



Health, Safety and Equity in Education

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**Start School Later's New Student Advocacy Team Guides Student Leaders
in Missouri to Successful Push for Healthier Hours**

High school student advocates have pushed successfully for healthier school start times in Columbia, Missouri after the school district considered opening schools even earlier. The decision to support healthier start times for Columbia public high schools was made Monday night by Columbia's Board of Education, which voted 6-1 to push back a 7:30 a.m. start time to 9:00 a.m. for the district's nearly 5,000 high school students.

The vote is the result of a powerful grassroots lobbying effort by Students' Say, a student-run advocacy group that formed in part to address the start times issue in Columbia. Jilly Dos Santos, a sophomore at Rock Bridge High School in Columbia and the founder of Students' Say, is joining Start School Later's new Student Advisory Board, which helped guide her and other students through their successful campaign. "With Start School Later, we will turn our success in Columbia into successes elsewhere," Dos Santos said. "Engaging students in this process is key to adopting healthier school start times."

The Student Advisory Board runs Start School Later's new Student Advocacy program, which includes outreach efforts to students across the country pushing for healthier start times. In addition to Dos Santos, board members include Zack Becker, a high school junior in Saint Louis, Missouri; Lindsey Kaler, a high school senior in Gaithersburg, Maryland; and Alex Pratt, a college freshman in Littleton, Massachusetts, who serves as the Director of Student Advocacy and Student Representative on Start School Later's National Executive Board. "We have a strong team of students with a lot of experience in creating change in their communities," Pratt said. "We couldn't be more excited for the weeks and months ahead."

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Start School Later, Inc. is a non-profit organization committed to ensuring healthy school hours for all public school students. For more information, visit: www.StartSchoolLater.net