

# **SB 328 (Portantino) School Start Time**

## **PROBLEM**

The vast majority of middle and high schools in California begin at times that are contrary to the sleep-health needs and developmental norms of adolescents. Currently, California has over 3 million middle school and high school students. The average school start time for these students is 8:07am, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

## **BACKGROUND**

California sets the standard for many aspects of the school system. For example, the number of days and hours schools must be in session, what tests need to be administered, and graduation requirements. However, local school districts are provided no guidance about what school hours are most appropriate for students' safety, health and learning. Today, over twenty school districts throughout California have begun discussing or planning for later school day start times, while some school districts have already implemented the 8:30am or later start time.

The American Academy of Pediatrics issued a policy statement advising school districts to change the school day start time to no earlier than 8:30am, specifically for middle schools and high schools. Studies have confirmed that insufficient sleep in teenage adolescents poses a public health risk and has an adverse effect on academic success.

According to the American Psychological Association, reports on school districts that have adopted the policy to start the school day no earlier than 8:30am have found increased attendance rates, grade point averages, state assessments scores, college admission test scores, student attention, and student and family interaction. Additionally, studies found de-

creases in student-involved car accidents, disciplinary actions, and students sleeping during lectures.

The American Medical Association encourages physicians to actively educate parents, schools, teachers and community members about the importance of sleep for adolescent mental and physical health based on their proven biological needs.

Furthermore, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration reported that traffic accidents are the leading cause of death for teenagers in the United States and roughly 100,000 traffic accidents each year are due to drowsiness and fatigue. Over 20 studies since 1994 using driving simulators demonstrate drowsy driving impairment being equivalent to driving legally drunk.

## **BILL SUMMARY**

SB 328 addresses the need for California middle and high schools to start the school day no earlier than 8:30am. The school day does not include zero period or an extra period offered before the start of the regular school day. Also, the governing board of a rural school district may request, and the state board may authorize a waiver to delay implementation of this law for two years if the governing board of the rural school district demonstrates a verifiable, significant economic hardship that would result from implementation on July 1, 2020. The waiver may be granted for two years, and upon approval by the state board, may be extended for up to an additional two years.

## **EXISTING LAW**

California requires the governing board of each school district to fix the length of the school day for the several grades and classes with the schools being maintained by the

school district in accordance with specified provisions of law.

## SUPPORT

Start School Later.net (Sponsor)  
American Academy of Pediatrics  
American Academy of Sleep Medicine  
California Federation of Teachers  
California Sleep Society  
California State PTA  
Children's Hospital Los Angeles  
Educate. Advocate.  
Hart Middle School, Students  
High School Parent Engagement Group  
Irvington High School, Students  
Los Angeles County Office of Education  
Loyola University Maryland  
Lucile Packard Children's Hospital Stanford  
Manhattan Beach Unified School District  
Marc Friedman, School Board Member, San Mateo  
Public Advocates  
Stanford University School of Medicine  
San Jose State University  
Seattle Children's Hospital  
Sharon Peaslee, former Seattle School Board Director  
Stony Brook Medicine Program in Public Health  
University of Washington, Department of Biology  
Zoe Lofgren, Member of Congress  
124 individual letters and e-mails  
800+ petition signatures

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