



SCHOOL START TIMES ADVISORY COMMITTEE UPDATE

By DR. SARA AHERN, SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

The School Start Times Advisory Committee has been meeting since March 2018 in order to examine the prospect of adjusting school start times to be more consistent with what a multitude of research studies show about sleep and adolescents. We know that the biological clock shifts for adolescents and they begin to sleep later and stay up longer as a result of natural changes in their brains. Yet, they still need at least 8 hours of sleep. School start times often do not coincide with these natural rhythms and, as a result, many school districts are adjusting the start of high school and sometimes middle school to begin later in the morning.

Adjusting start times within any community can be a complex endeavor, with many potential consequences for families, for employees, for the school district, and for the community. As a result, the School Committee developed the **School Start Times Advisory Committee** to study the possibility of adjusting start times locally in Franklin. The committee will make recommendations to the School Committee in the winter/spring of 2019. It is anticipated that any change, if approved, would go into effect 2020-2021 or later.

The advisory committee has split the work among six subcommittees. Small groups are studying

- Research on sleep and adolescents
- Impacts on before school programs and childcare
- Impacts on after school programs and childcare
- Implications for transportation
- School start times in other Districts
- Implications for employees

A survey is in development and will be sent out later this fall to gather input from parents, students, staff, and community members. Following the survey, the advisory committee plans to hold some parent outreach evenings so that parents can learn more about the study.

Making no change may be an ultimate recommendation of the group. The group may also identify one or more possible changes for the School Committee to consider.

For more information please see the [School Start Times Advisory Committee web page](#), which contains links to some helpful resources on sleep research.