



Health, Safety and Equity in Education

PRESS STATEMENT

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For more information, please contact:
Michael Rubinstein, 202-257-9182, michaelrubinstein6@gmail.com

Starr's Proposal Does Nothing to Help Sleep-Deprived Teens

by

Mandi Mader, MSW, Ann Gallagher, Merry Eisner-Heidorn, Michael Rubinstein,
Montgomery County Chapter of Start School Later

Superintendent Starr's recommendation to delay high school start times by a mere 20 minutes is a sham. The report released today by the superintendent demonstrates a poor understanding of the research, as the document understates the significant academic, health, and emotional benefits of later start times for teens. It includes no mention of the risks associated with early start times, including more dropouts, substance abuse, depression, and suicide.

Further, in drafting this report, Dr. Starr excluded the participation of community stakeholders. A more transparent, inclusive process could have provided a better report and meaningful recommendations.

The report includes several inexpensive and potentially feasible options for later start times. Unfortunately, Dr. Starr has selected the single least effective of all of those options. Whichever one is finally approved, it should call for middle and high school start times after 8:30 am, as recommended by the American Academy of Pediatrics.

Spending pennies to deliver our kids to school at healthy times and when they're primed for learning is smart spending. When Dr. Starr claims that we can't afford to spend \$4- \$5 million more on buses (out of a multi-billion dollar budget), he's ignoring the incredible return on investment that healthy bell times provide.

But to do nothing is to cause harm and to choose the option least likely to be of any benefit is scarcely any better. We expect better.