

CITY OF



MELROSE

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Board of Health

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MEMORANDUM

TO: Kristin Thorp, Chairperson
School Committee
FROM: Board of Health
DATE: January 28, 2015
RE: School start time

At our meeting January 15, 2015 we voted unanimously to recommend that the start time for the Middle and High School be moved to no earlier than 8:30 a.m.

This recommendation is based on evidence-based research which shows that “adolescents who don’t get enough sleep often suffer physical and mental health problems, an increased risk of automobile accidents and a decline in academic performance.” (American Academy of Pediatrics press release August 25, 2104) Additional information on this subject from the National Sleep Foundation corroborated this recommendation. Attached are two articles on the subject.

The AAP and National Sleep Foundation recommend 8.5-9.5 hours a sleep for adolescents in for them to function properly. However, melatonin, one of the key hormones that allow us to sleep, is not released in teenagers until approximately 11 pm. It is the reason our youth argue with us about going to sleep earlier, they physically are unable to do this. A school start of 7:40 am does not allow for our students to receive the sleep they need.

A 3 year study in 3 states, involving 8 schools and 9,000 students found that students who got less than 8 hours of sleep had increased depression, increased caffeine use, and increased substance abuse. Those students whose school started after 8:30 saw improvements in their core subject grades , improvements in national standardized tests, increased attendance, decreased tardiness, and most significantly a decrease in car crashes of 70 percent. (*Examining the Impact of Later High School Start Times on the Health and Academic Performance of High School Students: A Multi-Site Study*, University of Michigan College of Education of Human Development February, 2014)

We all want our youth to be happy, healthy and successful. This is one tool we can provide to help them achieve this goal.

Encl.