

Support for An Act to Provide for a Later Starting Time for High Schools

Thank you for considering An Act to Provide for a Later Starting Time for High Schools. As a parent and teacher across several districts in the Maine public schools, I see this bill as an efficient and effective way to improve the health and educational outcomes for students in Maine. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that middle and high schools start no earlier than 8:30 a.m. This allows adolescents, whose bodies naturally fall asleep later, to go to bed at a reasonable time and still get sufficient sleep. Researchers have found that later start times do in fact lead to more sleep for adolescents.

In my family, despite a reasonable bed time and good sleep hygiene, I still must wake both of my children up at from a deep sleep at 6:15 a.m. in order to catch a bus before 7 a.m. Even my generally early-rising son would naturally sleep until at least 7 a.m. on his own. In the more rural districts where I work, many students are up even earlier and have hour-long bus rides, which means their sleep is even more truncated. Students drag themselves into first period and are not ready to learn.

While I understand that change can be difficult, a statewide effort to provide later start times for school would benefit all students' mental and physical health and likely improve education outcomes.

Tiffany Yip, Yijie Wang, Mingjun Xie, Pak See Ip, Jillianne Fowle, Joseph Buckhalt; School Start Times, Sleep, and Youth Outcomes: A Meta-analysis. *Pediatrics* June 2022; 149 (6): e2021054068. [10.1542/peds.2021-054068](https://doi.org/10.1542/peds.2021-054068)