

January 14, 2014

To the Saco School Board:

As parents and practicing physicians caring for students in our community, we whole-heartedly urge you to follow the recommendations of the American Academy of Pediatrics to change the start of school at Saco Middle School from 7:30 am to 8:30am or later for the coming school year.

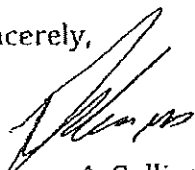
Sleep is critical for a child's mental and physical health, especially during adolescence when their brain develops more rapidly than at any other time in human development after the age of two. The 7:30am start time prevents many students from getting the 8.5-9.5 hours per night that most teenagers and young adults need. Puberty triggers a sleep-wake delay caused by a change in the brain's melatonin production. Biologically this means our middle school students are programmed to fall asleep about two hours later than they used to, but still require the same 8.5-9.5 optimum sleep time. On a practical level this means most teens cannot fall asleep before 11:00pm and have trouble waking before 8:00am.

There is a wealth of evidence documenting the impact that early start times have on both academic achievement and behavioral and emotional well-being. Sleep deprivation is directly linked to obesity, diabetes, and behavioral and emotional health issues. Pushing back the school day can positively impact physical and mental health, learning and performance, attendance, graduation rates, and tests scores.

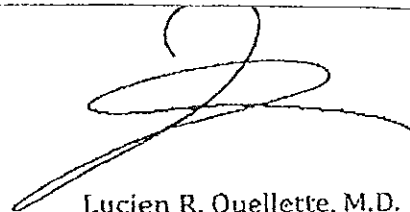
We realize that changing the school schedule is complicated and there are many factors to consider. However we believe this is an initiative worthy of community discussion and your attention.

We respectfully ask you to put the health and well being of our middle school children first by creating a plan for how we could push back the start time at Saco Middle School next school year.

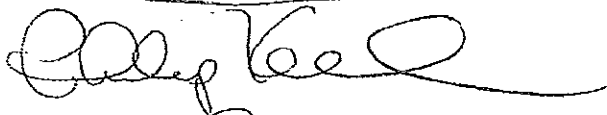
Sincerely,



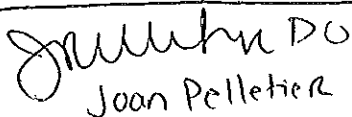
Gregory A. Collins, M.D.



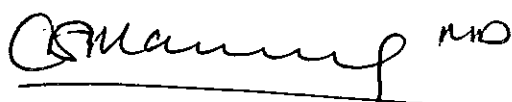
Lucien R. Ouellette, M.D.



Dr. Phil Kowash, MD

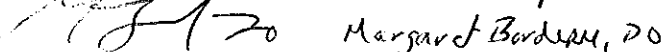


Joan Pelletier DO



Christina Manning MD

Christina Manning MD

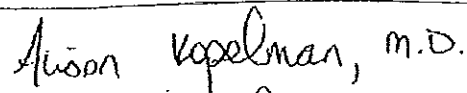


Margaret Borden, DO



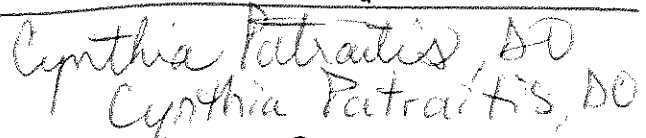
MD, FAAP  
FRCPC

Maura B Price



Alison Kopelman, M.D.

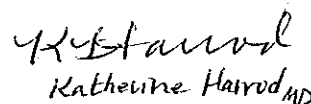
Alison Kopelman



Cynthia Patraitis, DO  
Cynthia Patraitis, DO



STAVRO NASHI



Katherine Harrod MD