

High School Start Times

House Memorial 56: Summary of Research and Considerations

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Overview

1. Introduction and Review of Work

2. Research Review
3. Local Research and High School Start Times
4. Considerations



Source: Anuj Shrestha for NBC News

Summary of House Memorial 56

- House Memorial 56 requested the LESC to:
 - Study high school start times
 - Make recommendations on enacting a statutory high school start time
 - Work with high school students, PED, and staff from New Mexico school districts and charter schools to develop recommendations on a statutory high school start time.
 - Make a report of LESC staff's research and recommendations by December 31, 2023.



LESC Work on HM56

- LESC staff looked at high school start times in 3 ways:
 - This memorial work became the focus of one of our summer intern's projects with LESC so the work was informed by, and led in partnership with, a current high school student.
 - We conducted a review of national and local research on high school start times.
 - We researched local education agencies to document and collect a summary of high school start times statewide.

National Research

- The federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has reported a lack of sleep is “common” among high school students and is associated with increased risk of being overweight, drinking, smoking, using drugs and poor academic performance.
- The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends high schools not start before 8:30 a.m., and notes changing to later start times would result in better outcomes for teens, including reduced obesity risk, lower rates of depression, fewer drowsy driving crashes and improved quality of life.
- Researchers at the University of Minnesota found in a seminal 2017 study that research as early as the 1990s showed teenagers are “unable to fall asleep before about 10:45 p.m. and remain in sleep mode until about 8 a.m.”
- The American Academy of Sleep Medicine recommends kids ages 13-18 should sleep eight to 10 hours a day. The policy statement of the academy notes adolescents of those ages have circadian rhythms that prevent them from falling asleep earlier in the evening.
- A study by the Rand Corporation found the economic benefit of later school start times “would outweigh the costs within five years after the change” in the vast majority of states, mostly due to less use of mental health facilities and juvenile judiciary and detention.

National Policy Scan

- Many states have considered proposals to mandate later high school start times (25 states in recent years)
- Lawmakers in Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, Oregon and Texas all had bills or memorials up for consideration in 2023 (Source: Start School Later, an advocacy group).
- Most didn't pass, but Maine, Maryland, New Mexico, and Indiana approved studies.
- Two states have enacted legislation: California and Florida
 - California was the first state to require later high school start times (8:30 a.m. start, or later)
 - Florida passed a law with similar requirements this year, which schools must meet by July 2026
- At the municipal or local level:
 - A researcher at the University of Minnesota estimates 1,000-2,000 individual school districts across the country have recently moved high school start times to approximately 8:30 a.m.

National High School Start Times

- Among public K-12 schools, the average start time was 8:13 a.m., with elementary schools having a later average start time by a few minutes (8:16 a.m.) than middle (8:11 a.m.), combined/other (8:08 a.m.), and secondary/high (8:07 a.m.) schools. (Source: NCES)
- A higher percentage of public secondary/high schools (9 percent) had start times before 7:30 a.m. when compared with middle (6 percent), combined/other (3 percent), and elementary (3 percent) schools. (Source: NCES)

Table A-5. School start time: Average K-12 school start time and percentage distribution of school start times, by school type and selected school characteristics: 2020-21

School type and selected school characteristic	Average start time	Percentage distribution of start times				
		Before 7:30 a.m.	7:30 a.m. to 7:59 a.m.	8:00 a.m. to 8:29 a.m.	8:30 a.m. to 8:59 a.m.	9:00 a.m. or later
All schools	8:13	3.8	23.0	40.5	22.4	10.2
All public schools	8:13	4.5	24.8	37.5	21.9	11.3
School classification						
Traditional public	8:13	4.6	25.4	36.7	21.9	11.3
Charter school	8:11	3.0	19.7	44.5	22.0	10.7
Community type						
City	8:16	3.7	21.3	35.1	24.9	14.9
Suburban	8:18	5.5	21.8	29.8	28.0	14.9
Town	8:07	3.0	28.9	46.7	15.3	6.1
Rural	8:06	4.8	30.1	44.8	14.7	5.6
School level¹						
Elementary	8:16	2.6	22.7	36.7	26.2	11.7
Middle	8:11	5.7	28.9	35.6	17.1	12.7
Secondary/high	8:07	8.9	27.6	35.5	17.6	10.5
Combined/other	8:08	2.7	23.6	52.5	14.0	7.2
Student enrollment						
Less than 100	8:16	2.8 !	21.8	39.9	21.7	13.8
100-199	8:10	3.3 !	22.9	47.6	19.5	6.8
200-499	8:14	2.9	23.3	38.9	23.9	11.0
500-749	8:12	4.7	29.0	33.6	20.0	12.6
750-999	8:11	5.9	25.6	37.3	20.8	10.5
1,000 or more	8:09	11.7	24.9	30.9	20.8	11.8
Percent of K-12 students who were approved for free or reduced-price lunches						
0-34	8:15	3.6	24.1	34.5	26.0	11.8
35-49	8:15	4.7	22.1	39.0	22.0	12.2
50-74	8:10	4.8	25.7	42.4	17.2	9.9
75 or more	8:12	4.9	25.8	36.7	21.4	11.2
Reported effect of COVID-19 on instruction²						
Offering only distance-learning instruction	8:21	2.5	14.8	36.2	28.2	18.2
Offering a hybrid of in-person and distance-learning instruction	8:11	5.0	27.6	36.7	20.8	9.9
Offering only in-person instruction or no effect on the instruction offered	8:09	4.5	24.1	47.7	16.8	6.9

Source: NCES

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Source: KRQE

Local Policy and Practice Scan

- LESC staff conducted a review of high school start times statewide by researching local education agency websites and calling school districts and charter schools if the information was not available online.
- New Mexico has varying start and end times for its high schools.
- LESC staff review of start times found:
 - For New Mexico school districts and charters schools with 4-day school weeks, school often begins around 7:30 a.m. and ends around 4:00 p.m.
 - For those with 5-day school weeks, school often begins around 8:00 a.m. and ends around 3:00 p.m.



Local Changes

- Albuquerque Public Schools (APS) recently changed start times to accommodate later bell schedules for older (middle and high school) students.
- There is some variation in individual schools, but in APS:
 - Middle schools will be in session from 9:15 a.m. to 4:15 p.m.
 - High schools will generally go from 8:40 a.m. to 3:40 p.m.
 - Elementary schools will be split into several groups, including some being in session from 7:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m., some from 8:05 a.m. to 3:05 p.m. and some from 8:05 a.m. to 3:35 p.m.
- APS cited national research about adolescent sleep needs in its rationale to change school start times, as well as a shortage of bus drivers as a reason for the district needing to stagger start times.
- There have been concerns flagged about longer school days as a result of the changes and how this might impact functions like educator duty before and after school and extracurricular activities for students, particularly middle school students.
- There is also optimism about the possibility of fewer tardies, more alert students, and ultimately, greater student success.

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Source: NEA



Considerations

- Research is clear that adolescent sleep needs are not being met.
- Despite that, changing high school start times has implications for school district and charter school systems, educators, families, and additional organizations (such as after school programs).
- School start times are deeply impacted by, and also impact, many societal functions.



Major Areas of Impact

- Student sleep needs
- Commuting, traffic patterns, and bus routes
- Athletics and extracurricular activities
- After school care and work commitments for both parents/guardians and students themselves
- Effects on teachers



Student Perspective

- Design of the school day.
 - School days can be complex and impacted by course requirements needed for each student's individual goals.
 - Changing school times could impact how much time a student has to fit their full load of classes into the school day.
 - It can be helpful to have school schedules that allow for things like tutoring and extracurriculars.
- Transportation considerations.
- Daniyal's own school's experience and structure.

Thank you!

Q & A



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