

School Start Times Task Force (4/30/14)

Findings from Elementary/Middle/High School & Family Impact of a Later Start Time

Topic: Student Behavior

Report: Minnesota

- Expecting to see more clear/cut data point to show strong data, but found “softer” data instead
- Did find that students were less likely to engage in risky behavior when they started school later
- Attendance was already high in districts analyzed but found several significant increases in attendance after delaying school times
- Found decrease in excused absences but not in unexcused absences

Report: Fairfax

- Parents reported positive changes in student’s attitude
- Referenced a study that found parents like the change
- Adverse consequences in MS where bad behavior increased “within acceptable limits”—unsure of what “acceptable limits” meant
- MS poses an odd time because students fall in both the child and adolescent spectrum
- Solving one problem may create another at a different school level

Topic: Family Time

Report: Fairfax

- The county’s biggest concern when they began to consider later start time was child care and increase after care, but in truth it evened out—some families needed more after school care, but it balanced with less before care and vice versa. In the end, it required now or low additional cost to families
- The Community adjusted around the changed school schedule: In KY, Boys and Girls clubs to have programs around middle school schedule so that they would not be alone so long; In FL all activities moved before school—but did not bus early, limiting the number of students who could attend

Topic: Student Readiness

Report: Fairfax/North Carolina (Similar ideas in both)

- Strong focus on the Minnesota report
- Found that later start times did give students more sleep (on average an hour more)

- Neither school found concrete data showing that later start times increased student academic achievement
- Found improved behavior and attendance among students with a later start time
- Ideal start time is 8:00 am
- Negative impact is the increased need for after-school help and the decreased time for homework

Topic: Health

Report: Montgomery

- ES: Reported negative impact of before-school care;
- ES: Increased need for transportation in the morning (assumption, not hard data)
- Very little research overall on the effect on elementary school students.

Report: Minnesota/Fairfax (among others not originally part of the investigation)

- Less sleep can result in memory loss, decreased socialization, worsened student attitude, increased risk behaviors, decreased achievement, lowered attention, lowered motivation, etc
- Students without sleep deprivation report better attendance and behavior
- A delay in start time does equal increased sleep
- Students are calmer during lunch/between classes
- Families may have more time together in the morning which may balance out less time in the evening
- Attendance rates improved significantly
- School counselors and nurses reported less students seeking emotional help and less students suffered from depression
- 68.9% of students are not currently getting enough sleep; High Schools that started 8:30 or later found that 60% of students were able to get 9 or more hours of sleep
- Increased sleep reduced car crashes by 70% (with a one hour delay)
- Students reported more positive behavior and decreased risk behaviors when they got at least 8 hours of sleep
- Insufficient sleep is related to increased risk for obesity, sports injuries, and school violence
- US Air Force Academy and US Navy instituted changes to allow for more sleep
- Connection between sleep disorders and ADHD
- Concern for any student (at every level) traveling to and from school in the dark