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**LEGISLATIVE EDUCATION STUDY COMMITTEE**  
**BILL ANALYSIS**  
**56th Legislature, 1st Session, 2023**

<b>Bill Number</b>	<u>HM56</u>	<b>Sponsor</b>	<u>Garratt</u>
<b>Tracking Number</b>	<u>.225380.1</u>	<b>Committee Referrals</b>	<u>HEC</u>
<b>Short Title</b>	<u>Study High School Start Times</u>		
<b>Analyst</b>	<u>Hathaway</u>	<b>Original Date</b>	<u>2/23/23</u>
		<b>Last Updated</b>	<u></u>

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## BILL SUMMARY

### Synopsis of Bill

House Memorial 56 (HM56) requests the LESC to study high school start times. LESC is requested to work with high school students, the Public Education Department (PED), and staff from New Mexico school districts and charter schools to conduct this study and to develop a recommendation on a statutory high school start time. The memorial requests that the LESC publish a report of its research and recommendations by December 31, 2023.

## FISCAL IMPACT

Legislative memorials do not carry appropriations.

## SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES

There is currently no requirement in state law about when high schools must start their school day. Both start and end times of school days at high schools vary widely across the state, and sometimes, even within a single school district. In addition, local charter schools are able to set start and end times independent of their school district authorizers. A sampling of start times among the state's six largest school districts is included below:

- High schools in [Albuquerque Public Schools](#) (APS) start at 7:25 a.m. and end at 2:25 p.m.
- High schools in [Las Cruces Public Schools](#) (LCPS) start at 8:30 a.m. and end at 3:30 p.m.
- [Rio Rancho Public Schools](#) (RRPS) has various start times at its high schools, but the school day generally starts between 7:20 a.m. and 7:45 a.m. and ends between 2:05 p.m. and 2:29 p.m.
- [Gadsden Independent School District](#) (GISD) has various start times at its high schools, but the school day generally starts between 8:35 a.m. and 8:45 a.m. and ends at 3:45 p.m. +
- [Gallup-McKinley County Schools](#) (GMCS) has various start times at its high schools, but the school day generally starts between 7:15 a.m. and 8:25 a.m. and ends between 3:15 p.m. and 3:25 p.m.

- High schools in [Santa Fe Public Schools](#) start between 8:30 a.m. and 8:50 a.m. and end between 3:30 p.m. and 4:00 p.m.

**Adolescent Sleep Needs.** [Research](#) from the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention shows adolescents (aged 13 to 18) have a biological need of eight to 10 hours of sleep per night, however, most high school students (73 percent) are not getting enough sleep on school nights. During adolescence, [research](#) shows circadian rhythms shift, [causing](#) most teenagers to not feel tired until 10:00 p.m. or 11:00 p.m. As a result, many teenagers are unable to fall asleep early enough to get the recommended amount of sleep and arrive at school on time. Since 2014, the American Academy of Pediatrics has [recommended](#) high schools start at 8:30 a.m. or later.

Insufficient sleep can affect physical, emotional, and mental health including mood challenges, behavioral problems (such as hyperactivity, poor impulse control, and non-compliance), and cognitive performance (such as attention, memory, and executive functioning). When adolescents get sufficient sleep, [research](#) shows there are many benefits including better academic outcomes, higher graduation rates, better attendance rates, reduced tardiness to school, lower levels of depression, reduced caffeine use, fewer car accidents, and less frequent drowsy driving.

**State Action on School Start Times.** In 2019, California passed [legislation](#) that requires high schools to begin no earlier than 8:30 a.m. and middle schools no earlier than 8:00 a.m. No other states have mandated start times, although many school districts throughout the country ([Seattle Public Schools](#) and [Denver Public Schools](#), for example) have conducted studies independently and adjusted high school start times as a result.

**Impact of Changing School Start Times.** While research suggests many benefits from later school start times, there can be logistical and operational challenges for schools and families to accommodate a later start to the school day. Later start times can sometimes cause school districts to move elementary start times earlier to accommodate later start times in higher grades—essentially transferring the earlier school start time to younger students. Later start times can also complicate the scheduling of before- and after-school activities, affect working parents and students, affect childcare in families who rely on older siblings to help care for younger siblings, and disrupt transportation schedules for schools.

Changing high school start times varies in popularity among parents and teachers. [Survey research](#) from the Sleep Foundation shows mixed reactions about the desire for later school start times. Among parents and teachers surveyed, 34.7 percent and 35.2 percent, respectively, expressed an interest in later start times, with other respondents preferring no change or to start the school day earlier.

## ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLICATIONS

The LESC would be requested to work with high school students, school staff, and the PED to study this issue and produce a final report. The LESC would need to provide staff, and associated work time, to complete the study.

The Department of Health (DOH) reports no administrative implications, but notes HM56 supports one of its strategic goals to improve the health status of all New Mexicans.

The New Mexico Activities Association (NMAA) reports its primary concern would be the effect of start times on interscholastic athletics during the spring season, noting that many playing fields

do not have lights and many schools do not have other athletic complexes to move sports indoors if needed. NMAA requests that participation in athletic events be considered in this study.

**SOURCES OF INFORMATION**

- LESC Files
- Children, Youth and Families Department (CYFD)
- Department of Health (DOH)
- New Mexico Activities Association (NMAA)

**JKH/tb/cf/mb**