

May 17, 2021

Dear Superintendent Miner, President Jernigan and Shoreline school board directors,

As advocates for the well-being and education of our students, the Shorewood High School PTSA is recommending the district's adoption of later start times in our high schools. The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) issued a [policy statement](#) in 2014 that strongly supports the efforts of school districts to begin classes **no earlier than 8:30 a.m.** for our high school and middle school students.

Per the Washington State PTA's (WSPTA) [resolution](#) of aligning sleep requirements for optimum health with school start times: "*The latest research shows that teens worldwide have natural sleep rhythms that make them unable to go to sleep before 11 p.m. and that they need an average of 9-10 hours of sleep, yet most high schools start early in the morning.*" (WSPTA, 2012)

As parents, we have seen physical and emotional effects in our own middle and high school students due to the current 8:00 a.m. hybrid/remote start time – vs. the previous 8:50 a.m. start time during full remote learning. These include:

- Lower overall energy and concentration throughout the day
- Lower engagement in school work and activities
- Increased moodiness
- Over-reliance on alarm devices and adult support in order to awake on time

Sleep deprivation may also heighten risks to teenagers' physical safety and alertness as they operate motor vehicles. Thus, when school start times were delayed as described in the Fairfax County (Virginia) [study](#), the "crash rate in 16-to-18-year-old licensed drivers decreased significantly from 31.63 to 29.59 accidents per 1,000 drivers." (*American Academy of Sleep Medicine, 2020*)

There is no better opportunity than the present to re-envision systemic practices as we emerge from the pandemic. We recognize that a change in start times will present issues; however, other districts have figured it out. *We believe Shoreline can, too.* Therefore, it is imperative to start the planning process now, to ensure that all complex issues are considered and mitigated, with a particular view to unintentional impact on families who rely upon their older students for childcare and/or supplemental family income. Immediate action also allows accommodation of impacts into the upcoming teachers' union contract bargaining.

As stakeholders, we can maximize academic outcomes by first addressing the overall health and well-being of our teenagers and adolescents. Later start times can increase our students' quality of life which, in turn, will positively influence the district's #1 priority: "*All students graduate college and career ready.*"

We respectfully ask that the Shoreline School District implement later start times in our high schools to begin no earlier than 8:30 a.m. Thank you!

The Shorewood High School PTSA Board of Directors

Shannon McMaster, President

Johanna Polit, Vice President

Linda Tsai, Secretary

Mea Fischelis, Treasurer

Debbie Olhoeft and Marion Mohrlök, Members-At-Large

Citations:

(Info only - not to be sent with public comment to the board)

Website: American Academy of Pediatrics. School Start Times for Adolescents. Accessed May 16, 2021. <https://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/134/3/642>

Website: Washington State PTA (WSPTA). WSPTA Resolution 11.21: Alignment of Sleep Requirements for Optimum Health With School Start Times. Accessed May 16, 2021. <https://www.wastatepta.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/WSPTA-Resolution-11.21-Alignment-of-Sleep-Req-2012.pdf>

Website: ScienceDaily. Later School Start Times Reduce Car Crashes, Improve Teen Safety. Accessed May 16, 2021. <https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2020/02/200218125312.htm>