



# School Start Time Study

Citizens Advisory Committee

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## **Study Objective**

Wyoming City School's current start time for the high school is 7:50, and the day ends at 2:50. In some listening sessions it has been suggested to look at the start time based on the research that high school kids should be starting later than primary kids based on sleep requirements. Our sub-committee was tasked with researching the scientific evidence of the benefits of additional sleep on the overall well-being of the students.

In addition to researching other districts and their start times along with their process of changing their times, the committee came up with a list of benefits to the students overall well-being as to why a time change would be favorable. We also listed out challenges that other districts encountered in their process along with possible conflicts that could be unique to Wyoming that might need to be considered prior to proceeding.

The Committee is providing the Board of Education with this information to assist the district in the process of embarking on the possibility of looking into new start times for the district. To do this we looked at three key components:

1. To research and present factors pertaining to the most appropriate school start time.
2. Review the impact that school start times have on student health and academic success.
3. Address the impact on the Wyoming community that could result from adjusting school start times.

## **Methodology and Research**

Our committee looked at various factors to take into account when considering changing the start times for the district. We started by doing extensive research on sleep studies, and how the quality and quantity of sleep affects adolescent students overall well-being. We then researched other schools that have made the change to a later start time, to find out their process, reason for making the change, and outcomes. We looked at a few national and a few local schools for this. After having scientific research and some examples from districts that have made the change, we took some of the learnings and made a benefits vs. challenges chart to see how this could impact our students and community, and things we need to consider prior to embarking on this possible shift. Lastly, we compared a few surrounding districts and their start times to ours, so you can see the range of what comparable districts are doing.

## **Findings**

A full list of the websites for review can be found in the Appendices, but some key findings include:

1. Optimal amount of sleep for teens is 9.25 hours, averaging 8-10 hours per night.
2. Based on the age range of high schoolers and the circadian rhythm, the natural sleep cycle is for them to fall asleep at 11:00 p.m. as sleep onset is not a chosen or intentional behavior ~ melatonin is naturally released about 10:30 p.m. and stops about 9:00 a.m., not allowing teens to naturally or easily fall asleep any earlier.
3. Research states that if schools can delay start times, they will go through high school with better overall mental health and less substance abuse.
4. Athletics and family scheduling appeared to be the biggest factors in the other districts that made the shift in start times.
5. Our district is middle of the road when it comes to start times compared to other districts in the area.

## **Recommendations and Conclusions**

1. We feel our current start time is in the average range for schools across the area, including those that have adjusted their start time.
2. That being said, studies have shown that student well-being is proven to improve with more sleep, and we are currently in the middle range of the start times, and there is room to extend it. Evidence points to an 8:30 a.m. or later start time.
3. Data points to consideration of making a change. We hope we have provided you with enough balanced information for you to make a decision that will best meet the needs of the students and community of Wyoming.

## **Action points to Consider**

1. Gather more information from Mariemont, as they are happy share surveys and data.
2. Survey stakeholders - students, teachers, community.
3. See if there is a way to survey current seniors participating in late start program.
4. Figure out if other building times will change to see if transportation logistics are affected.
5. Look at teacher scheduling to see impact of traveling teachers.
6. Review with AD to determine impact on program in regards to practices and game times.
7. Possibly consider bringing in sleep expert to help educate the community.