

Support HB 39 | SB 224
The "Orange Ribbon" for
Healthy School Hours Bill



Waking in the Dark + Too Early School Start Times = Struggling, Sleep-Deprived Teens

“This is a real photograph of a real Anne Arundel County Public Schools high school senior totally conked out asleep at 3:12 p.m. The wood stove did have a roaring fire in it when he chose to lay down on the hardwood floor and close his eyes ‘for just a few minutes.’ Even the cold room, siblings, refrigerator ice maker and barking dogs didn’t wake him. This teen leaves for school exhausted. Comes home exhausted. Wakes up from unintentional afternoon naps exhausted and then struggles to fall back asleep by 10 p.m. because his alarm clock will start buzzing at 5:15 a.m. so he can hit the snooze button once, twice or even three times as he tries to wake up in the dark for a pre-dawn drive to school and AP World History or college prep math at 7:17 a.m. It’s an exhausting cycle.” — *Melissa*



January 13, 2016, 3:12 p.m., Anne Arundel County, Maryland

“My high school-age son was in bed by 9:30 every night (without TV or a phone) and was a complete zombie by Thursday from the cumulative lack of sleep (up at 5:45 to shower and eat before the 6:30 bus). Kids are put in a position to choose sleep vs. homework and at some point homework wins or grades suffer. He was miserable. I’m hoping my 8th grader won’t suffer the same fate.” — Megan

“On those beautiful 65+ degree sunny days we had in December, my son missed them completely, as he had to come home and nap rather than be outside going for a run or biking to see friends. And he’s in bed, lights out, zonked by 10:30 p.m. The 5:45 a.m. wake time kills him, and makes him too tired and brain dead to stay after school for help-day makeups.” — *Janet*

“I will never forget my daughter’s emotional wreckage by Thursday of each week. It was so predictable, and so avoidable.” — Heather

The commentaries presented here are from posts in the Facebook group of Start School Later Anne Arundel County, comments on LegiScan and testimony before the Anne Arundel County Board of Education. See more on the next page. >>

Local School Districts NEED STATEWIDE SUPPORT to address this health, safety and education problem

House Bill 39 | Senate Bill 224 Education - Orange Ribbon for Healthy School Hours - Establishment

The purpose of the “Orange Ribbon for Healthy School Hours” certification is to recognize a local school system that creates, implements and enforces school start times that are consistent with the school start times recommended by the Maryland State Department of Education, the Maryland State Department of Health and Mental Hygiene and the American Academy of Pediatrics.

- For an elementary school, that means no child would be in class before 8 a.m. or boarding a school bus before 7 a.m.
- For a middle or high school, that means no child would be in class before 8:30 a.m. or boarding a school bus before 7:30 a.m.

This is a voluntary program that requires no funding

“I’ve always gotten straight A’s and loved school. This year I’ve gotten 100s on all my projects in English but I got an E on reading comprehension for the book we were reading because I kept falling asleep, so I didn’t comprehend it as well.

I have to get up at 5:30 in the morning and then catch the bus while it’s pitch black outside. I also love to be active and do things but because I have to get up so early, I’m still tired when I get home from school that I end up falling asleep for 3 or 4 hours.

I don’t like falling asleep at that time because I want to do stuff and get my homework done and spend time with my family. I try to get to bed early, although when I sleep for several hours after school I get all messed up. I leave my cell phone in my parents’ room at 8 o’clock and then I try to get to bed by 9 o’clock.

During class, especially 1st period, when you look around more than half of the kids are falling asleep. Even the kids who don’t look tired have told me they’re trying to keep their eyes open. It’s horrible in the morning trying to get up even after going to bed really early and this is only my first year. I still have 3-1/2 years left, and I already feel this way.” — *Kayla*



October 7, 2014, 6:41 a.m. An Anne Arundel County school bus picks up high school-bound students along a road with no sidewalks and few streetlights. With a 7:17 a.m. start time, the district has the earliest starting high schools in the state.

“I was not overly concerned about high school early start times until my 9th grade granddaughter and all the other students had to trek to the neighborhood bus stop in the full dark of night at 6 a.m. Even when our generation had to walk two miles through all sorts of weather when school never closed, it was daylight.” — *Gail*

"My scholar-athlete was diagnosed as clinically sleep deprived last month. She gets up at 5:40 in the morning to make a 7:05 report to school time. She tries to get to bed at 9:30 each night — but that means there is no time to do anything except homework any night of the week, outside of sports." — *Joanne*

"I just withdrew my youngest from high school and she enrolled at the community college as I could no longer bear the depression and anxiety and necessary medication to cope with the effects of sleep deprivation. Both of my children had struggles, which I believe were precipitated by this. My oldest developed substance abuse. This is a health matter [that] should take precedence over any other concern!!!! ... The least advantaged children suffer from these unreasonable hours. Want to close the ‘achievement gap’? Look no futher!!! — *Wilma (name changed)*

“I graduated from South River. My oldest son did a couple of years ago and now my youngest is entering middle school. My oldest was a zombie through most of high school and I can remember having to get my own sister up when I was in high school because it was too early for my parents to be up! I feel like our county is stuck in the '60s.” — *Alexa*

"After an exciting first day of high school and since being up since 5:45 a.m., my sweet son, who suffers with OCD, is in my room crying and talking about the self-harming, out of control thoughts he has. We do what we’ve learned in therapy and it’s definitely the newness and stress of school starting back, *but* his symptoms are impacted majorly by getting up so early. And, of course, this scares the crap out of me and angers me, and then I have to calm myself to sleep. Again, school start times are only a part of this, but a significant one." — *Mo*

"All I can think about today is how my 11th grader went in this morning and started the PSAT at 7:17 a.m. And now his scores are going to be compared across Maryland and the nation for National Merit Scholarship opportunities. I wonder how my very bright but sleepy boy did this morning. Seems pretty unfair for the kids in Anne Arundel County to be at this disadvantage today." — *Lori*