



Grassroots Petition to Start School Later Goes to Washington During Sleep Week

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 1, 2012

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Annapolis, MD. A grassroots coalition of parents, teachers, and health professionals will begin delivering a petition advocating legislation to start schools later in the morning to Congress and White House officials on Wednesday, March 7, 2012 in honor of National Sleep Awareness Week. The petition, garnering national attention, has signatures from all 50 states and Washington, DC and has fueled activity in local communities from Short Hills, NJ to Woodinville, WA.

“Most U.S. high schools today start in the 7 a.m. hour, a practice that began several decades ago primarily to save money on bus runs,” explains Terra Ziporyn Snider, Ph.D., a medical writer and the petition creator from Maryland who is also the mother of three. After more than a decade of work advocating for later start times in her local school system, Snider recounts, “Although evidence is crystal clear that starting later is best for health and learning, political obstacles and myths have made change virtually impossible in most districts.”

The petition effort has galvanized a national coalition of doctors, sleep experts, researchers, educators, concerned parents and other professionals called [Start School Later](#). The coalition has representation from 16 states and includes an [advisory board](#) comprised of notable sleep researchers, adolescent health care providers, and education leaders.

Voluminous research regarding later school suggests later school starts can

- Reduce sleep deprivation, depression, mood swings and suicidal ideation
- Decrease stimulant abuse, weight gain and diabetes risk
- Reduce early morning traffic accidents and drowsy driving by new teen drivers
- Improve safety by eliminating waiting or walking in dark, low visibility settings
- Reduce risky after-school behaviors in unsupervised adolescents
- Improve lifetime earnings potential, according to a recent [study](#) published by the Brookings Institute

The petition delivery is the first in a planned series of weekly deliveries to legislators known as “Wake Up Wednesdays”.

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Signature totals and comments from Start School Later’s campaign: http://signon.org/sign/promote-legislation-to.fb1?source=s.fb&r_by=1521139

For more information on Start School Later: <http://www.startschoollater.net/>

Start School Later is a coalition of health professionals, sleep scientists, educators, parents, students, and other concerned citizens dedicated to increasing public awareness about the relationship between sleep and school hours and to ensuring school start times compatible with health, safety, education, and equity.