

Sheriff



Larry Ashley, Okaloosa County Sheriff

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Date: August 21, 2013
To: Florida's Community Leaders and Legislators
Subject: Early School Start Times

Dear State and Community Leaders,

The subject of early school start times and the effects on truancy, disciplinary problems, and academic success has been a topic of countless studies. We are familiar with the large body of evidence that correlates chronic sleep deprivation with substance abuse, aggression, impulsivity, and anti-social behavior leading to increased criminal activity. Sleep deprivation resulting in increased auto accidents is undeniable.

There are myriad studies linking adolescent sleep deprivation with early school start times and proponents point to many of these findings to support a change that would allow high school students to have a later start to their day. We believe it is certainly an issue worthy of examination to determine what is in the overall best interest of our youth. It just makes sense to give serious consideration to any feasible proposals that focus on determining the best course of action for mitigating the potential for teenage behavioral problems to the extent possible.

We are confident in our community's ability to act in the best interest of our adolescent students and our agency stands ready to provide whatever statistical information we have available which may be helpful in the decision-making process.

Sincerely,

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