

Have any schools changed to healthier start times?

Yes! Hundreds of schools and school districts have adopted later morning start times with positive results including more sleep, improved grades, decreased automobile crashes, less teen depression, and fewer suspensions. These schools include large and small districts, as well as rural, suburban, and urban ones. Visit StartSchoolLater.net for examples.

Why don't all schools have healthy start times?

There are many reasons. A lack of awareness about adolescent development and the science of teen sleep is a big barrier to change. Many districts and families, having established systems for the existing school hours, are hesitant or fearful of change. Also, communities often assume that later school start times will increase transportation costs or reduce extracurricular opportunities. (Real-life examples prove such speculation unfounded and offer feasible, fiscally-responsible ways to implement safe and healthy school hours.)

How can people help?

1. Share this brochure and information from our website, with parents and local leaders.
2. Ask school administrators as well as local, state, and national elected officials and policymakers to take action to protect children.
3. Join or start a chapter of Start School Later.
4. Make a donation at StartSchoolLater.net

About Start School Later

Start School Later, Inc., is a national 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization of health professionals, sleep scientists, educators, parents, students, and concerned citizens who are working to ensure that all schools can set hours compatible with health, safety, equity, and learning. Healthy Hours, the education and research arm of Start School Later, develops and provides educational resources, serves as an information clearinghouse, and champions the cause of healthy school hours — nationally and locally — for children of all ages.

For information about healthy school hours, for media requests, or to join or start a local chapter.

Contact Us

Email: Contact@StartSchoolLater.net

Website: StartSchoolLater.net

Start School Later, Inc.

P.O. Box 6105

Annapolis, Maryland, 21401

Follow us on Twitter [@StartSchoolL8r](https://twitter.com/StartSchoolL8r)

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Local Contact:



health, safety, and equity in education

Facts About School Start Times

- The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that middle and high schools start at 8:30 a.m. or later.
- Today, many middle and high schools begin much earlier, often around 7 a.m.
- Bus pick-ups starting between 5:15 and 6:30 a.m. require students to wake up hours before what is healthy, safe, and developmentally-appropriate for their still-growing brains and bodies.
- With such schedules, teenagers have to be in bed and *asleep* at 8 or 9 p.m. in order to get the amount of sleep they need. This just isn't possible — for both biological and logistical reasons.

Learn more about why it's time to [Start School Later](http://StartSchoolLater.net) ... and what you can do to help.

Let's start with sleep science

During puberty, adolescents are biologically programmed to fall asleep later at night (typically 11 p.m. or after, give or take) than children and adults are. Consequently, it is biologically normal — and necessary — that they rise later in the morning. Most sleep deprivation among middle and high school students is a product of their wake-up time, not their not bedtime. (Reports and studies about sleep and sleep cycles, also known as “circadian rhythms,” are available online at StartSchoolLater.net.)

Then why is school so early?

Well, it wasn't always. Prior to the 1970s and in some areas the 1980s, most schools began *after* 8:30 a.m. Factors ranging from tight economic conditions to suburban sprawl to the lack of walkable streets and sidewalks to the consolidation of neighborhood schools into larger, more distant ones, made school systems more reliant on school buses. To serve all school-levels, the window of time needed for the buses to gather and deliver all students was expanded. The extra time was gained by starting the high school and its bus runs earlier.

What's the solution?

The science supporting later school start times has been clear since the 1990s. Some schools have acted accordingly, but the vast majority have yet to act. Experts from many fields are calling on state, local and/or federal lawmakers to set parameters for safe, healthy and developmentally-appropriate school hours so parents aren't forced to choose between school attendance and a child's safety, health and overall well-being.

How sleep-deprived are America's teens?

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reports that more than 90 percent of high school students in the United States get inadequate sleep.

Adolescents require about 9 hours of sleep per night for optimal health.

The typical adolescent in the United States gets only 6.75 hours of sleep on school nights.

Just a few consequences of chronic sleep loss

- Increased chance of automobile crashes
- Increased chance of sports injuries
- Increased depression
- Increased suicidal ideation
- Increased substance abuse
- Increased risk-taking
- Increased school violence
- Increased insulin resistance
- Increased stress response
- Increased inflammatory response
- Increased risk of obesity
- Increased risk of diabetes
- Increased risk of heart disease
- Increased risk of aggressive forms of cancer
- Reduced immune functioning
- Reduced attention
- Reduced problem-solving skills
- Reduced academic performance

Research and references are at StartSchoolLater.net

Supporters of starting school later include ...

American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry

American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP)

American Academy of Sleep Medicine (AASM)

American Medical Association (AMA)

American Psychological Association

American Thoracic Society

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

Connecticut Interscholastic Athletic Conference

Education Commission of the States

Florida High School Athletic Association
(Sports Medicine Advisory Committee)

Maine Sports Medicine Physicians

Maryland State Medical Society

Massachusetts Association of School Committees

Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Association

Minnesota Medical Association

National Association of School Nurses

National Association of Social Workers (Ohio)

Seattle Education Association

Society of Pediatric Nurses

Virginia State PTA

Washington State PTA

More are listed at StartSchoolLater.net