

Charleston County School District

START TIME PROJECT

D9, D10, & D23

A SUMMARY



WHY ARE WE CONSIDERING CHANGING SCHOOL START TIMES?

- **CCSD School Start Time Project**

Goal to align school schedules in Districts 9, 10, and 23 with research-based best practices.

- **Current Discrepancy**

These constituent districts operate on different schedules than the rest of Charleston County, prompting a review.

- **Student Success**

Later start times for adolescents support better sleep, heightened focus, and improved academic performance.

THE SCIENCE BEHIND SLEEP AND SCHOOL START TIMES

- **Teen Sleep Needs:** 8-10 hours per night (AAP, 2014).
- Biological changes delay sleep drive and melatonin release.
- **Effects of sleep deprivation:** Lower grades, increased stress, more accidents.

RESEARCH ON LATER START TIMES

- **Academic Improvements**

- Higher GPA and standardized test scores.
- Increased focus, engagement, and class participation.
- Fewer tardies and absences, leading to better learning outcomes.

- **Health & Well-being**

- More sleep for students (25-77 minutes more per night).
- Reduced stress, anxiety, and depression.
- Fewer reported cases of student illnesses (50% decrease – Kelley et al., 2017).

- **Safety Benefits**

- Fewer drowsy driving accidents among teen drivers.
- Reduced risk-taking behavior and health-related issues.
- Safer commutes with better daylight conditions for younger students.

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT AND DECISION PROCESS

1

Comprehensive Research & Community Feedback: Conducted literature review, surveys (5,747 responses), and listening circles to gather insights.

2

Broad Stakeholder Engagement: Engaged students, parents, teachers, and community members to ensure diverse perspectives.

3

Data-Driven Decision Making: Used research and community input to guide the evaluation of school start times and understand the challenges associated with making a change.

CONCERNS AND SOLUTIONS


- **Work schedules:** Extended before/after-school programs.
- **Childcare costs:** School-based childcare, funding options.
- **Traffic:** Adjust bus routes, stagger start times, infrastructure improvements.
- **Student safety:** Bus stop lighting, reflectors, safety measures.



DECISION ANNOUNCEMENT

**START TIMES FOR D9, D10, AND D23 WILL ALIGN
WITH CCSD IN 2026-2027.**

No changes in 2025-2026 to allow preparation to ensure a smooth transition.



WHAT THIS MEANS FOR FAMILIES

- **High Schools:** Later start = Better sleep, heightened focus, enhanced mental health, improved academic performance.
- **Elementary Schools:** Minor changes, little academic impact.
- **Support:** Expanded childcare, safety focus, bus adjustments, ongoing communication.

Visit the [Start Time Project webpage](#) for more information.