



Sleep Study FAQ

In recent years, there has been increased scientific research related to adolescent sleep. As a result, a growing number of school districts have made changes to school start times. **Since last spring, the Ephrata Area School District has been studying a significant body of research on this topic to ensure school times within the District meet the sleep patterns of our students.**

Additionally, the District held a Community Information Session on December 9 which included information from District Administrators and WellSpan professionals to educate the community on sleep and its importance for adolescents. A copy of this presentation is available [HERE](#).

The following are answers to frequently asked questions.

Q: Has the District made a decision to change start times for any schools in the 2020-21 school year?

A: *No. Recommendations will be submitted to the School Board for final approval to be voted upon in February.*

Q: Is the idea of delaying the start time for adolescents a new idea and only being considered in the Ephrata Area School District?

A: *No. The scientific research about sleep and its importance for adolescents has been growing over the past ten years, which has caused districts across the country and Pennsylvania to make changes. In fact, recommendations to start secondary schools no early than 8:30 AM have been made by the following organizations:*

- American Academy of Pediatrics
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
- American Medical Association
- American Academy of Sleep Medicine
- American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatrists
- American Psychological Association
- American Thoracic Society
- National Sleep Foundation
- National Educational Association
- National Parent Teacher Association

Additionally, in October of 2019 the Pennsylvania Joint State Government Commission released a report on sleep deprivation on adolescents and made a case for delaying secondary school start times. The report states, "A number of ways to address insufficient sleep in adolescents exist, but the response that garners the most attention, has the greatest potential to impact large numbers of students at the same time, and has been endorsed by numerous professional organizations is delaying secondary school start times. The American Academy of Pediatrics and the American Medical Association were among the first organizations to call for an 8:30 AM or later start time, and many others followed." [CLICK HERE](#) to read the full report.

Q: If adolescents sleep later due to a delayed school start time, won't they also stay up later; hence, not getting any additional sleep?

A: *This is not the case according to the research presented at the Community Information Session on December 9. [CLICK HERE](#) to access the presentation slides.*

Q: Have start times been identified by District Administration?

A: *Yes, the chart below represents the current best estimates on times. These may be adjusted by 5-10 minutes based on the final calculations related to transportation and school day schedules.*

Level	Current Start Time	Current End Time	Proposed Start Time	Proposed End Time	Start Time Change	Student Day Change (Length)
Elem.	8:55 AM	3:30 PM	9:00 AM	3:40 AM	+5	+5 (6 hr 40 min)
Int.	8:25 AM	3:20 PM	8:55 AM	3:45 AM	+30	-5 (6 hr 50 min)
MS	7:20 AM	2:50 PM	8:05 AM	2:55 AM	+45	-40 (6 hr 50 min)
HS	7:30 AM	2:35 PM	8:10 AM	3:00 AM	+40	-15 (6 hr 50 min)

Q: Would a delay in secondary school start times mean all after school activities would start/end later?

A: *No. As is outlined in the draft proposal above, end times for secondary students would still be prior to the 3:30 PM start of practices.*

Q: Won't allowing adolescents to sleep later fail to prepare them for the "real world" as successful members of the workforce?

A: *In addition to the reality of work schedules being different for a variety of professions, **the Phase Shift that occurs from approximately ages 12 to 19 is why it is most important for secondary students to have a later school start time.** As documented in several of the articles on the District [website](#) and included in the presentations by WellSpan representatives, the Phase Shift causes a delay in the onset of sleep for adolescents by approximately two hours.*

Q: Will a change in school start times increase school property taxes?

A: *No. We believe this change will not cause any additional costs to the District.*

Q: Did the Sleep Study consider the sleep of elementary school students?

A: *Yes, the research states that pre-adolescent students are not impacted by a phase shift, which causes the onset of tiredness and sleep to occur later. The phase shift only occurs at about the onset of puberty and thus impacts children of approximately 12 to 19 years old.*

Q: Some elementary parents said they did not received email correspondence. Can emails be resent?

A: *All email communication was sent Districtwide and remains posted on the website. Additionally, the District communication system was checked, which found that many parents/guardians needed to update their communication preferences/settings and make corrections to their email addresses. Invitations to update records were sent to those who did not have a valid email address on file so information could be provided or updated if desired.*

Q: Is the survey still open to get more parent/guardian feedback?

A: Yes. The survey was only closed the day prior to the January Committee Meeting and has since been reopened.

Q: The proposed schedule has a decrease in student time in school. Is that good or bad for the students?

A: The exact impact on instructional time has yet to be determined as principals are working with teachers on final logistics. One concept being considered is decreasing the length of transition times between classes to minimize any potential reduction of instructional time. In most grade levels, the impact on instructional time will be less than 10 minutes per day.

The District website continues to offer a [LINK](#) to submit questions.