills Community Association
The Other Barn • 5851 Robert Oliver Place
Columbia, MD 21045
410-730-4610 • oaklandmills.org



July 14, 2023

Dear Dr. Martirano, Chairperson Watts, and Members of the Board of Education,

The Oakland Mills Community Association (OMCA) respectfully requests that you consider staggering the school start times on the Oakland Mills High School/Oakland Middle School campus by 10 minutes, with the high school starting at 8:00 and the middle school starting at 8:10.

We understand and support the need for later start times to support the mental and physical health of adolescent students. However, we also want to ensure that commutes to school and within Oakland Mills are as safe as possible. Since Kilimanjaro Road is a two-lane residential road that already gets overwhelmed with traffic during just the high school drop off, we are concerned that starting both schools at the same time will create unsafe conditions not only on Kilimanjaro Road, but also on Oakland Mills Road and Stevens Forest Road, which are the only access points to Kilimanjaro.

Since the schools are a campus but are separated by a residential community on Kilimanjaro Road, we propose starting the high school at 8:00 followed by the middle school at 8:10. This would allow for the school with the larger population to have earlier arrivals and give a chance for Kilimanjaro Road to begin clearing out before the middle school commute starts. For families choosing to drive students to both schools, starting the high school first ensures less time consuming and safer right turns out of the high school to get to the middle school for the second drop off.

We also encourage the school system to work with the county to ensure the safety of walkers and bikers, as well as drivers, through increased traffic direction via the School Resource Officers and the Howard County Police Department's Traffic Management Division. Within the past few years, we have already had one incident of an Oakland Mills Middle School student being hit by a car in the crosswalk at Stevens Forest Road and Kilimanjaro Road. We have also seen frequent traffic backups onto both Oakland Mills Road and Stevens Forest Road during

just high school drop off, especially during the past couple of years as the high school's attendance area expanded. We hope our requests will be considered and will happily work with you, the county, and our local school administrators on any other ideas to ensure the safety of students, staff, and our residents along the Kilimanjaro Road corridor.

Thank you for your consideration,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Jon. L. Edelson", is placed on a light blue rectangular background.

Jonathan L. Edelson
Chairperson, Oakland Mills Community Association