



Health, Safety and Equity in Education

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U.S. EDUCATION SECRETARY ENDORSES LATER SCHOOL START TIMES AS “COMMON SENSE”

Contact: Heather Macintosh, Start School Later,

Heather@startschoollater.net | 410-279-4569

Secretary Arne Duncan yesterday tweeted his support of later high school start times, saying:

"Common sense to improve student achievement that too few have implemented: let teens sleep more, start school later."

Secretary Duncan also shared the morning's [Washington Post Editorial](#), which calls for a return to later, healthier school schedules:

It's in the best interest of students, teachers, administrators and parents that this problem be addressed. To function at their most alert levels and to maintain the healthiest possible lifestyles, adolescents need more sleep and early start times at schools interfere with their natural circadian rhythms, making it almost impossible for them to get the rest they need.

[Start School Later](#), the grassroots group working to promote an appropriate start time by raising awareness about the negative impacts of **start times as early as 7:00 a.m.** in many school districts, calls on Secretary Duncan to discuss how the Department of Education can partner with local school boards to encourage implementation of healthier school schedules.

Hundreds of districts that have made the change to later starts more consistent with the sleep needs of students have seen the benefits in terms of health, academic improvements and increased safety. However, most of the **nearly 14,000 U.S. school districts still start high school before 8:30 a.m.**

"The dilemma we face is that despite both 'common sense' and overwhelming research, many communities resist a return to later, healthier hours because they've built their lives around the early schedules," says Terra Ziporyn Snider, PhD, Executive Director of Start School Later. "That's why we need help from national leaders like Arne Duncan. Setting parameters for healthy schools hours, as we request in our [national petition](#), would make it easier for local districts to prioritize health and learning when they set their local schedules."

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