



health, safety and equity in education

PRESS STATEMENT

November 19, 2015
For Immediate Release

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Seattle Public Schools Vote to Delay High School Start Times Next Year

By Terra Ziporyn Snider

On behalf of Start School Later, I want to extend a huge congratulations to the Seattle Public Schools on [last night's historic vote](#) to delay the start times of high schools and all but one middle school to 8:45 a.m. This change, scheduled to begin in school year 2016-17, gives new hope to thousands of other districts working to ensure safe, healthy school hours.

Recognizing that benefits of later school start times far outweigh speculated costs or perceived inconveniences, Seattle Public Schools have taken an important step toward resolving an issue hotly debated for years. With the help of our local chapter, [Start School Later Seattle](#), which was started by a district teacher, and support from school nurses, the local teachers union, and sleep specialists, they have modeled a way for citizen advocates to work hand-in-hand with school leaders to improve children's health and well-being by:

- setting the goal of later morning start times for adolescents to benefit student health, well-being, and performance
- involving a broad spectrum of school and community stakeholders
- developing consensus about ways to achieve their goal
- resolving to continue working on ways to ensure safe, healthy hours for all students

With last night's vote, Seattle has become the largest school system in the country to change its hours to meet recommendations from the [American Academy of Pediatrics](#) and [Centers for Disease Control](#).

While no change is perfect, and all change is hard, this change is an historic step toward making Seattle students healthier, safer, and more productive. That a large, urban school system like Seattle can make this change is an inspiring example of what can be accomplished when communities and school leaders set a goal and work together in good faith to accomplish it.

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Terra Ziporyn Snider, PhD, is the Executive Director and Co-Founder of Start School Later, Inc.

Seattle Public Schools' [Board Action Report](#) on the approved schedule changes and last night's vote can be found at http://www.seattleschools.org/UserFiles/Servers/Server_543/File/District/Departments/School%20Board/15-16agendas/111815agenda/20151118_Action_Report_TSS_BellTimes_Packet.pdf

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