



health, safety and equity in education

## PRESS STATEMENT

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### Fairfax County Public Schools Vote to Delay High School Start Times Next Year

By Terra Ziporyn Snider

On behalf of Start School Later, I want to extend a huge congratulations to the Fairfax County Board of Education on [last night's historic vote](#) to delay high school start times to between 8 and 8:10 a.m. This change, scheduled to begin in school year 2015-16, gives new hope to thousands of other districts working to ensure safe, healthy school hours.

Recognizing that benefits of later school start times far outweigh speculated costs or perceived inconveniences, the Board has taken an important step toward resolving an issue hotly debated for years. Together with our partner organization, Sleep in Fairfax, they have modeled a way for citizen advocates to work hand-in-hand with school leaders to improve children's health and well-being by:

- setting the goal of later morning start times for adolescents to benefit student health, well-being, and performance
- involving a broad spectrum of school and community stakeholders
- developing consensus about ways to achieve their goal
- resolving to continue working on ways to ensure safe, healthy hours for all students

No change is perfect, and all change is hard, but this change will unquestionably make it possible for a large percentage of Fairfax County students to be healthier, safer, and more productive. That one of the country's largest school systems, running the nation's largest fleet of school buses, can make this change is a shining example of what can be accomplished when communities and school leaders set a goal and work together in good faith to accomplish it.

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*Terra Ziporyn Snider, PhD, is the Executive Director and Co-Founder of Start School Later, Inc.*

Fairfax County Public Schools' [Press Release](#) on the approved schedule changes and last night's vote can be found at <http://www.fcps.edu/news/starttimes.shtml>

*Start School Later is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization working to ensure school start times compatible with health, safety, education, and equity. Please visit our website at: <http://www.startschoollater.net>.*