

# More sleep for students

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**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

BEEP BEEP BEEP BEEP BEEP sounds the alarm clock in the early morning, jolting an unrested teen into a morning haze. That sluggish feeling and inability to focus in class until late in the school day is pretty typical for the average teen.

This problem makes school harder than it should be. School should start at a later time to accommodate kids' sleeping schedules. Important points on this matter to address: the sleeping patterns of teens, teenage brain activity during the morning, why it is a danger to not be fully awake, and an explanation of why starting schools later would be the best way to help. The amount of sleep that doctors recommend for adolescents is between 8.5 to 9.

8.5 to 9 hours (according to Nationwide Children's which is one of America's largest health and research centers), but the reality is most teens are not getting the recommended amount. In an experiment by Wolfson and Carskadon (doctors in clinical physiology), teens were asked to report the amount of sleep they would usually get per night. Their research showed that there was a direct correlation between the amount of sleep that a teenager gets and their grade point average. The kids with lower grades generally reported less sleep than the kids with higher grades. The problem is that only 15% of teens reported sleeping more than 8.

8.5 hours which means the majority of teens do not get enough sleep and this could be affecting their grades. Some studies have even shown that even with a full night's rest it is harder to learn during the early morning.?

Professor Russell Foster, an Oxford University neuroscientist, said that

teenagers are more alert in the afternoon rather than in the morning. He said German and American schools which switched to later start times had generally improved success in exams and lower rates of absence and depression. Professor Russell Foster even said that forcing teenagers to go to school in the morning could result in more errors, poor memory, and reduced motivation.

Why are we forcing kids to go to school early when studies have shown that brain activity in teenagers is less active in the early morning and when they are not as focused and ready to learn? But sometimes lack of sleep can have an even bigger risk. One of the main risks for teens is driving. A lot of teens are just getting their license and are starting to drive to school in the morning. With them being less experienced and more reckless being tired as well is not going to help. The problem is that drowsiness or general lack of sleep has been identified as the main cause in at least 100, 000 traffic crashes each year according to the ? The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (part of the U.

S. branch of transportation). Another big risk is that lack of sleep can cause an increased likelihood of stimulant abuse of caffeine and nicotine, or even alcohol as shown in a survey from Carskadon in 1990. Schools starting time should be pushed back to a more fit time for students. If the school time is pushed back they can be fully awake for school being generally more motivated and focused on school work with less errors. Students will be able to sleep for the doctor recommended amount of 8.

5 hours even if they go to bed late (11pm-12pm), which will allow them the ability to memorize more easily and possibly get better grades. With their full night of sleep they will have more focus while driving to school which will help prevent sleep related crashes. Now with the knowledge of teenagers sleeping patterns, how teens need time to fully wake up, how morning drowsiness can be dangerous, and why school should start later, we should make changes to school start times. With a full night's rest teens can wake up refreshed without an alarm clock and be ready for the day. Teachers, students, and parents would all benefit from a later school start time, because the students will arrive safely, ready to learn, and ready to participate in class.