

# Later School Start Times: Is This a Right Fit for our Schools?

**Forums with members of Norwood School Community  
June 13 and June 20, 2017**

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# Introductions

- We are the co-chairs of the sub-committee formed in April 2017 to study school start times.
- Our Backgrounds
- The Process
- Three Questions to Answer

# Why are we here today?

## Three Questions:

- (1) Why is this something we may want to consider?
- (2) Is this right for Norwood Public Schools?
- (3) If yes, what is the best option?

We are focused on #1 today. We wish to share with you the subcommittee's research and work so far; and desire to gain valuable feedback from community and school members before we continue research into the summer.

# Current Norwood School Times

- Elementary Schools: 8:40am- 2:55 pm
- Coakley Middle School: 7:25am- 2:05pm
- Senior High School: 7:40am- 2:23 pm

# Terminology to Know

**Adolescence:** ages 10-24, according to experts in the field of sleep medicine. Growth and development are occurring at rapid rates during this stage of life.

**Circadian Rhythm:** the “biological clock” that regulates the timing of periods of sleepiness and wakefulness throughout the day. The circadian rhythm dips and rises at different times of the day. There is a “phase delay” in adolescents with their hormones and circadian rhythm drifting later.

An adolescent’s strongest sleep drive generally occurs between **3:00--7:00 am** and in the afternoon between **2:00-4:00 pm**, although the morning dip can be even longer if teens haven’t had enough sleep, and can even last until 9:00 or 10:00 am.

The sleepiness we experience during these circadian dips will be less intense if we have had sufficient sleep, and **more intense when we are sleep deprived**.

# Sleep of an Adolescent

## FACTS from the National Sleep Foundation:

- Sleep is vital to your well-being, as important as the air you breathe, the water you drink and the food you eat. It can even help you to eat better and manage the stress of being a teen.
- **Biological sleep patterns shift toward later times for both sleeping and waking during adolescence** -- meaning it is natural to not be able to fall asleep before 11:00 pm.
- **Teens need about 8 to 10 hours of sleep each night to function best.** Most teens do not get enough sleep — one study found that only 15% reported sleeping 8 1/2 hours on school nights.
- Teens tend to have **irregular sleep patterns** across the week — they typically stay up late and sleep in late on the weekends, which can affect their biological clocks and hurt the quality of their sleep.

# Policy Statement from the American Academy of Pediatrics

American Academy  
of Pediatrics



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In a policy statement published online Aug. 25, 2014:

**“The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recommends middle and high schools delay the start of class to 8:30 a.m. or later. Doing so will align school schedules to the biological sleep rhythms of adolescents, whose sleep-wake cycles begin to shift up to two hours later at the start of puberty.”**

# CDC Report in 2015

The CDC and U.S. Department of Education researchers reviewed data from the 2011-2012 Schools and Staffing Survey of nearly 40,000 public middle, high, and combined schools to determine school start times.

Here are some of their findings:

- 42 states reported that 75-100 percent of the public schools in their respective states started before 8:30 AM.
- The average start time was 8:03 AM.
- The percentage of schools with start times of 8:30 AM or later varied greatly by state.
- Louisiana had the earliest average school start time (7:40 AM), while Alaska had the latest (8:33 AM).

# Consequences and Correlations to Consider:

- Insufficient sleep in adolescents is associated with several health risks such as:
  - Being overweight;
  - Type 2 diabetes;
  - Drinking alcohol, smoking tobacco, and using drugs;
  - Mental health concerns.

**The proportion of high school students who fail to get sufficient sleep (2 out of 3) has remained steady since 2007, according to the Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance Report.**

- Research indicates correlations between lack of sleep to mood, emotional regulation, mental health, decision making, athletic performance, academic performance, school attendance, injuries, car accidents, other risky behaviors.

# Other Implications on Teen Sleep

The authors of the AAP recommendations and CDC reports do state that delayed school start times do not replace the need for other interventions that can improve sleep among adolescents.

Parents can help their children practice good sleep habits. For example, a consistent bedtime and rise time, including on weekends, is recommended for everyone, including children, adolescents, and adults.

Health care providers who treat adolescents should educate teens and parents about the importance of adequate sleep in maintaining health and well-being.

# What are the potential benefits?

- The University of Minnesota's Center for Applied Research and Educational Improvement (CAREI) has followed the changes made in the Minneapolis public schools. Among the benefits the CAREI study found:
  - One hour more sleep per school night on average
  - Significantly increased attendance rates in all grades
  - Increased continuous enrollment
  - Decreased tardiness
  - Improved behavior
  - Lower rates of depression
  - More student alertness, by teacher report
  - Less sleepiness during school, by student report
  - Fewer trips to school counselors and nurses
  - Teens easier to live with, by parent report
  - 70% reduction in teen car accidents
- Some parents had expressed skepticism about the change, wondering if all the students' activities could be worked around the later schedule. But a year after the change, 92 percent of parents said they were happy with the new schedule.

# What are the potential challenges to our school district?

- Before and after school transportation
- After school activities, particularly of concern would be winter sports and early sunset times.
- Effect on other students, both in terms of changed start times and after school child care.
- Impact on parents
- Consequences of any change on teachers, staff, and administrators district wide.

# What is happening around us?

- Massachusetts is home to the following 15 town-based chapters of “Start School Later”
- Belmont
- Boston
- Concord
- Georgetown
- Masconomet
- Melrose
- Newburyport
- Northborough-Southborough
- Quincy
- Sudbury
- Watertown
- Wayland
- Westborough
- Weston
- Winchester

## Possible state legislative action in Massachusetts (May 30, 2017- petition filed)

### **School Districts that have moved start times later to between 8-8:25am:**

Beverly, Cambridge, Cape Cod, Chelsea, Duxbury, Hanover, Holyoke, Lee, Lynn, Marshfield, Medway, Millis, Needham, Sharon, Swampscott, Ware, Winthrop

Massachusetts high schools, on average, start earlier than high schools in the rest of the country.

# Next Steps:

- Over summer, analyze results from forums.
- Create surveys to distribute in the fall.
- Share further research in the fall.
- Hold more forums with parents, teachers, administrators, and others in the school district and community (food services, transportation, extended day, etc) to understand the impact, pros, and cons.
- Create a task force.

**Thank you for your time and attention.  
Questions? Comments? Let's discuss!**



You can also email us at:

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