



SR0752

LRB104 21697 RMO 37288 r

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SENATE RESOLUTION

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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