

SOURCE: <https://www.change.org/p/anchorage-school-district-push-start-times-in-asd-high-schools-to-8-30-am>

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**Let's push  
high school  
start times  
to 8:30 AM.**

[Matthew Park](#) started this petition to Anchorage School District and 2 others

**As of 5:00PM, Wednesday February 19, 2020 5,457 have signed.**

As the next school year approaches, the daunting idea of yet another year of heavy workloads and lack of sleep crosses the minds of thousands of high school students around Anchorage. With the first classes of the day starting at 7:30 AM, students are exhausted, unfocused, and held back from performing to the best of their academic abilities.

**In order to promote the health and education of our students, the Anchorage School District must push back starting times in high schools to 8:30 AM.**

The issue at hand is a school day that starts too early for students. Compelling evidence and numerous studies show that teenagers aged 13-18 require a minimum of eight to ten hours of sleep each night (CDC, Stanford, AASM). However, current starting times in our schools call for students to wake up as early as 5:00 AM, preventing them from getting their much needed rest. Sleep deficits take a toll on students by causing fatigue, impaired cognitive abilities, impulsivity, moodiness, concentration troubles, and an overall unpreparedness to learn. A lack of sleep also puts students at greater risk for motor accidents, excessive caffeine use, and an array of other high-risk health behaviors (UCLA, Sleep Foundation, Child Mind Institute).

While solutions to getting more sleep include adhering to a strict sleeping schedule and turning off electronic devices, it is also important to note the natural biological shift that occurs during adolescence. Due to a delay in the release of melatonin, a hormone involved in regulating sleep cycles and circadian rhythms, teenagers often do not feel the need to sleep until much later at night. This means that while early waking times may be suitable for adults and young children, the same does not go for adolescents.

Pushing the start time in high schools to 8:30 AM guarantees students with the chance to get their needed sleep; it may even motivate students to develop better sleeping habits. With enough time to

sleep at night, students falling asleep in class would be replaced with those who are concentrated, alert, and ready to learn. There are plenty of additional benefits that come with a later starting time:

- - Higher attendance rates, less truancy and tardiness (percent of high school students who had a 90% attendance rate in 2016-17 was 69.48%)
- - Healthier students can perform better in after-school activities and sports
- - Awake and alert students who are better able to comprehend, process, and retain information
- - Drop in number of students developing high-risk health behaviors
- - Schools with later starting times have shown increases in test scores and grades, decrease in dropout rates and disciplinary actions/delinquency

It is also important to recognize the logistical and budgetary concerns that come along with moving school times. Districts often use staggered school times to save transportation costs. Solutions may include re-optimizing the efficiency of our current school transportation system, encouraging the use of public transportation, switching elementary and high-school times, and more. Nonetheless, pushing the start time to 8:30 AM is a safe and important investment in our students. The adjustments and expenses that may come with later starting times should be made to give high schoolers the best possible opportunities to learn and succeed each day.

This petition has the potential for great impact on thousands of Alaskan students. If you believe in a school system that supports both the health and education of our students, sign this petition. Let's take the initiative to ask the Anchorage School District to invest in our students.

Sign the petition, spread the word, and let's help our students.

## Useful resources are listed below.

### Cited Sources:

<http://www.aasmnet.org/Resources/pdf/Pediatricsleepdurationmethods.pdf>

[https://www.cdc.gov/sleep/about\\_sleep/how\\_much\\_sleep.html](https://www.cdc.gov/sleep/about_sleep/how_much_sleep.html)

<https://childmind.org/article/happens-teenagers-dont-get-enough-sleep/>

<https://med.stanford.edu/news/all-news/2015/10/among-teens-sleep-deprivation-an-epidemic.html>

<http://sleepcenter.ucla.edu/sleep-and-teens>

<https://sleepfoundation.org/sleep-topics/teens-and-sleep>

### Case Studies:

<http://www.startschoollater.net/success-stories.html>

<http://www.startschoollater.net/case-studies.html>

### Sleep Research and Recommendations:

<http://sleepcenter.ucla.edu/sleep-and-teens>

<https://www.cdc.gov/media/releases/2015/p0806-school-sleep.html>

<https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/65/wr/mm6513a1.htm>

<https://sleepfoundation.org/sleep-topics/teens-and-sleep>

<http://www.thesleepdoctor.com/2017/03/30/teens-need-sleep-think/>

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2528821/>

### Articles Worth Reading:

<http://time.com/4741147/school-start-time/>

[http://www.huffingtonpost.com/terra-ziporyn-snider-phd/why-we-must---and-can---s\\_b\\_9550488.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/terra-ziporyn-snider-phd/why-we-must---and-can---s_b_9550488.html)

<https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation-now/2017/04/18/schools-should-start-later-prevent-accidents-depression-scientists-say/100573390/>

[https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/answer-sheet/wp/2014/08/25/u-s-doctors-urge-later-school-start-times-for-teens/?utm\\_term=.39bafa431ae4](https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/answer-sheet/wp/2014/08/25/u-s-doctors-urge-later-school-start-times-for-teens/?utm_term=.39bafa431ae4)

<https://www.theatlantic.com/education/archive/2014/08/surprise-students-arent-getting-enough-sleep/379020/>