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MASSACHUSETTS VOTERS URGE PASSAGE OF LEGISLATION ENDING UNHEALTHY SCHOOL START TIMES EARLY START TIMES CAUSE STATEWIDE PUBLIC HEALTH PROBLEMS

Concerned Massachusetts voters are speaking loudly: Change unhealthy school start times now to give our greatest assets – our children – a healthy and safe environment to learn and achieve full academic potential. On January 28, 2015 the [Massachusetts Chapter of Start School Later, Inc](#) launched an online [petition](#) directed to the Governor and the Legislature calling on both to pass legislation aligning school start times with the [American Academy of Pediatrics' recommendations](#). AAP recommends that teens start school no earlier than 8:30 AM in accordance with teen developmental needs and safety.

Pre-8:30 a.m. start times are correlated with insufficient teen sleep. Insufficient sleep in turn has been correlated to physical and mental [health problems](#) such as substance abuse, obesity, depression, and anxiety, as well as higher rates of [athletic injuries](#) and [teen car accidents](#). Schools in Massachusetts and across the country that have moved to later start times saw [substantial improvements](#) in all of these factors along with increased academic performance. All Massachusetts schools should enjoy these benefits.

Statewide legislation avoids the barriers inherent in a piecemeal, town-by-town effort, and ensures that all children in Massachusetts public schools have a healthy and safe environment to learn.

The Massachusetts Chapter of Start School Later, Inc. supports [SD 51](#), introduced by Senator Cynthia Creem, calling for a task force to do a comprehensive study of this public health issue and to prepare recommendations for change.

Start School Later, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization dedicated to healthy, safe, equitable school hours.