

Sleep more, achieve more

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You know when that time comes around and the back to school shopping begins and the letters are received in the mail about the first day of school times and procedures. For high school students this means no more going to bed at 1: 00 in the morning and then sleeping all day after a long night out with the friends.

Your parents begin to nag you about going to bed at a “ reasonable time” and getting up earlier, as in no more 11: 30, for the wakeup call on the first day of school. Even though high school students sleep in the latest, the high school start time is the second earliest. A change needs to be made in the start times of schools in the school system to allow certain age groups the right amount of sleep. With a 7: 40 a. m. start time, many students find themselves forcing their sleep deprived bodies out of bed at 6: 00 in the morning to get ready for school and catch the bus.

Then there’s the middle school. A 7: 20 a. m. start time allows for a seven maybe eight hour night of sleep for the adolescent students in middle school, an hour or two off of the recommended amount. Meanwhile, the elementary and preschools have almost an hour later start time, or in some cases, even more than an hour! These times are unreasonable because the students of the elementary schools are awake and functioning earlier than those teenagers in high school. With an hour added on to the start of both the middle school and high school, students would be more alert and focused throughout the full six hour school day.

Research from Michael J. Breus, a clinical psychologist from the Board of Sleep Medicine, shows that even 20 fewer minutes of sleep can affect a

human's behavior. Poor sleepers and those who stay up late and are up early in the morning encounter learning difficulties throughout the school day, which will continue through the school year. Daytime fatigue, dozing off in class, and an inability to concentrate in school are problems associated with not receiving the nine hours of recommended sleep for a teenager. With the hour delay in the start of the two schools, the students would be getting more sleep and avoiding effects of the 20 fewer minutes of sleep.

The University of Minnesota conducted a study aimed specifically at the later start times for high school students. Kyla Wahlstrom, the creator of the School Start Time Study, researched and found that throughout the teenage years, the brain chemicals for sleepiness are not released until 11: 00 p. m. and the brain is in "sleep mode" until 8: 00 a. m.

This helps support the fact that with a 7: 15 a. m. - 7: 40 a. m. start, 20% of students sleep during the first two hours of school. The change from a 7: 20 a.

m. start in the Minneapolis High School to an 8: 30 a. m. start proved to be a success indicated by the lower dropout rates, lower levels of depression, and higher grades. The superintendent of Minneapolis Public Schools, Carol Johnson, commented on the outcome of the School Start Time Study, "...

. and the data has resulted in many other districts in the state and around the country changing start times to better match students' learning rhythms with the school's instructional programs." It is now time that the town of Wilmington, Massachusetts is made aware about the results of the School Start Time Study and changes its own school start times. Getting the <https://assignbuster.com/sleep-more-achieve-more/>

recommended amount of sleep each and every night is an essential and very important part to maintaining proper health. A push-back of the start times of middle and high school would allow students to get that much needed extra hour of sleep. The research from both Breus and Wahlstrom shows that without enough sleep, students are more likely to fall asleep during class, lose focus throughout the day, and experience a general decrease in grade levels.

A supporting factor of the one hour later start time is the increase in grades in the Minneapolis High School. With these higher grades, the students of Wilmington will be looking at a brighter future with more experiences available to them. The School Start Time Study needs to be brought to the attention of the Administration of the Public Schools district so a beneficial change can be made to the start times of the public schools. Ankurr77. Short Cut Arrow. 2011.

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