

December 1, 2014

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS OF DOVER AND SHERBORN
TO EXPLORE SCHOOL START TIMES

In response to a [recent recommendation by the American Academy of Pediatrics \(AAP\)](#) and in the interest of student wellness and achievement, the Superintendent of the Dover, Sherborn, and Dover-Sherborn Regional School Districts created a committee to research and explore school start time options, with an emphasis on later school start times for at least the middle and high school.

The School Start Times Committee, comprising parents, faculty, students, administration and members of the school committees, will explore all available options for a change in school start time to be potentially implemented for the 2015-2016 school year.

In August, the AAP released a new policy recognizing the strong scientific evidence in support of later school start times for middle and high school students. Extensive research suggests that biological changes in sleep associated with puberty prevent many teenagers from effectively functioning in the early morning hours. In addition, research suggests that lack of sleep in teens contributes to depression, susceptibility to illness and injury, motor vehicle accidents, stunted growth and obesity¹ while later school start times promote both health and academic success.²

In recent months, the topic of adolescent sleep deprivation has made headlines across the United States. On October 23, 2014, Fairfax County, one of the largest school districts in the nation, voted to start the school day later for high school students. Closer to home, a few area school districts have moved to a later start time and several others, like Dover-Sherborn, are researching the issue. In addition, on November 30, 2014, The National Institutes of Health, in partnership with the National Geographic Channel and The Public Good Projects premiered the documentary *Sleepless in America*.

¹ [Adolescent Sleep Working Group, Committee on Adolescence, and Council on School Health. School start times for adolescents. *Pediatrics*. 2014 Sep;134 \(3\):642-9. Epub ahead of print August 25, 2014; doi: 10.1542/peds.2014-1697. Review. PubMed PMID: 25156998.](#)

² [Weale, Sally. "Major Study of Teenage Sleep Patterns Aims to Assess Impact on Learning." *The Guardian*, 8 Oct. 2014. Web. <<http://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2014/oct/09/study-teenage-sleep-patterns-assess-impact-learning>>.](#)

The committee recognizes that any potential change in start time will have an effect upon a large portion of the Dover-Sherborn school community and therefore is committed to transparency in the process. Parents, faculty and students will be surveyed and the results of these surveys will be shared by way of the School Start Times landing page of the Dover-Sherborn Public Schools' website (<http://www.doversherborn.org/index.cfm/page/School-Start-Times/pid/21393>). The impact of any change on transportation, extracurriculars, and child care are some of the logistical considerations to be taken into account. Questions, concerns and ideas regarding the process may be directed to the School Start Times Committee at schoolstarttimes@doversherborn.org.

The School Start Times Committee meets regularly, and the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) document posted on the website will be updated to reflect new information and shall serve as a means of answering questions posed by individuals for the benefit of all stakeholders. Presentations will be given to the Dover and Sherborn parent organizations during regularly scheduled meetings in December and January, and a town hall-style meeting will be held in early February. Work will be completed in time for the Superintendent to make a recommendation to the school committees in February 2015 regarding any change(s).

For more information, please visit the DS website at <http://www.doversherborn.org/index.cfm/page/School-Start-Times/pid/21393>