



Sycamore Community Schools *Healthy School Start Times*

Susan Crabill, Jessica Hoffman, Taylor Materna, Marika McFall, Elizabeth Vorholt

Healthy Start Times

Charge:

Identify and develop recommendations, based on **research** and **feasibility** studies, to adjust school start times to a healthier time frame.

Essential Guiding Questions

Research

- What are the **health outcomes** for adolescents that are associated with early start times?
- What are the **effects of changing** to later start times?

Feasibility Studies

- How have **other schools, districts** or communities approached HS start times?
- What are **key factors** to consider?
- What are the current **barriers**?
- What are the **costs** associated with implementing changes?
- Action steps to **plan** for healthier start times?
- Action steps to **implement** the plan?
- How is **success measured**?

Balance of Two Approaches

Research from the field

- Valid, reliable, proven
- Synthesized over many contexts
- Based on outcome measures, not impressions

Information from districts

- Based on local context
- Timely
- Directly informs district action steps

Overview

Research:

- Recommendations from the American Academy of Pediatrics
- Recommendations from the American Psychological Association
- Sleep Foundation (2022) statistical data from parents, adults and teachers

Feasibility Studies:

- Reviewed enrollment & transportation data from ODEW and school websites for **14** Ohio districts; **9** local including Sycamore and **5** others with similar enrollment, economics, diversity, typography (suburban) # of buses, % of ridership **and/or** square miles.
- Consulted with transportation administrators and/or school treasurers of the 13 Ohio districts. One district did not respond.
- Consulted area high school athletic directors regarding impact on athletic schedules



Research on Healthy Start Times

Big Picture on Healthy Start Times

HS start times
before 8am

Chronic sleep
deprivation in teens

Physical and mental
health risks

* Early start times do not have the same negative effects on younger students, due to changes in natural sleep cycles in adolescence.

Why?

The majority of teenagers do not get the recommended 8-10 hours of sleep. Inadequate sleep can lead to countless negative health consequences that impact students' ability to learn.

Many experts advocate later school start times—sometimes up to an hour—to help students get the sleep they need.

In 2022, California became the first state to mandate a later school start time. Middle schools and high schools cannot start earlier than 8 AM and 8:30 AM, respectively. Other states and cities will be monitoring the impact of the law as they consider a similar move.

American Academy of Pediatrics Recommendation

High schools not start before 8:30 a.m.

Later start times result in better outcomes for teens including:

- reduced obesity risk
- lower rates of depression
- fewer drowsy driving crashes
- improved overall quality of life

Source: Owens, Judith. "School Start Times for Adolescents." PEDIATRICS, vol. 134, no. 3, 25 Aug. 2014, pp. 642–649, [pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/134/3/642](https://doi.org/10.1542/peds.2014-1697), <https://doi.org/10.1542/peds.2014-1697>.

American Psychological Association Recommendation

Later start times lead to more sleep for teens

Benefits observed from later high school start times include:

Increase in:

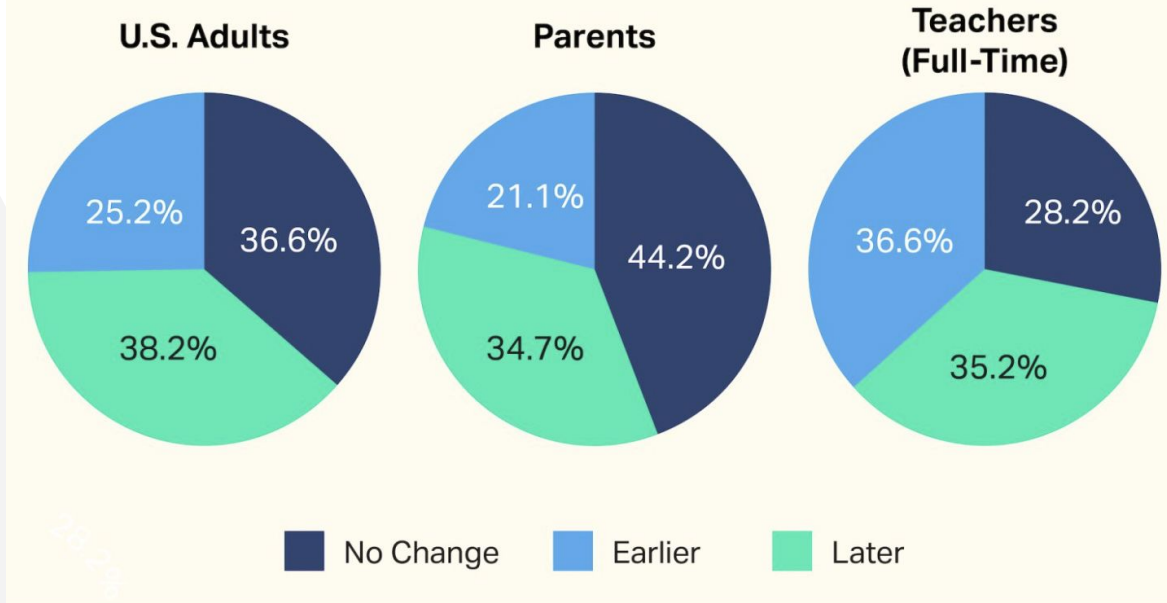
- Attendance rates
- Student GPA
- State assessment scores
- College admissions test scores
- Student attention
- Quality of student-family interaction

Decrease in:

- Disciplinary action
- Student-involved car accidents
- Student sleeping during instruction

Source: American Psychological Association. "Later School Times Promote Adolescent Well-Being." Apa.org, American Psychological Association, 30 Oct. 2023, www.apa.org/topics/children/school-start-times.

Who wants later start times?



A July 2022 survey of parents and teachers by the Sleep Foundation showed a mixed response to later school start times.

Credit: Sleep Foundation

Source: Sommer, Constance. "What Do We Really Think of Later School Start Times?" Sleep Foundation, 24 Aug. 2022, www.sleepfoundation.org/sleep-news/later-school-start-times-what-do-we-think.

Potential Barriers to Consider

- Operational and logistical challenges
- Complications scheduling after-school extra-curricular activities including impact to other districts schedules
- Complication to current high school schedule
- Domino impact to other building schedules
- Disruptions to schedules of working parents
- Community backlash at “erosion of local control and a failure to respect parental decisions and community input”
- Disproportionately challenges low-income families with less workplace and child care (of younger siblings) flexibility
- Additional cost for buses and/or staffing for additional routes



Learning from Other Districts

Districts We Researched/Interviewed

1. **Sycamore Community City**
2. **Mason City**
3. **Loveland City**
4. **Princeton**
5. **Kings Local**
6. **Wyoming City**
7. **Solon City**
8. **Forest Hills Local**
9. **Oak Hills**
10. **Upper Arlington City**
11. **Lakota Local**
12. **New Albany-Plain Local**
13. **Avon**
14. **Springboro**

Districts that Do Not provide high school transportation

Oak Hills - eliminated high school transportation in the 1970's. Treasurer noted that road access to high school limited, one of the lowest tax rates in Hamilton County, one of the lowest cost per pupil in the state. Eliminating high school transportations allows more flexibility in start/end times.

Lakota Local - eliminated high school transportation in 2011 due to a levy failure in 2010. Levy passed in 2013 and transportation returned for Freshman only due to Lakota having Freshman buildings. No consideration to bring back transportation for grades 10-12.

Loveland - eliminated high school transportation in 2021 due to operating levy failure in 2020.

Wyoming - has not transported high school students and/or only transport about 13% of students due to small geographic area. **Conducted a study in 2021 resulting in a later start time for high school from 7:50 to 8:00.**

Upper Arlington - has not transported high school students for over 20 years.

Springboro - transports grades 9-11, not grade 12

Comparative Start/End times

District	Prek-2 Elem.Start End times	Start/End Gr.3-5	Start/End Gr. K-4	Start/End Gr. 5-6	Start/End Gr.7-8	Start/End Gr. 9-12	Academic Day Length (hrs:min)
Sycamore Community City	9:10-3:55	9:10-3:55		7:50-2:50	8:10-3:15	7:20-2:20	7:00
Kings Local	8:25-2:55			9:15-3:45	7:30-2:10	7:30-2:10	6:40
Springboro Community City	9:20-4:04	8:45-3:30	8:30-3:15	7:30-2:20	7:30-2:20	7:30-2:25	6:55
New Albany-Plain Local	9:20-3:50		9:15-3:45	8:25-3:00	8:25-3:00	7:40-2:15	6:35
Mason City	9:20-3:50	8:40-3:05		8:40-3:05	7:45-2:30	7:45-2:30	6:45
Loveland City			8:55-3:35	7:20-2:10	7:20-2:10	7:45-2:40	6:55
Wyoming City	8:30-3:30			8:10-3:08		8:00-3:00	7:00
Solon City	8:00-2:30	8:00-2:30	8:00-2:30	8:50-3:40		7:50-2:55	7:05
Forest Hills Local	9:15-3:45	9:15-3:45	9:15-3:45	9:15-3:45	8:30-3:15	8:00-2:40	6:40
Oak Hills	8:50-3:30	8:30/9-3/3:30		7:35-2:15	7:35-2:15	8:00-2:48	6:48
Upper Arlington City	8:15-2:50	8:15-2:50	8:15-2:50	8:10-3:20	8:10-3:20	8:05-3:05	7:00
Lakota Local	9:10-4:00	8:20-3:10		8:20-3:10	7:20-2:10	7:20-2:10	6:50

Wyoming, Oak Hills, Loveland and Upper Arlington do not transport high school. Lakota transports only Freshman. Springboro only 9-11. Mason, Wyoming and Forest Hills changed to a later high school start time within the past 5 years.

District data comparison; cost, econ. disadvantaged & other

District	Economic ally Disadvan taged	Total # of Buses	Total Miles	Total Regular Student Cost	Total Regular Riders	Cost per regular rider
Sycamore Community City	12.6%	47	567,900	\$3,862,095	4312	\$896
Kings Local	11.2%	47	253,960	\$3,395,954	3174	\$1,070
Springboro Community City	8.1%	53	622,980	\$3,967,719	3703	\$1,071
New Albany-Plain Local	6.4%	32	329,040	\$2,098,678	2378	\$883
Mason City	9.7%	96	904,860	\$6,468,311	7529	\$859
Solon City	10.5%	44	407,340	\$2,856,181	2493	\$1,146
Forest Hills Local	12.10%	60	632,700	\$3,185,732	3397	\$938
Lakota Local	18.4%	175	1,734,300	\$13,674,983	9682	\$1,412

Sycamore cost per regular rider is one of the lowest of the group that provides high school busing. Also has the 2nd highest economically disadvantaged %. Lakota Fr. only, Sprboro - 9-11 only

How have districts accomplished later start times?

Districts who have accomplished this have used the following:

- Swap HS and Gr. 5-8 start times
- Shift the entire system back by x minutes
- Reduce inefficiencies/down time of bus routes
- Add routes to existing drivers/buses
- No HS busing (not recommended)
- Shorter instructional day (not recommended)

High School Athletics Impact

Athletic Directors: Mason (2:30), Anderson (2:40), Turpin (2:40)

- All reported NO major issues with scheduling or arriving on time to events and very few additional interruptions to the academic day
- All reported positive response from athletes to the later start time
- It is noteworthy that these schools have SHORTER days than SHS. Anderson and Turpin by 20 min, Mason by 15 min. So, while starting 25-40 minutes later, they only end 10-20 minutes later.
- Sycamore Athletic Director (Mark Harden) reported an end time as late as 2:45 end time could be doable for athletics, in his opinion.

Key Factors from Districts researched

Districts changing start times ranged from 10 to 15 minutes later

No district included in research had a high school start time at the recommended 8:30.

District start time change was a full team approach, every school, every dept.

Districts that change their high school start time based it on health research.

Districts eliminating high school busing related to levy failure, no urgency by parents to add back and lower tax rates.

Districts adjusting their high school start time did not add buses.

Recommendations & Next Steps

Take our research and go deeper:

- Establish high school **task force**; teachers, administration, students, parents
- Deep dive into high school schedule for alternate options for students requesting/requiring later start time (currently a privilege for seniors)
- Reach out to **Forest Hills and Mason** for their template on how they accomplished later start times across the system.
- Explore district feasibility of options such as:
 - Swapping Gr. 5-8 and HS start times
 - Shifting start times across the system by ~15 min.
 - Review time availability within current buses and routes
- Explore feasibility for community: need/want, cost, buy-in, impact to after school activities, childcare, domino impact to younger grades/buildings

References

- [American Academy of Pediatrics article](#)
- [American Psychological Association article](#)
- [National Education Association \(national teacher's union\)](#)
- [Ohio Department of Education - bus cost analysis](#)
- [Ohio Department of Education - enrollment data](#)
- [Ohio Department of Education - reports portal](#)
- [Ohio Department of Education - reports enrollment](#)
- [Ted Talk on Sleep Deprivation](#)