

LATER START TIME FOR HIGH SCHOOL

- WHEREAS, Missouri Congress of Parents and Teachers recognizes education as vital to the success of Missouri's children and youth and adequate rest and sleep as vital to the success of education and the physical, emotional and social well-being of children and youth; and
- WHEREAS, Research shows that puberty resets teenagers' biological clocks via the secretion patterns of the sleep chemical, melatonin, prompting them to fall asleep later and wake up later than younger children or adults and causing them to have an increased need for sleep to an average of 9.2 hours a night for a typical teen or generally between 8.5 to 9.5 hours of sleep nightly; and
- WHEREAS, Studies showing that melatonin, which signals the brain that it is time for bed, is not secreted until around 11 p.m. and then continues being secreted for approximately nine hours, clearly puts the biological sleep time of adolescents in conflict with early start times for school, particularly high school; and
- WHEREAS, The average American teen gets only 6.5 hours of sleep on a school night, some much less, to the extent that the National Academy of Sciences estimates that 70 percent of teenagers may have some kind of problem related to sleep, with research suggesting that adolescents may be among the most sleep-deprived group in society; and
- WHEREAS, Sleep researchers, doctors and educators are concerned about the sleep deprivation in today's teens that causes 20% of high school students to fall asleep in class and 17% of teen drivers to report that they have dozed off at the wheel at least once, so that teen drivers are involved in more sleep-related accidents than any other segment of the population; and
- WHEREAS, Teen sleep deprivation or insufficiency is associated with information processing and memory deficits; decreased creativity and ability to handle complex tasks, think critically and analyze things; increased irritability, mood swings, anxiety and depression, and increased difficulties in dealing with stress and controlling emotions; and suppression of the immune system and greater susceptibility to serious illness; and
- WHEREAS, Research shows that teens benefit if high school classes start later in the morning in the time frame from 8:20 a.m. to 8:45 a.m., with improvement in the overall academic environment marked by decreases in tardiness and absences from the first hour of the day, greater quality of learning, not only in first hour, but all through the day and far greater alertness and attentiveness; now, therefore, be it
- RESOLVED, That Missouri Congress of Parents and Teachers, support legislation and/or state board of education policy recommending or if possible, requiring later start for high school; and be it further
- RESOLVED, That Missouri Congress of Parents and Teachers, through its councils and local units encourage later start for high schools at their individual local school district levels; and be it further
- RESOLVED, That Missouri Congress of Parents and Teachers, through its councils and local units, educate parents, educators and teens who still have to cope with early school schedules concerning adolescent sleep requirements, good sleep hygiene and adolescent sleep biochemistry so adults understand that teens are experiencing a natural shift of sleep biochemistry.