



health, safety and equity in education

PRESS STATEMENT

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For Immediate Release:
June 12, 2015

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New Jersey School Start Time Bill is Good News for Student Health

As a national nonprofit dedicated to safe, healthy school hours, we applaud the New Jersey legislature for their unanimous passage of [S2484](#), a bill tasking the state Department of Education with studying options and benefits of developmentally appropriate middle and high school starting times. This bill has the potential to resolve a fundamental challenge to student health and safety that local schools have been unable to resolve independently for decades.

New Jersey is the second state in the nation to pass legislation on school start times. Maryland passed a similar bill in 2014 ([HB883](#)) that resulted in a December 2014 report by the Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DHMH). The report, *[Study of Safe and Healthy School Hours for Maryland Public Schools](#)*, recommended that the state board of education advise all Maryland school districts of the benefits of starting school days after 8 a.m. and encourage them to conduct feasibility studies on implementing necessary changes.

New Jersey's similar legislation is critical because local school districts need support and guidance from health and education leaders to make health and safety top priorities when they set schedules. Without this support, school districts often let bus costs or adult convenience determine school hours, requiring middle and high schools to get up and off to school at times that pediatricians say are unhealthy and counterproductive.

When signed into law, S2484 will send a strong signal that local school districts need to wake up to this issue. We applaud Senator Codey for introducing it and the New Jersey legislature for understanding its importance to the health and well-being of students and families.

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[S2484](#) was introduced by Senator Richard J. Codey (District 27) and Senator Shirley K. Turner (District 15).

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>.