



Lexington Public Schools

146 Maple Street ♦ Lexington, Massachusetts 02420

Proposed Resolution of the Lexington School Committee on Later School Start Times for LHS Students August 28, 2018

Whereas the American Academy of Pediatrics recommends delaying school start times until 8:30 a.m. or later for middle and high school students to combat sleep deprivation (*8:30 a.m. is referred to as the “circadian sweet spot”);

Whereas for optimal health, safety and achievement, the average middle and high school student needs 8 - 10 hours of sleep; the average elementary student needs 9 - 12 hours of sleep;

Whereas Lexington High School students and parents report an average of 7 hours of sleep per night and approximately 95% of students, teachers and parents indicate that students are sleepy or tired;

Whereas we recognize that the current 7:45 a.m. high school start time forces students to wake for the day and function during the “circadian nadir,” or the lowest level of alertness during the 24-hour day;

Whereas the American Academy of Sleep Medicine (AASM) reports that most school-aged (pre-pubertal) children have a ‘morningness preference’; however, the data for elementary school start times are mixed and suggest an appropriate start time between the hours of 7:30 – 9:00 a.m.;

Whereas research by the National Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the American Academy of Pediatrics show that inadequate sleep endangers adolescents and contributes to accidental injuries and fatigue-related crashes;

increases in risk for obesity, cardiovascular disease, metabolic dysfunction (e.g. Type 2 diabetes); and increases in depression and suicidality;

Whereas early wake times contribute to sleep loss negatively impact Rapid Eye Movement Sleep (REM) which is critical for cognitive functioning (e.g. decision-making, problem-solving, planning, organization); attention; memory; the learning of new tasks; emotional regulation; and risk-taking behaviors;

Whereas adolescents are forced to “make-up” sleep, which leads to “circadian misalignment” and daytime sleepiness, poor academic performance, and depressed mood;

Whereas even a 30-minute delay results in improved school performance outcomes, such as better attendance and grades, and decreased tardiness and drop-out rates;

Whereas a later start time of 50 minutes has the equivalent benefit as raising teacher quality by roughly one standard deviation¹;

Whereas approximately 50% of the Middlesex League school districts have adjusted their school start times for the 2018 - 2019 school year;

Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, that the Lexington School Committee:

1. acknowledges the work of the Start Times Task Force and thanks the following individuals for their efforts: Jeff LaBroad; Anna Monaco; Scott Kmack; Barbara Hamilton; Naomi Martin; Andrew Baker; Elaine Celi; Kathleen Lenihan; Jessie Steigerwald; Sara Cuthbertson; Beth Murnaghan; Deepika Sawhney; and Ian Daily;

¹ Brookings Institute Report, “Organizing Schools to Improve Student Achievement: Start Times, Grade Configurations, and Teacher Assignments (2011).

2. announces its public support for a later school start time for Lexington High School students and its desire to maintain elementary and middle school start times at this time
3. agrees to explore the possibility of funding a high-school only later start solution for implementation, should cost-savings and other efficiencies be identified in the next few months;
4. authorizes the Superintendent of Schools to hire a consultant familiar with the LPS transportation routing system, Transfinder, in an amount not-to-exceed \$10,000, for the purpose of conducting a Transportation Efficiency Study that will incorporate data from the School Start Times Task Force; and
5. acknowledges its ongoing commitment to exploring later start options for high school students should funding be a barrier.