



ADOLESCENT SLEEP, HEALTH,  
AND SCHOOL START TIMES  
THE NATIONAL CONFERENCE

# Later School Start Times: Do They Work?

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A Clash of

Strong

Forces

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Biological  
Demand of  
Teen Brain  
(to be asleep  
from 10:45pm -  
8:00am)

High Schools  
Historically  
Start First



# The answer depends ...

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On the question— for whom?

and

On the data— the sample and  
the quality



# Stakeholders

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Does it work for:

- Students?
- Teachers?
- Parents?
- School administration?
- Community?



# Late Start Health Effects on Students

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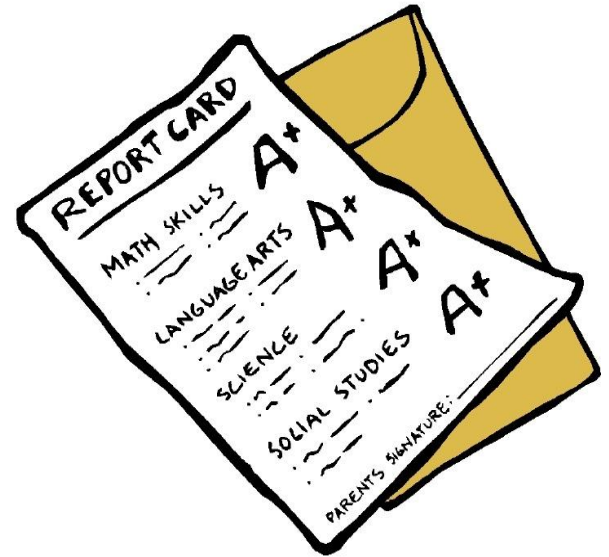
- Longer sleep duration (8+ hours)
- Less depression
- Less substance use
- Fewer car crashes



# Late Start Academic Effects on Students

Statistically significant improvement:

- Attendance
- Reduced tardiness
- Grades earned (greatest improvement in latest starting schools)



# Late Start Effects on Teachers

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- 52% saw fewer students falling asleep in class
- Allows teachers time for better planning across subject areas
- Less than 1 in 5 teachers indicate middle and high school students are ready for learning before 8 AM
- Both elementary and secondary teachers note schedule changes affect their personal lives, but most say the benefits to students is worth it.



# Administration, Parents, and Community

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- Principals describe...
  - Less agitation in passing times
  - Fewer lunchroom incidents
  - Quieter “tone” to the entire building
- 92% of parents say their child is “easier to live with”
- Parents need adequate advance time to adjust schedules
- Community traffic patterns often affected





# Twenty Years' Worth of Data

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- Over 2,000 articles examining adolescent sleep, late start, health/safety, psycho-social issues
  - Randomized control studies are mostly in medical literature
  - Quasi-experimental and case studies most common in education literature
- Education and survey data bases—need deep understanding of idiosyncrasies by district and by state for accurate use
- Data is most accurately viewed within local context



# The Data Tell the Story...

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Outcomes are:

- Statistically significant
- Affecting all socio-economic groups
- Persistent over time



# Understanding Why Change is Difficult

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Educational change:




- Slow and labor-intensive process
- Requires 3-5 years to be institutionalized
- Schools/Districts are self-contained systems — interfering with the rhythms of the system cause anxiety → resistance
- Stakeholders' beliefs that things are “better” after the change will ensure the change will persist.



# Back to the Question: Do Later Start Times Work?

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YES

- Students  The key stakeholder group
- Teachers 
- Parents 
- School administration 
- Community 





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**Thank You!**

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