

10 Ways Later MIDDLE and HIGH SCHOOL Start Times Benefit Teens and the Community

1. Healthy School Hours Reduce the Achievement Gap

"[D]elaying school start times by one hour, from roughly 7:30 to 8:30, increases standardized test scores by at least 2 percentile points in math and 1 percentile point in reading. The effect is largest for students with below-average test scores, suggesting that later start times would narrow gaps in student achievement."

2. Healthy School Hours Lower Juvenile Crime Rates

Juvenile Crime peaks nationwide at 3 p.m., a time that's between the end of school and when parents get home. Police support limiting unsupervised situations at this crucial time. Also, sleep deprived teens are more likely to commit crime due to low self-control.

3. Healthy School Hours Help Prevent Car Crashes

Drowsy driving is responsible for a significant number of fatal teen crashes. School districts with later morning start times see the teen crash rates decline.

4. Healthy School Hours Reduce Drop-Out Rates

5. School attendance improves, tardiness decreases and graduation rates increase, which helps raise tax revenues and reduce crime and gang activity.

6. Healthy School Hours Improve Health

Sleep loss has wide-ranging consequences, including obesity, diabetes, cardiovascular disease and hypertension. Sleep deprivation reduces the immune system. With later, healthier school start times, teens experience fewer sports injuries and miss fewer days of school due to illness.

7. Healthy School Hours Are Better for Mental Health

Inadequate sleep is linked to depressed mood, anxiety, behavioral problems, alcohol and drug use, risky behaviors and suicidal thoughts.

The Maryland Youth Risk Behavior Survey 2013 (YRBS) shows that 15% of Howard County high school students seriously considered suicide and 11% made a plan to do so. When able to sleep more:

- Teen attitudes and behavior improve
- Teens report less depression
- Teenage needs for medication decreases

(A cost-benefit analysis prepared for Fairfax County, Virginia, estimates that later start times could save the community \$1.7 million a year in mental health treatment costs.)

7. Healthy School Hours Help Prevent Substance Abuse

Increased and adequate sleep decreases risk taking behaviors such alcohol and drug use.

8. Healthy School Hours Make Streets Safer

With early school start times, many students who are eligible for school bus service opt out and instead drive to school (or are driven by family members), which leads to more cars on the road during morning rush hours.

9. Healthy School Hours Are Family-Friendly

A year after the city of Minneapolis implemented later start times, students were getting an hour more of sleep per school night, 92 percent of parents were happy with the change, and parents reported improved relationships with their children.

10. More Energy to Engage in Extra Curricular Activities

Loudoun County teens start school at 9:00am and are dismissed at 3:48. They still have plenty of time for extracurricular activities as demonstrated by their numerous athletic state championships and achievements in academic and musical endeavors.

Howard County Maryland Chapter |

<http://www.startschoollater.net/md---howard-county.html>

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- SOURCES: (1) <http://educationnext.org/do---schools---begin---too---early/> and http://www.hamiltonproject.org/assets/legacy/files/downloads_and_links/092011_organize_jacob_rockoff_brief.pdf
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