



## **SCHOOL START TIMES ADVISORY COMMITTEE UPDATE**

*By DR. SARA AHERN, SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS*

The School Start Times Advisory Committee is nearing the conclusion of a one-year study examining the prospect of adjusting school start times to be more consistent with what a multitude of research studies show about sleep and adolescents.

Recently, the committee hosted a parent/guardian education event where pediatricians and a sleep research expert shared important points about adolescent sleep schedules and the importance of good habits, including limiting technology and blue light before bedtime. See the video [HERE](#).

The SSTAC has been studying school start times because research shows 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 is a complex endeavor, with many potential consequences. In order to study the possibility of adjusting start times locally in Franklin, the advisory committee split the work among six subcommittees:

- 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

The committee has surveyed parents/families as well as faculty and staff to better understand the impact on the community. Currently, the SSTAC is writing a report of its findings and are preparing a presentation to the Franklin School Committee for March 26, 2019. The committee will present its recommendation to the School Committee at this meeting.

If the School Committee takes a vote on start times, that vote is scheduled to take place on April 23, 2019. It is anticipated that if the SSTAC recommends a change, that it not go into effect until the 2020-2021 school year at the earliest.

For more information please see the School Start Times Advisory Committee web page:

<https://www.franklinps.net/district/school-start-times-advisory-committee>