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Recommendation for Setting Later High School Start Times

Subject: Medical and academic research on teens' developing bodies and brains show that sleep is directly linked to physical and mental health as well as learning and academic success. Teenagers in high school need, on average, 8 to 10 hours of sleep each night. Setting a more traditional start time between 8:00am – 9:00am supports the evidence that increasing adolescents' hours of sleep results in better outcomes and aligns better with healthy adolescent wake and sleep cycles.

Background: The 2011 Centers for Disease Control (CDC) Youth Risk Behavior Survey of teens around the nation found that 69% of teens get less than 8 ½ hours of sleep on school nights and 30% of them get less than 6 hours each night. Early high school start time is a major cause of insufficient sleep. Insufficient sleep is linked with risky health behaviors such as smoking, drinking, physical fighting and physical inactivity. Tired teens are moody, irritable and have more hopelessness, depression and suicidal thoughts. Further medical research links inadequate sleep to migraines, teen obesity and disruption of the immune system. Finally, sleepy teens are also more likely to be involved in car accidents.

Across the United States, school districts where 8:00am school start times have been implemented, have decreased tardiness, decreased sleeping in class, increased attendance, increased graduation rates and higher standardized test scores. Students are reported to be better prepared, more alert and motivated to do well.

Perhaps contrary to expectation, these students also get more sleep on school nights. Most recently, a study at the US Air Force Academy showed students starting classes after 8:00am performed better not only in their first period classes, but throughout entire day. The Brookings Institute reports a 0.175 SD increase in test scores with benefits approximately twice as great in disadvantaged students. This reports states further that later high school start times create a lifetime earnings gain of \$17,500 per student with a school district cost of \$0.0 to \$1,950 per student; a benefit-to-cost ratio of 9:1 or better.

Position: The Wisconsin Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics (WIAAP) supports consideration of policy changes promoting students' physical and mental health and well-being. WIAAP therefore supports efforts to delay high school start times to 8:00am or later.

Resources

Re: A Letter to the Editor in Defense of Sleep Recommendations

Lynn M. Keefe, *Pediatrics* 2012;129;988

<http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/129/5/988.full.pdf>

High Schools Find Later Start Time Helps Students' Health and Performance

Lynne Lamberg, *JAMA (The Journal of the American Medical Association)*, 2009;301(21):2200-2201.

<http://jama.jamanetwork.com/article.aspx?articleid=184011>

The Impact of School Daily Schedule on Adolescent Sleep

Pediatrics 2005;115;1555

<http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/115/6/1555.full.pdf>

Early school start times lead to lagging performance

Dr. Roger Thompson, August 9, 2013

<http://www.timesfreepress.com/news/2013/aug/09/early-school-start-times-lead-lagging-performance/>

Later School Start Time Improves Teens' Sleep and Mood

Contemporary Pediatrics, September 1, 2010

<http://contemporarypediatrics.modernmedicine.com/contemporary-pediatrics/news/modernmedicine/modern-medicine-news/late-school-start-time-improves-te>

Start School Later

Research and Information

<http://www.startschoollater.net/research--info.html>

Success Stories

<http://www.startschoollater.net/success-stories.html>