

Longer zzz's for more a's

Business



The alarm goes off with a monotonous, repetitive beep; it's 6 AM. Waking up from what seems to have been five minutes of sleep is merely impossible. Just the idea of getting ready seems like a strenuous task. Lack of sleep leaves teens feeling like they are starting their days on empty fuel tanks. Teens are supposed to be getting nine to ten hours of sleep per night but on average they are only getting seven. With overworked and under-rested teens, schools and communities should reevaluate school hours by looking at the hard facts stating that education is not productive if students' brains aren't actively learning. Sleep is the brain's food. Just as teens get older, bigger and eat more, sleep patterns change. More sleep becomes necessary as daytime sleepiness increases.

Not getting the required hours of sleep truly puts a damper on how much a teen can comprehend and remember. Sleep is a time for the brain to recharge and commit what is learned in the previous day to memory. With so little time, the brain is not given a chance to analyze daily information. This becomes a vicious cycle that damages all aspects of teen's lives. They become sleepy in class, slower on the field, lack-luster on the stage and drained by the time they get home. On top of sleeping less, the body clocks of adolescents shift.

Changing sleep and wake hours off balances the circadian system which regulates the mind in relation to the 24 hour day. This shift makes teens stay up later and sleep in longer. They make up for lost sleep time on the weekend only further messing with their patterns once they return to school days. Teens will always be behind in sleep and overloaded with activities, but

what can they do? Neurologist David Urion said, “ The ideal high school would start late in the morning and end late in the afternoon but unfortunately this is not the norm.” Many refute Urion saying that if students can’t handle everything, they should cut down on what they participate in.

If only it were that simple. To drop that one AP that puts a student over the edge or to cut down on sports and clubs could be the difference between acceptance and denial into college. In the past, teens have had to excel in their area of interest and get into schools based on that alone but current high schoolers have the pressures of performing well in standardized testing, community service requirements, academics, and extracurriculars to even be considered for many schools. Others also mention the difficulty of changing school policies but with bands of students, faculty and parents, school boards cannot refute the social discontent as well as the scientific evidence. Gibson and colleagues in Sleepiness is Serious in Adolescence: Two Surveys of 3235 Canadian Students said, “ There is a need for educators to be more aware of the impact of school start times and academic scheduling, and to consider sleep problems as potential factors in students who fail to achieve or who exhibit behavioral problems.

While it may be administratively convenient to begin high school classes early, there is strong evidence in our data, supported by the literature, suggesting that later start times would be more appropriate for teens.” Teens are chronically sleep deprived. Given the opportunity to sleep, teens can better control their behavior, emotions and attention for better atmospheres in school. Plain and simple- teenagers do not comprehend things taught to them in the early morning and teaching it at that time is <https://assignbuster.com/longer-zzzs-for-more-as/>

beneficial to no one. With science advocating reform, it only seems right that high schools start later. Among many progressive high schools, Edina Public Schools in Minnesota was the first to change its daily schedule.

They changed their start time from 7: 25 to 8: 30 to accommodate adolescent sleep rhythms and to maximize time spent in school. Through Minnesota Medical Association, support of the district and approval of superintendents, Edina Public Schools took a step towards better education. The school has reported fewer absences, more attentive students and even an unexpected increase in involvement in extracurriculars since the change during the 96-97 term. Other schools who have followed in their footsteps reported a decrease in depression, sleep disorders like sleep apnea and narcolepsy, car accidents and weight gain as well as better parent-child relationships. As research grows, more and more schools are accepting and embracing the positives involved in such modifications.

The idea of allowing teens to sleep in one hour is a simple change that could alter student attitudes, standardized test scores, and school ratings, all to the advantage of the district. Despite the hardship that would be required to endure to make such a change, the benefits are long lasting. With current research and the decreasing rate of adolescents succeeding in school, it is clear that the topic of pushing school back requires attention and consideration by all districts. When all it takes are a few extra zzz's to get an A, why not make it happen?