

Dear Senator,

I am writing as a

and as a member of the Michigan Academy of Sleep Medicine (MASM). I want to express my concern about my community and patients who are currently attending our school district.

The current **school start times are too early**, which prevent our high school and middle school students from getting recommended amount of sleep that they need for optimal health and performance in school.

The American Academy of Sleep Medicine (AASM) recommend that children between ages 13 to 18 years old should sleep eight to ten hours per night on a regular basis.

However, the prevalence of short sleep duration among high school students in the national Youth Risk Behavior Survey in 2015 was 72.7%, similar data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) show that nearly 73% of high school students report sleeping 7 hours or less.

Adolescents with early school start times suffer not only from sleep deprivation but also from circadian misalignment. Currently, we are asking our students to be sleep by 10 PM and wake up by 6 AM, which is not a realistic expectation based on their body's biological clock.

Multiple medical organizations, including the American Medical Association (AMA), the American Academy of Sleep Medicine, the Society of Behavioral Medicine and the American Academy of Pediatrics have put out statements to start middle and high school classes no earlier than 8:30 AM. These later start times would allow students the opportunity to achieve optimal levels of sleep.

In Michigan, 9.5% of schools had start times before 7:30 AM, 43.6% of school had start times of 7:30 to 7:59 AM, 39% of school had start times of 8:00 to 8:20 AM and only 7.9% of schools had start times of 8:30 AM or later.

Insufficient sleep in teenagers has been linked to numerous problems including poor academic performance, increased depression symptoms, suicidal thoughts, obesity and risk-taking behaviors.

Implementing delayed school start times is shown to increase sleep duration, improve sleepiness and overall perception of sleep, improve concentration and attention, decrease depression, lower frequency of headaches, decrease tardiness, and even improve athletic performance. Later school start times have been implemented in several states and districts and do not adversely impact students being involved in sports and other extracurricular activities.

**I hope you will join me in supporting a school start time of 8:30 AM or later for middle schools and high schools in our district so we can help promote sleep health and safety for our children.**

Sincerely,