

ALIGNMENT OF SLEEP REQUIREMENTS FOR OPTIMUM HEALTH WITH SCHOOL START TIMES

Whereas, the Seattle Council PTSA supports legislation in the areas of children's health, safety, well-being and education, and this resolution supports an important health and safety issue for children attending public school: start times that ensure enough sleep for health requirements; and

Whereas, "Adolescents today face a widespread chronic health problem: sleep deprivation. Although society often views sleep as a luxury that ambitious or active people cannot afford, research shows that getting enough sleep is a biological necessity, as important to good health as eating well or exercising. Teens are among those least likely to get enough sleep; while they need on average 9 1/4 hours of sleep per night for optimal performance, health and brain development, teens average fewer than 7 hours per school night" (National Sleep Foundation); and

Whereas, the latest research shows that teens worldwide have natural sleep rhythms that make them unable to go to sleep before 11 p.m., and that they need an average of 9-10 hours of sleep, yet most high schools start early in the morning. In addition, the student must get ready for and find transportation to school, so simple math shows there is not enough time available for adequate sleep; and

Whereas, schools are looking for solutions to poor academic performance, poor attendance, students falling asleep in class, and problems with student depression and aggression, yet studies show that simply getting adequate sleep will positively impact all these problems; and Whereas, studies show adolescents get an inadequate amount of sleep due to early start times, increasing teen driver accident rates; and

Whereas, some school districts have responded to the research and changed their start times. "Since the discussion on school start times began more than a decade ago, not a single district that has made the change has decided to change back." (LA Times 8/23/2010, School Start Times and ZZZ's to A's)

Therefore, be it

Resolved: the Seattle Council PTSA will encourage and support secondary school start times of 8:30 am or later, which meets the optimum health requirements for adolescent sleep needs.

Passed at 10/8/14 by SCPTSA General Membership