



health, safety and equity in education

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\$1M Study To Assess How Later Starts to the School Day Affect Learning

Major study by Oxford scientists will extend the work of Start School Later Advisory Board Member

Annapolis, MD—Thousands of teenagers will get to start their school day at 10 a.m. next year as part of a major new research project by Oxford University researchers. Funded with a million dollar grant from the Wellcome Trust and the Education Endowment Foundation, the study aims to determine how synchronizing school bells to teen sleep needs changes educational achievement.

“Given the research evidence for later starts over the past 30 years, moving to a later start time is a long-overdue change, made more urgent by the health impact on adolescents,” says Dr. Paul Kelley, an Oxford University research associate and part of the study’s team. A member of Start School Later’s Advisory Board, Kelley recently co-authored a paper, “[Synchronizing education to adolescent biology: ‘Let Teens Sleep, Start School Later’](#)” summarizing the many studies showing that starting school too early in the morning is unhealthy and counterproductive.

“We’re thrilled that one of our Advisory Board members is involved with this project, which furthers our commitment to translating research into practice,” says Start School Later Operations Director Maribel Ibrahim.

The new multi-center study aims to provide robust data about the impact of later start times on learning by extending research begun when Kelley was principal in an English high school. After moving the opening time to 10 a.m. in 2010 based on the latest neuroscience research and other data, he found that comprehensive exit exam scores rose significantly among all groups of students, and most strikingly among disadvantaged students.

Now [Oxford University's Sleep and Circadian Neuroscience Institute](#) led by Professor Russell Foster will study the effect of 10 a.m. bell times on the exam scores, attendance, and aspects of health of nearly 32,000 students at 100 secondary schools across the United Kingdom. Students will also receive education about the importance of sleep for health and learning.

“This marks a new stage in the relationship between neuroscience and education: applying neuroscience research in ways that demonstrate real benefits for learners,” observes Kelley. “It has global importance after the U.S. Secretary of Education has called for later starts and America’s leading pediatric organization has called to start [secondary schools no earlier than 8:30 a.m.](#)”

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