



Health, Safety and Equity in Education

PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release
December 10, 2015

For more information, please contact:
Debbie O. Moore, debbie@startschoollater.net, (682) 429-5803

Arlington ISD Misses Mark on School Start Time Facts

This week, the Arlington Independent School District released a fact sheet, on the strategic plan webpage, as a summary of the 2014 School Start Time Committee. The summary doesn't accurately reflect the facts about school start times.

The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) – the organization that represents the official stance of pediatricians in the United States – recommends that middle and high schools start at 8:30 am or later. This policy statement is based on a thorough review of the scientific evidence. The research is clear. There are numerous benefits to providing school schedules that align with student body clocks, including:

- less depression
- decrease in high risk behavior such as drug and alcohol use
- decrease in disciplinary problems
- decrease in student-involved car accidents
- decrease in student sleeping during instruction
- increased attendance rates
- increased academic achievement

The AAP is one of many organizations supporting healthy school hours including:

- American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry
- American Foundation for Suicide Prevention
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
- National Education Association
- National Association of School Nurses and the Society of Pediatric Nurses
- National Sleep Foundation
- Tarrant County League of Women Voters

Healthy Hours is the Research and Education Arm of Start School Later, Inc.

Start School Later, Inc. • PO Box 6105 • Annapolis, MD 21401 • www.StartSchoolLater.net

“How discouraging to see a fact sheet posted three layers deep on the district website with numerous inaccuracies and attributing several conclusions to the committee that were not made or discussed,” states Debbie Moore chapter leader for Start School Later Arlington and a member of the executive board of Start School Later, Inc.

Several subcommittee conclusions were omitted and others were added:

- There are over 300 research reports and studies supporting later start times for adolescents.
- The unsubstantiated costs of \$32 million associated with returning to a single tier busing system are misleading. Such an over-inflated estimate seems designed to dissuade citizens from doing the right thing for students. It is associated with returning to a single tier busing system, which was never discussed.
- Districts across the country have returned to healthy school hours for teens with little or no costs through a variety of ways. It costs nothing to flip the order of the tiers or to adjust the start time of all three tiers.
- The School Start Time committee had no input regarding the wording or content of this summary nor were members notified that the summary had been posted by the district.
- The tone and structure of the summary is skewed towards no change in the bell schedule by the district.

Start School Later Arlington urges Arlington ISD to:

- Develop the objective to start high schools after 8:30 am for the 2016-17 academic year.
- Publicly acknowledge the abundant sleep research indicating early school start times affect the health, safety and academic achievement of adolescents.
- Acknowledge that strategic plan objectives involving academic achievement and fostering an environment that enhances emotionally and physically safe learning cannot be achieved without responding to the student health crisis created by early daily high school start times.

When these facts are acknowledged, Start School Later Arlington looks forward to working with the district to find creative solutions to insure no child goes to school before sunrise.

“Change is hard and requires leadership and a willingness to problem solve to provide the best possible outcome for all students. Reading this slanted summary made me feel as if our high school students are going to be stuck with this inhumane schedule for the foreseeable future,” says Mark Schatzman, member SSL Arlington and the district School Start Time committee.

###

Debbie O. Moore is the chapter leader of Start School Later Arlington, TX and the chapter director of Start School Later, Inc.

Start School Later is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization working to ensure school start times compatible with health, safety, education, and equity- with currently 51 chapters in 18 states. Please visit our website at <http://www.startschoollater.net/>

Healthy Hours is the Research and Education Arm of Start School Later, Inc.

Start School Later, Inc. • PO Box 6105 • Annapolis, MD 21401 • www.StartSchoolLater.net