

6/13/2011

WASHINGTON STATE PTA Resolution Submittal

Resolution Title: **Alignment of Sleep Requirements for Optimum Health with School Start Times**

Local Unit/Council or membership: **Interlake High PTSA 2.3.150; membership ID 1167087**

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Alignment of Sleep Requirements for Optimum Health with School Start Times

Whereas: The Washington State PTA 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.

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

<http://www.sleepfoundation.org/article/hot-topics/backgrounder-later-school-start-times>

Whereas: The latest research shows that teens worldwide have natural sleep rhythms that make them unable to go to sleep before 11 pm, and that they need an average of 9-10 hours of sleep. 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. First classes in WA High Schools typically begin from 7:10-7:50, depending on the District. Zero hours activities begin approximately 50 minutes earlier.

<http://www.latimes.com/health/la-he-school-time-20100823,0,7500807.story?page=2>

Whereas: The schools are looking for solutions to poor academic performance, poor attendance, students falling asleep in class, problems with student depression and aggression. Studies show that simply getting adequate sleep will positively impact all these problems.

http://www.projo.com/news/content/SCHOOL_START_TIME_SLEEP_07-06-10_BTJ3V3C_v18.1687c8e.html

Whereas: Early start times, increase teen driver accident rates.

<http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2010/06/100609083225.htm>

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.)

<http://www.latimes.com/health/la-he-school-time-20100823,0,7500807.story?page=2>

Resolved: The WASHINGTON STATE PTA will encourage and support school start times that meet the optimum health requirements for sleep needs.

Rationale: Current scientific research shows that teens need more sleep than present school start times allow. Making start times later has been shown to help with student grades, attendance, driving safety, mood/depression, and aggression levels. School districts that have made the change have all seen benefits and none has changed back to earlier start times.

Summary

Over two decades of scientific research on Teen sleep needs show that adolescents have trouble falling sleep before 11:00 pm, and need over nine hours of sleep nightly to avoid sleep deprivation. Early High School start times (typically 7:00-7:50 am in WA), do not provide enough hours for Teens to get adequate sleep.

The well-documented results of sleep deprivation range from increased obesity and depression to diminished academic performance and poor attendance. Driving when sleep deprived has been shown as equivalent to driving drunk.

In addition to advocating for student health via nutrition and physical exercise, the PTSA needs to recognize a student's need for adequate sleep. Teens would be well served by the PTSA educating the public and lobbying for later start times for High School Students. This aspect of the health and welfare of children in our state has been overlooked and needs a champion.