

School Hours AND Sleep Deprivation A Public Health Epidemic



Too many schools start too early in the morning to allow students to get the sleep they need — and that's taking a toll on their health, safety, and ability to learn.

▶ **The American Medical Association, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and American Academy of Pediatrics** advise that middle and high schools start no earlier than 8:30 a.m.

▶ But fewer than 1 in 5 schools in the U.S. meet this important health recommendation.

▶ **Over the past several decades, school start times have become increasingly early. Restoring traditional school hours is a practical and necessary solution with broad and immediate benefits for children of all ages.**

▶ **Creating a minimum morning start time for schools will protect and enhance child health, well-being, safety, and academic performance.**



◀ **WHO WAKES UP EARLIER? A ROOSTER OR A TEENAGER?**

Pictured: 6:30 a.m. at a high school bus stop in central Maryland. First period starts at 7:17 a.m. Throughout the nation students are waking or leaving for school as early as the 5 a.m. hour. Many are driving drowsy or walking in the dark along streets without sidewalks.

***“Sleep deprivation is a growing public health issue affecting our nation’s adolescents, putting them at risk for mental, physical and emotional distress and disorders. Scientific evidence strongly suggests that allowing adolescents more time for sleep at the appropriate hours results in improvements in health, academic performance, behavior, and general well-being. We believe delaying school start times will help ensure middle and high school students get enough sleep, and that it will improve the overall mental and physical health of our nation’s young people.... While implementing a delayed school start time can be an emotional and potentially stressful issue for school districts, families, and members of the community, the health benefits for adolescents far outweigh any potential negative consequences.”** — American Medical Association (June 2016)*

Start School Later, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization of health professionals, sleep scientists, educators, parents, and students who are working to ensure that schools hours are compatible with health, safety, equity, and learning.
web: startschoollater.net **email:** contact@startschoollater.net

Support **Safe and Healthy School Hours** for All Children by ...

1. **Advocating** to your school board, elected officials and others for safe and healthy school start times
 2. **Getting involved** with your local schools and public health initiatives
 3. **Writing** a newspaper op-ed column, blog post or letter to the editor
 4. **Joining** (or starting) a local chapter of Start School Later
 5. **Volunteering** your time and sharing your talents with Start School Later
 6. **Adding** your school's hours to our database on *StartSchoolLater.net*
 7. **Subscribing** to our email updates and alerts
 8. **Wearing** a Start School Later button or T-shirt
 9. **Following** *Facebook.com/StartSchoolLater* and *Twitter.com/@StartSchoolL8r*
 10. **Making a tax-deductible donation** to Start School Later or a local chapter
- ... or **telling us** how you'd like to help!



▲ An exhausted high school senior asleep at 3:12 p.m. after closing his eyes "for just a minute" while doing homework.

Most U.S. middle and high schools start the school day too early

 5 out of 6 U.S. middle and high schools start the school day before **8:30 AM**

The American Academy of Pediatrics has recommended that middle and high schools should aim to start no earlier than 8:30 AM to enable students to get adequate sleep.

 Teens need at least **8** hours of sleep per night.  Younger students need at least **9** hours.

 2 out of 3 U.S. high school students sleep less than **8 hours** on school nights

Adolescents who do not get enough sleep are more likely to



be overweight



not get enough physical activity



suffer from depressive symptoms



engage in unhealthy risk behaviors such as drinking alcohol, smoking tobacco, and using illicit drugs



perform poorly in school

For more information: www.cdc.gov

National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion
Division of Population Health



MORE YOU SHOULD KNOW

From the JOURNAL OF SCHOOL HEALTH

"A unique biological shift in sleep cycles occurs during adolescence causing later sleep and wake times. This shift is not matched by a concurrent modification in school start times, resulting in sleep curtailment for a large majority of adolescents. Chronic inadequate sleep is associated with poor academic performance including executive function impairments, mood and behavioral issues, as well as adverse health outcomes such as an increased risk of obesity, hypertension, and cardiovascular disease."

From the EDUCATION COMMISSION OF THE STATES

"Education start times requiring waking at 7 a.m. or earlier — which is like adults waking at 4 a.m. every day — cause chronic sleep loss.... Despite the substantial body of evidence from scientific, medical and education research supporting later school starts, almost all adolescent education in the United States currently has early start times. This leaves states, school districts and other responsible bodies in the untenable position of defending a current practice that has been demonstrated to be detrimental to student learning."

AND KEEP IN MIND

- ▶ Many school districts have made the change to safer and healthier school hours at no cost, some have been able to save money on transportation, and others have found low-cost options for implementing this positive change.
- ▶ Economists from the Brookings Institution estimate a benefit-to-cost ratio of at least 9:1 and report that lifetime earnings increase and the improved academic performance of students is equivalent to two extra months in school.
- ▶ Driving drowsy is like driving drunk: Teens with later school start times have fewer car crashes.

TO LEARN EVEN MORE, READ THESE REPORTS

- ▶ "Examining the Impact of Later High School Start Times on the Health and Academic Performance of High School Students: A Multi-Site Study" (Kyla L. Wahlstrom, PhD., et. al, Center for Applied Research and Educational Improvement, University of Minnesota)
- ▶ "School Start Time Change: An In-Depth Examination of School Districts in the United States" (The Children's National Medical Center's Blueprint for Change)