

# [Each raise a generation of healthy, prosperous,](https://assignbuster.com/each-raise-a-generation-of-healthy-prosperous/)

Each fall, groggy teenagers come to terms with themselves for another year of fighting their internal clocks so they can get to school on time. On average in today’s society, most teens come into school at 7: 30 AM.

Though some students get an adequate amount of the recommended eight to ten hours of sleep, a majority of the country get even less than that. Though it might be fair to say that the concept of delaying school times would impact sporting events and extracurricular activities, research proves that schools that have made the switch have had minimal to no issue. As expected, teen sleep deprivation is a crucial problem infecting this country, and it persists to spread as high schools start at earlier hours. By looking at statistics and research studies done by universities and professionals, it will become clear that in order to raise a generation of healthy, prosperous, and well-educated young adults, America must have schools delay the start time.

At most high schools, students force themselves to get to school by 8: 00, but it is only natural for teenagers to get up later in the morning. Teenagers require a minimum of eight to ten hours of sleep every night, yet according to the Christine Roth at University of Rochester Medical Center, “ About 90% of high-school-aged adolescents get insufficient sleep on school nights, or barely meet the required amount of sleep needed for healthy functioning.” Adolescents are going through puberty and hormonal changes where it makes it physically difficult for teens to fall asleep earlier at night, thus causing sleep deprivation. This sleep deprivation influences adolescents’ circadian rhythms that manages an individual’s responses to stimuli and regulates sleep patterns. There is also clear evidence that sleep loss contributes to the growth of serious health problems, the development or exacerbation of behavioral, and emotional problems. According to a resource from the Division of Sleep Medicine at Harvard Medical School, “ a lack of sleep—especially on a regular basis—is associated with long-term health consequences, including chronic medical conditions like diabetes, high blood pressure, and heart disease, and that these conditions may lead to a shortened life expectancy.” In addition to causing lower self-esteem, more negative attitude towards life, problems controlling their emotions, higher rates of mood disorders, substance abuse, and suicidal ideation in teens.

Chronic sleep loss can additionally contribute to a negative spiral of a vicious cycle of deterioration which in some cases can appear to be a pathway to withdrawal from school or serious psychiatric problems (Dahl). This means that students who have earlier school start times are at a high risk for these medical conditions along with mental disorders like insomnia, anxiety, and depression. As a matter of fact, a 2014 survey of 9, 089 high school students found that teens reporting less than 8 hours of sleep had significantly more symptoms of depression than peers getting 8 or more hours per school night (Wahlstrom). Reports of depression have shown to decline in schools delaying start times to 8: 25 a. m., or later. Early school start times puts more pressure on the sleep process and escalate mental health symptoms as opposed to delayed school start times which act as a strong protective factor for teens considering they are able to get more sleep.

Moreover, students are able to perform better academically if students receive an adequate quantity of sleep. For students in middle school through college, the general consensus of research shows that there is a positive relationship between a sufficient sleep and academic results (Wolfson & Carskadon, 2003; Wahlstrom, 2002; Carrell, Maghakian, & West, 2011). School districts like Minneapolis, Minnesota, Colorado, and Wyoming have implemented a shift to a later start time based on medical research about sleep phase shifts in teens. According to research from Kyla L.

Wahlstrom, a director at the University of Minnesota, “ A positive trend line was found for pre? post comparisons on actual GPAs of Minneapolis high school students. All districts provided ACT scores, and two of the four districts’ pre? post comparisons resulted in a statistically significant increases.” This adjustment has produced academic performance outcomes in fundamental subject areas of math, English, science and social studies and on state and national assessments. Furthermore, sleep plays an important part in learning, memory consolidation, long-term recall, and retrieval. Sleep restrictions will impair attention, memory, decision-making, organization, and creativity, all of which are undoubtedly important for success in school. Additionally, Ronald Dahl, an associate professor of psychiatry and pediatrics says that ” sleep deprivation can sometimes mimic or exacerbate symptoms of ADHD (attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder), including distractibility, impulsivity, and difficulty with effortful control of attention.” In other words, if students don’t get enough sleep before starting their school day, they will struggle to understand the material taught that day and have difficulty to complete an assignment or test that require attention in two or more areas at the same time, despite the amount of time spent studying.

So if schools strive to contemplate an ideal school arrival time after 8: 30, there will unquestionably be enhancements in schoolwork as other schools have demonstrated these improvements over the years. In addition to prevention of chronic health conditions and escalation of academic performance, allowing adolescents to sleep more on school nights by delaying the start of school has a measurable positive effect on their driving safety. Not only is the ability to focus important to grasp new material in school, but also for safe completion of activities like driving. According to the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, “ young people ages 15-24 represent only 14% of the U. S. population. However, they account for 30% ($19 billion) of the total costs of motor vehicle injuries among males and 28% ($7 billion) of the total costs of motor vehicle injuries among females.

The risk of motor vehicle crashes is higher among 16- to 19-year-olds than among any other age group.” The leading cause of these fatal crashes is sleepiness among teen drivers ages 16 to 19 and motor vehicle crashes represent the leading cause of death for U. S. teens. This demonstrates that sleep deprivation poses significant cognitive risks in the performance of many ordinary tasks such as driving. As a matter of fact, research shows that psychomotor impairment due to sleep deprivation, as seen on tests like driving performance, can resemble that seen with blood alcohol levels between . 05 and .

10 percent (Williamson & Feyer). Meaning that driving without an adequate amount of sleep is like driving under the influence of alcohol and that these accidents are virtually as are severe as those involving alcohol. Surprisingly, sleepiness causes more accidents than the consumption of alcohol. If students are able to get more sleep due to delayed school start times, there wouldn’t be as many accidents. A study that used DMV records of teen automobile accidents found that adolescent automobile accidents occurred at a higher rate in a city which had an earlier high school start time than its neighboring, but demographically similar city (Wahlstrom).

This study shows that this all leads back to the number of sleep teens get and the arrival time to school. If schools delayed their start time, there wouldn’t be this chain effect of sleep deprivation and then motor vehicle accidents. By simply implementing delayed school start times gradually, teens can avoid motor vehicle accidents and positively cultivate the new generation. Admittedly, one of the primary reasons some oppose the delays in school arrival time entails the logistical and financial constraints of actually implementing this change. According to the School Start Times Task Force (STTF), “ The task force’s first option is for high school classes to begin at 8: 30, middle schools at 9: 30 and elementary schools between 7: 50 and 9: 15. The estimated cost of this option — $8.

9 million — includes expenses for additional staffing and 124 more buses” (Pegher). The task force offers four options to delay school start times along with the costs of each one. Furthermore, delaying school start times would cost the country between $600, 000 and $9. 6 million with each option ranging in these parameters (Pegher). School districts are resistant partly because of the demanding costs from changing bus schedules and higher electricity expenses for keeping schools open later. Even changing the bus schedule can be $500, 000 and that is a lot of money to allocate and school districts fear how it will affect their school overall in the year.

While opponents of delaying school start times do have a point that there is a financial constraint of changing bus schedules, they forget that it will actually benefit them in the long run. As Chris Weller, a writer for Business Insider states “ A new study published by the RAND Corporation and RAND Europe found that moving the first bell to 8: 30 a. m. across America’s middle schools and high schools could add some $9.

3 billion to the economy within the next year and $83 billion over the next decade”. By simply delaying school start times, the economic benefits would primarily derive from two sources: greater academic performance among more well-rested students and reduced rates of car crashes among sleepy adolescent drivers. These benefits would immensely outweigh the annual costs of applying the policy change, which include the price of reorganizing school bus schedules and additional infrastructure. While delaying school start times may come with a cost, it’s actually beneficial to the country’s economy and schools in the country should execute a delay in school arrival time. Indubitably, there exists a great urge for delayed school start times.

With this policy change and the extra beauty sleep, adolescents and teens will experience a decline in academic performance, a risk in their destiny, physical and mental health. The fate of the younger generation will depend tremendously on how school districts decide to execute the delay time of school and their physical and mental maturation. But if students persist this detrimental pattern of sleeping and waking up, the epidemic that is sleep deprivation will eventually overwhelm the intellect of this generation of youth. Thereby, restraining the full potential and prosperity to come of subsequent generations.

For the normal functioning of humans, adequate sleep is a biological desideratum, not a luxury. Sleep is an obligation for fundamental survival, occurring in every studied species of living creature. Allowing teens to obtain at least one hour of sleep each night will ultimately benefit the country in the long run.

Contrary to opponents of this concept sustain, such a policy will actually profit the economy in decades due to the safety, prevention of health conditions, and academic achievement of teens. School is the indispensable foundation of this nation as it an institution for educating the younger generations and delaying school times will only stimulate the amelioration of students.