
Reasons Why School Should Start Later

It's 6 A.M, you barely slept last night, you're exhausted, barely have any time to make breakfast, and have a long day of school ahead of you. The expectations for high school students are overwhelming and unfair. 7 classes a day, with most teachers acting as if their class is the only one students have. They are expected to finish loads of homework, study for weekly tests, participate in clubs and extracurricular activities, keep a healthy social life, and be tucked into bed by 8 pm. The tasks high school students are asked to complete within the time allotted are ridiculous. With classes starting as early as 7:30 AM, they don't have time to do all of these things at the same time. If you want to get your homework done and participate in sports, you cannot possibly get to bed at a reasonable time. If you do go to bed early, chances are you didn't even touch your flashcards for whatever test you have the next day. High schoolers should be allowed a later start time for a better, healthier learning situation. Students have always hated getting up early to go to school. As children get older they move from elementary to middle, to high school, and the start times get earlier. It's been proven in many studies that teenagers do better with a later start to the day. With this in mind, why do we still start school at 7:30 in the morning?

High school teenagers should start school at around 10 am. This would allow for a relaxed morning, making the day start less stressful and with a lot less panic. A teenager could stay up until midnight or 1 is and still get a decent amount of sleep, which doesn't happen when they are forced to wake up at 6:30 or 7 am. Traffic will also be more spread out, and students can take the time to get a good breakfast and be extremely mentally prepared for the day. Most teenagers receive between 6 to 7 hours of sleep, while studies done by doctors at the Seattle Children's Hospital say they should be receiving 8 to 10 hours of sleep to function properly the next day. A lack of sleep can affect the way children interact and handle social situations, test scores, and overall learning in general. Research by the NSF (National Sleep Foundation) shows that 87% of high school students are getting less than 8 hours of sleep every night. Sleep-wake cycles shift when growing from a child to a teenager. This means that it is nearly impossible in most cases, for teens to fall asleep before 10:30 PM [Shute]. Lack of sleep causes serious health risks and can result in extremely bad judgment and prevents teens from using their full potential at school.

Many officials and parents across the country have tried encouraging a change in the 7:30 A.M am start time in place in most high schools. The "ZZZ's to A's" Act was created and put in place to push schools to change the start time to something more reasonable. This would mean sometime closer to 8:30 or later. "60% of children under 18 have complained of being tired at school and 15% of said they have fallen asleep in class [Sleep Foundation.]" It is proven in studies from pediatricians and sleeps specialists all over the country, and even the world that adolescents are not getting enough sleep to complete the tasks expected of them. Asking teens to wake up so early and automatically be alert enough to intake material is not good for their health. High school students have no say in the situation and are forced into this unfair routine.

While some people might argue that the time students and teachers wake up is fine and productive, this is an ignorant statement because only benefits come with more sleep and a later wake-up time.

With this being said, high schoolers should be allowed to sleep in. Teens are not living a healthy lifestyle by staying up to complete the work assigned to them and then being asked to turn around, wake up at a ridiculous time of day, and come to school. The risks of sleep deprivation are very high. It causes drowsy drivers, upset and depressed teenagers, and sleepy students. All of these things can be fixed easily, by having a later school start time.

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