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HOUSE RESOLUTION

2           WHEREAS, Decades of peer-reviewed research in sleep and  
3           circadian biology led by Dr. Mary Carskadon, PhD, of Brown  
4           University and the National Institutes of Health has  
5           demonstrated that the biological sleep-wake rhythms of  
6           adolescents naturally shift later beginning at puberty, making  
7           early-morning school schedules incompatible with healthy  
8           sleep; and

9           WHEREAS, This biological shift is not a matter of  
10          preference, motivation, or discipline but reflects changes in  
11          melatonin release and circadian timing that make it  
12          physiologically difficult for adolescents to fall asleep early  
13          enough to obtain adequate rest when schools begin early in the  
14          morning; and

15          WHEREAS, The American Academy of Pediatrics, the Centers  
16          for Disease Control and Prevention, and the National  
17          Institutes of Health all recognize insufficient sleep in  
18          adolescents as a significant public health issue linked to  
19          increased risk of depression, anxiety, suicidal ideation,  
20          substance use, obesity, sports injuries, and motor vehicle  
21          crashes; and

22          WHEREAS, The American Academy of Pediatrics has formally

1 recommended that middle and high schools begin no earlier than  
2 8:30 a.m. in order to align school schedules with adolescent  
3 biology; and

4 WHEREAS, Longitudinal research led by Dr. Kyla Wahlstrom,  
5 PhD, at the University of Minnesota has followed more than  
6 9,000 students across multiple states and has found that later  
7 school start times are associated with increased sleep  
8 duration, improved attendance, higher academic performance,  
9 reduced depression symptoms, lower rates of substance use, and  
10 significant reductions in teen car crashes; and

11 WHEREAS, Dr. Wahlstrom's research further shows that while  
12 8:30 a.m. is a meaningful improvement, start times closer to  
13 9:00 a.m. produce the greatest benefits for adolescent health,  
14 learning, and safety; and

15 WHEREAS, The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention  
16 has identified later school start times as one of the most  
17 effective population-level strategies for improving adolescent  
18 mental health and reducing injury and mortality; and

19 WHEREAS, Data from the Illinois Youth Survey and related  
20 state public health sources consistently show high rates of  
21 sleep deprivation, depression, anxiety, substance use, and  
22 risk-taking behaviors among Illinois middle and high school

1 students; and

2 WHEREAS, Improving adolescent sleep is a prevention  
3 strategy that supports academic success, mental health,  
4 substance use prevention, and school safety simultaneously;  
5 and

6 WHEREAS, School districts across Illinois face wide  
7 variation in transportation systems, geography, staffing, and  
8 community needs, making flexible, locally driven  
9 implementation essential; and

10 WHEREAS, Transportation contracts and school schedules are  
11 regularly re-examined by districts, creating natural  
12 opportunities to realign start times in ways that better  
13 support student health without increasing long-term costs;  
14 therefore, be it

15 RESOLVED, BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE  
16 HUNDRED FOURTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that  
17 we strongly encourage all public school districts serving  
18 grades 6 through 12, in consultation with local stakeholders  
19 and with consideration of community-specific factors, to  
20 assess relevant logistical, transportation, staffing, and  
21 community considerations and to develop a plan as practicable  
22 to adopt school start times that reflect the biological sleep

1 needs of adolescents by beginning - middle schools (grades  
2 6-8) no earlier than 8:30 a.m. and high schools (grades 9-12)  
3 no earlier than 8:30 a.m., with recognition that start times  
4 of 9:00 a.m. or later are even more strongly aligned with  
5 adolescent circadian health and research-based best practices;  
6 and be it further

7       RESOLVED, That school districts are encouraged to  
8 prioritize the adoption of later start times during periods  
9 when transportation contracts, bus routes, or bell schedules  
10 are being reviewed or renegotiated, in order to implement  
11 these changes in a fiscally responsible and operationally  
12 feasible manner; and be it further

13       RESOLVED, That districts are encouraged to consider later  
14 start times as part of comprehensive strategies to improve  
15 student mental health, reduce substance use, enhance academic  
16 engagement, and promote youth safety; and be it further

17       RESOLVED, That suitable copies of this resolution be  
18 delivered to the Illinois Department of Public Health and the  
19 Illinois State Board of Education for distribution to the  
20 school districts.