

# How to Improve High School Performance: Start School Later

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Plain English Version



Getting a teenager up in the morning is always a challenge. In some school districts they may be able to sleep later.

The results of research are coming in. If you start high school between 8:30 a.m. and 9:00 a.m. students will:

- Learn better
- Be late less often
- Get in fewer fights
- Reduce athletic injuries
- Behave less impulsively
- Make fewer bad decisions
- Get in fewer car accidents
- Have better attendance

The sleep hormones of teenagers are released later in the evening. Teenagers tend not to feel tired until around 11:00 p.m. They need eight hours of sleep for best performance. Starting school later will give them the sleep they need.

High schools all over the country are looking at **new studies**. The studies show improved mental health for students in schools with later starting times.

Schools are resisting changing their schedules for two reasons.

One is that it will change the daily routine. Family plans often include after-school activities. On the other hand, observers say children coming home closer to mealtime may make it easier for families.

The second is the view that getting by on just a few hours of sleep is a sign of strength. Said an expert, “it means to some that you are working harder, and that is a good thing.”

One researcher concluded, “Even schools with limited resources can make this one policy change with what appears to be benefits for their students.”

