



## Health, Safety and Equity in Education

**Press Release: Seattle School Board is considering later starts for 2016**

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An action item on bell times will be introduced at the October 21 Seattle school board meeting. The basis for changing bell times is to place the majority of students in start times that are aligned with their sleep cycles. Due to changes in the sleep cycle that occur during puberty, and the documented links between chronic sleep loss and impacts on learning, health and safety, the AAP and CDC have recommended middle and high school start times after 8:30 am. Superintendent Nyland reviewed recommendations from the bell time task force, survey data, and community input and proposed that SPS flip its bell times in 2016. Start School Later Seattle supports the proposal.

The superintendent's original proposal, called the "cost neutral modified flip" moved all high schools to 8:50 starts, all middle schools to 9:40 starts, and most K8's to an 8:50 start. However, assignment of elementary schools into the three tier structure was uneven, as 20 elementary schools were slated to start at 9:40, the majority at 8:00 and a few at 8:50. Strong objections were raised at the community meetings to the 9:40 starts for elementary schools and, as a result, adjustments were made to the proposal.

On the whole, the modified flip will place the majority of students in age-appropriate start times. In the final proposal all middle and high schools will start at 8:50 and only 3 K8's and 10 elementary schools will have 9:40 starts. Start School Later Seattle has advocated for earlier elementary starts and we are gratified that the final proposal established 8:00 start times for the majority of elementary schools.

While not perfect, the current proposal before the board represents a significant improvement and we strongly advocate for its passage. The vote is expected to occur on November 4.

The following members of Start School Later Seattle are available to discuss the benefits and limitations of the Bell Time Revision/Transportation Standards currently under consideration by the board.

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