

## **ADOPTED 2006 - RESOLUTION ON THE IMPACT OF SCHOOL START TIMES ON STUDENT HEALTH**

- WHEREAS Sleep deprivation and sleep disorders are estimated to cost Americans over \$100 billion annually in lost productivity, medical expenses, sick leave, and property and environmental damage; and
- WHEREAS Research conducted by the National Sleep Foundation finds that nearly seven out of 10 Americans said they experience frequent sleep problems; and
- WHEREAS The research also found that more than two-thirds of all children (69%) experience one or more sleep problems a few nights a week resulting in daytime fatigue, naps and concentration difficulties, affecting teens' ability to think, perform and react appropriately; and
- WHEREAS The National Institutes of Health have identified adolescents and young adults (ages 12 to 25 years) as a population at high risk for problem sleepiness; and
- WHEREAS Drowsiness or fatigue has been identified as a principle cause in 100,000 police-reported traffic crashes each year, killing more than 1500 Americans and injuring another 71,000 according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration; and
- WHEREAS Young drivers age 25 or under are involved in more than one-half of fall-asleep crashes; and
- WHEREAS The biological clock that regulates the sleep-wake cycle shifts to a later sleep and wake time as children become adolescents; and melatonin, the hormone that regulates sleep makes it difficult for teens to fall asleep before 11 PM and difficult to wake and be alert before, 8 AM; and
- WHEREAS Sleep debt affects mood and behavior, particularly among teenagers, and contributes to depression; and can impair metabolism, disrupt hormone levels and contribute to obesity; and
- WHEREAS The National Sleep Foundation reports that 28% of high school students fall asleep in class at least once a week, 22% fall asleep doing homework and 14% arrive late or miss school because they oversleep; and
- WHEREAS Research shows many benefits from later secondary school start times, including more average sleep per night; decreased in teen car accidents, teen depression, visits to the clinic and dropout rates; and improvements in attendance, behavior (during and after school), and grades; and

WHEREAS Research from the University of Minnesota demonstrates improved attendance and enrollment rates, increased daytime alertness, and decreased student-reported depression in school districts that implemented later start times for teens; be it therefore

RESOLVED The Virginia PTA shall encourage its constituent districts, councils and local unit members to educate their local school boards and superintendents on the importance of quality sleep and the positive impact that later school start times would have on the health, safety and productivity of teens; and be it further

RESOLVED The Virginia PTA shall encourage other state PTAs to adopt similar resolutions; and be it further

RESOLVED The Virginia PTA shall encourage the National PTA to examine the subject of later school start times for teens and to consider a nationwide education program about the importance of sleep, particularly as it relates to teens and school schedules.

Adopted at Convention 2006