

Later start times in school

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We've all heard it before from our sleep deprived teens, " school starts too early", " I'm too tired to get up" etc... and if you haven't heard anyone say it, than you probably are. Everyone hears teens complaining about how school starts too early and how they're too tired to get up and do the work, and we've always just dismissed this as " laziness" but has anyone stopped to think about if this is really an epidemic within our teens and community? Does school honestly start too early? Almost every teen argues this, yet, no one ever listens to their reasoning or arguments, even though a later start time would be just as beneficial to the teachers and staff as well. The groggy feeling in your head, the terrible taste in your mouth, that weird yellow crusty stuff in your eyes, those very things define waking up early, not just for teens, but for everyone who's been " blessed" with the burden of waking up too early.

But there are much worse, more psychological side effects that you may not know about, that affects learning and memory recall. Studies done by the NSF (National Sleep Foundation) lack of sleep leads to mental illnesses such as Depression and Anxiety, which is also an epidemic among teens right now. " The results showed that about half (46%) of the adolescents surveyed had a depressive mood score of 10 to 14, 37% had a score of 15 to 19, and 17% had a score of 20 to 30" This entails to worse grades, and even less sleep. 23% of those with feelings of depression also " felt hopeless about the future" if they don't see a point in trying a future for themselves then why would they? Lack of sleep also affects kids on a physical level. A brain deprived of sleep will get sleep, with or without you trying, if it's tired enough. The lack of sleep experienced by teens puts them at risk driving to

school, driving around 7-7:30 to make it to school on time without enough sleep is dangerous enough, but mix in traffic from the mob of other students trying to get there in time and inexperienced drivers then you have a perfect storm waiting to happen.

Another thing to take into consideration is the fact that the students are aware of the fact that they don't perform well nor will they meet the expectations set by their parents and peers if they're tired so they'll try to combat it with caffeine. Now a redbull every now and then won't hurt, but, if teens are drinking one every day to try to cope with being tired throughout the week then you could have some serious complications with your health, especially if you're having multiples caffeinated drinks a day, because like what was stated earlier, if your mind is tired it will get sleepy, and caffeine doesn't last forever. Most parents argue that teens going to sleep at such a late time is their fault and that technology and late night activities cause them to stay up later. While this is true to some degree, the adolescent mind doesn't feel ready to go to sleep 'till around 11 P. M. Knowing this alone should be enough to have schools push their start times back, how can a school expect their students to function if they won't even let their bodies get enough sleep? Everybody has a biological clock that lets them know when it's time to go to sleep.

Most of these clocks have certain times throughout the day where people feel more awake or tired. Most teenagers biological clock makes them feel drowsy in the morning from 7-9, even 10 in some instances. So if that's piled on top of teens already not getting the full 10 hours, then the first two periods of school are practically pointless trying to learn anything. Teachers

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may also have an argument in this drama of early start times, stating that students will need to get up just as early to prepare themselves for jobs and experiences in the real world after high school. However, school starting later is just as beneficial to the teachers as it is the students, and may even work out better for them.

Students have it much easier compared to their superiors, teachers have to deal with 100+ different kids every day, all varying in personality and behavior, some good, some not so much, and aside from the babysitting they may have to do, they also have to create the curriculum, create the homework, grade the homework, make the tests and grade the tests, and all of them have to meet standards set by the state. Sounds like a lot of work? Well it is. And this doesn't even begin to include the teacher's personal obligations, like a lot of the students, teachers have to stay after school and coach the kids in sports, music, etc, they basically have more work than the students. Most teachers have to stay late after school or take it all home with them to get it all done. If school started later, they could use the extra 2 hours to get a head start on the day's criteria, finish grading, make the tests etc., or not have to rush from dropping their own kids at school this knocks out a whole lot of work they'd have to finish in a very small time frame.

Plus, if they didn't have to get up so damn early, they could tolerate some of their kids better, which could very well be the root of all their stress. School starting so early is extraneous to a student's learning ability, and in fact only hinders it. Knowing this, why have school start so early? The extra two hours could be very beneficial to everyone, on so many levels, for everyone. A simple solution for a very simple problem.

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