



health, safety and equity in education

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

## **California hits snooze button on student health. Governor vetoes school start time bill supported by leading medical groups. September 20, 2018**

California Governor Jerry Brown vetoed Senate Bill 328, legislation that would have restricted middle and high schools from starting before 8:30 a.m. – a recommendation that has been made by the American Academy of Pediatrics, the Centers for Disease Control, and the American Medical Association. The bill, introduced by Senator Anthony Portantino, was sponsored by the nonprofit Start School Later and supported by a host of health, safety, and education groups including the California State PTA, the California Police Chiefs Association, the California Federation of Teachers, and myriad state hospitals and universities.

“We’re tremendously thankful to Senator Portantino, with whom we’ve worked since the bill’s earliest days, for tirelessly championing healthy start times,” said Lisa Lewis, Co-Chair of the California chapter of Start School Later. “We’ll continue to advocate on behalf of our state’s teens, given that too-early start times pose a significant public-health issue.”

Child health was a primary driving force behind the bill, with proponents citing decades’ worth of research on the unique sleep rhythms of adolescents and the negative impacts of early school start times and disrupted sleep, including: increased risk for diabetes, sports injuries, depression, substance abuse, school suspensions, and poorer academic performance. Proponents also touted a recent report from the RAND Corporation outlining state-level economic benefits of moving start times to after 8:30 a.m., based on estimated improved graduation rates and decreased teen car crashes.

The governor voiced concerns about local control in his veto, despite the fact that the first position statement recommending later school start times was issued in 1993 by the Minnesota Medical Association. According to reports from the CDC, a quarter of a century after the MMA statement the majority of schools in the U.S. do not comply with the minimum standards recommended by experts.

“Most districts need help if they’re going to do the right thing and avoid subjecting another generation to what we now know are counterproductive and dangerous conditions,” states Dr. Terra Ziporyn Snider, Co-founder and Executive Director of Start School Later. “The fact that this bill got as far as it did is a testament to the strength of the science, the importance of the issue to kids’ health, and the passion of grassroots advocates. Eventually a bill like this, created in the best interests of children, will pass. It’s only a matter of time.”

Start School Later is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization working to ensure school start times compatible with health, safety, education, and equity. Visit their website at [www.startschoollater.net](http://www.startschoollater.net)

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