



We Treat Kids Better



USC University of
Southern California

March 5, 2017

Anthony J. Portantino, State Senator
California State Senate
State Capitol, Room 3086
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: SB 328 (Portantino) - School Start Time - SUPPORT

Dear Senator Portantino:

On behalf of the members of the Children's Orthopaedic Center at Children's Hospital Los Angeles, we are writing to express our strong support for SB 328 (Portantino), which will require California school districts to start their middle and high school days no earlier than 8:30 a.m.

The Institute of Medicine estimates that up to 70 million Americans suffer from inadequate sleep, which is associated with an increased risk of chronic disease, to include high blood pressure, diabetes, depression, and stroke. Adolescents are no exception. Studies have shown that the adolescent population is chronically sleep deprived and at risk of significant injury to include increased athletic injury, mental health problems, worsened academic achievement and automobile accidents.

Our previous research has examined a lack of sleep as a major contributor to injury and worsened mental capabilities in pediatric athletes. We found that those adolescent athletes who had less than eight hours of sleep had two-thirds times the increased risk of sports injury. Additional research also revealed that decreased sleep is associated with decreased neurocognitive performance to include worsened memory and cognition.

The National Sleep Foundation and the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recommend that adolescents achieve a minimum of eight hours of sleep per night. However, 68.9% of adolescents get less than the recommended 8-hour minimum, with higher percentages experiencing inadequate sleep with increasing age.

Simply recommending earlier bed times for adolescents does not solve the problem because pediatric biologic changes prevent such compliance. Teens' natural sleep-wake cycles begin shifting two hours later at the start of puberty, thus making it difficult for them to fall asleep before 11 p.m. Students who have first-period or worse, zero-period class at 7 a.m. or earlier, face certain sleep deprivation.

The AAP recommends middle and high schools delay start of classes to 8:30 a.m. or later, which could align school requirements to their biological sleep rhythms. SB-328 would help California schools support that recommendation and help adolescents get the sleep they need to grow, learn and ultimately achieve a better quality of life.

Respectfully,

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cc: Members of Senate Committee on Education