

# School start times lower grades

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I know, you have heard this argument before, and are probably thinking “ oh look, another whiny teenager, complaining about how we has to wake up early to go to school.” That’s where you are wrong.

This paper’s goal is to convince you that the school board should switch elementary school and high school starting times in order to improve grades. According to the New York Times “ During puberty, as hormones surge and the brain develops, teenagers have a later release of the “ sleep” hormone melatonin, which means they may not feel drowsy until about 11 p. m.” (New York Times upfront). With school starting as early as 7: 00 and teens needing to get up usually about an hour before school starts, it becomes difficult to reach the goal of 8 hours of sleep a night if you physically cannot even fall asleep until 11 o’clock. If schools moved back to the same time elementary schoolers start at, 9 o’clock, getting 8-9 hours of sleep would be easy, and with a full, healthy night of sleep grades would significantly approved.

This is known, because schools with later starting times have shown to have higher attendance rates and standardized test grades. They also have been proven to have lower car accident rates in students. Another reason why school start times should be moved back is because of the amount of homework and afterschool activity high school students are asked to do. A recent survey conducted by the University of Phoenix says that, “ According to the survey ..

. and ninth to twelfth grade teachers 3. 5 hours [of homework].” If school starts at 7: 30am, and a commute to school on the bus takes about forty-five minutes, so the bus arrives at 6: 45am, the student should be up at 6am.

That means to get the 8-9 hours of sleep, they would need to go to sleep between 9-10pm. If school ends at 2: 15pm, and it takes another hour to get home, making it 3: 15, after the 3.

5 hours of homework it would be 6: 45pm. That leaves only a little over two hours left for many other activities, including sports, volunteer hours, socializing and other activities important for maintaining a good mental state. “ High school teens should spend 1. 4 hours a day on leisure activities on an average weekday”(hhs. gov).

Overall, this system of early high school starting times just does not work, when put in an practice. Finally, schools should start later because students cannot perform up to expectations in the early morning classes. Jane Croft, a studier of sleep sciences at the CDC(Center for Disease Control) says, “[high schools that] start at such an early time mean that most teens are essentially brain dead when they go to these early classes.”(societyforscience. org) Even in a recent study by the University of Minnesota the final review states that “..

. include a significant reduction in local car crashes, less absenteeism, less tardiness, as well as higher test scores on national achievement tests,” after conducting tests on schools that set the start time back 45 minutes. So, just setting school times back can cause a huge difference in grades, likeliness of skipping school, and safety of students in school. Now someone who would still be opposed to this idea might say, “ What about all the time needed for extracurricular activities after school?” With the extra time in the morning,

sports could hold practice then. However, non-sports activities, like debate and model UN, will also need another time to practice.

I suggest that they are still after school, and just end up starting a little later, and ending a little later. Since teenagers are better suited to be more mentally stimulated into the night, the later start and end time might actually help the students with their model UN and debate. The school board needs to change the school times for high school. They need to do this because students need more sleep time, which will meet their circadian rhythms, make students happier to go to school, and create higher average test scores on SAT and other standardized tests. If you want to support this movement, start attending local school board meetings and make petitions to change.

If we all work together, I am sure we can make something happen.