


## How to Communicate with the Community about School Start Times

Parent Concerns	Validation	Solution "It Works"
<p>Young children on a dark bus corner</p>	<p>We understand you want to know your child will be safe.</p>	<p>There are many MN schools (Edina, Wayzata, Duluth) who have had elementary children starting before high school children for years if not decades, without reports of an incident.</p>
<p>Young children not getting enough sleep (if bus times are "flipped" for teenage students) Aren't we exchanging one problem for another? There is no evidence.</p>	<p>It can be unsettling to make a change without knowing how it may effect your child.</p>	<p>Most younger children are naturally morning larks. In fact, teachers most often schedule core curriculum classes like math and reading in the morning hours, as they find younger children have more attention to focus on learning at that time, compared to after the lunch hour. And, younger children have more malleable sleep schedules so you will have the ability to get them the sleep they need.</p>
<p>Less family time in the evening: Elementary (due to earlier bedtimes)</p>	<p>We live in a fast paced society and we realize you already feel crunched for time. Now it feels like you have even less time to get it all done.</p>	<p>Families have been able to make it work. Health Professionals say prioritizing sleep for our children is important for their health, mood, safety and ability to learn. Yes, you are making a compromise now by putting your younger child to bed earlier, but you will benefit from this school time change later, when your young child is a teenager.</p>
<p>Less family time in the evening: Teens (due to later school days)</p>	<p>Teenagers can be difficult to communicate with so we understand you need to have every opportunity to connect with them.</p>	<p>Consider quality over quantity. Socializing with a well rested teen in a good mood is much easier than doing so with one who is tired and cranky</p>
<p>Less time for sports</p>	<p>We recognize your concern that this change in schedule may hamper the athletics our community enjoys. Sports play in an important role: activity, teamwork and build confidence.</p>	<p>Schools have found both sports and later start times can co-exist. They have found ways to work around schedules. They have not seen a decline in the number of children participating in sports. And there is data showing teenagers who are well rested perform better athletically and have less injuries.</p>

## How to Communicate with the Community about School Start Times

<p>Highschool students missing academic time in order to attend games or be involved in other extracurricular activities</p>	<p>See above</p>	<p>Students today have a wide variety of choices for activities and some of those will require leaving school early. The students in schools with later start time have been able to make this work. They obtain homework ahead of time. Some schools will allow for these students to take a study hall at the end of the day.</p>
<p>Cost of after-school childcare</p>	<p>It can be stressful to have a change in the family and work schedule, especially when that might involve effect finances.</p>	<p>In districts where start times were moved, many families were able to adjust work schedules or find less expensive childcare by enlisting the help of grandparents or neighbors.</p>
<p>School leaders making parenting decisions</p>	<p>You know what is best for your child better than anyone. And we wish we could accommodate everyone's individual needs.</p>	<p>We are trying our best to help the majority of the students in school in this community over the duration of the time they are in our district. Right now, we are not being fair to our current or future teenagers. They need more sleep to minimize negative effects to their health. That evidence is clear.</p>
<p>If this is so important for children, why are we not putting money into it by getting more buses so that everyone can go to school around the same time. This would help with the family/work scheduling difficulties</p>	<p>We agree! We wish there were unlimited funds.</p>	<p>School leaders, like parents and teenagers themselves, are constantly needing to make decisions on where best to put their available time and resources. Other school districts in MN have been able to put the time in to make this work without extra costs to the district so they could put their financial resources into other areas. So that is where we are going to put our efforts for now, to see if we can find a similar solution.</p> <div style="text-align: right;">  <p><b>Minnesota Sleep Society</b> mnsleep.net</p> </div>



