

Our community issue is school start time, which is not only important to students, but also to school faculty. Through our research, we have found that adequate amounts of sleep are essential for teenagers. In our state, this sleep deprivation issue is negatively impacting teenagers' academic performance and overall health and well-being. West Virginia placed 50th, the lowest, in education according to research conducted by WalletHub. If we can compromise and agree on a public policy as a community that directly addresses and improves this issue, we believe we would witness significant improvements in grades, participation, and performance within the school system.

School start times may not seem like a big issue, but in reality, it is, as shown in a chart below that we made through a survey we conducted on community members. 42% of the people who took our survey think that school starts too early, and that is only with 7 responses. If we were able to obtain a larger sample size to complete our survey, we believe that that percentage would be much higher based on conversations that we have had with other students and teachers. For five days a week, West Virginia students come into school feeling exhausted, causing them to lose focus and sleep. This, in turn, frustrates teachers because their students aren't learning what they are supposed to learn, dropping the students' grades.

This problem should be addressed by the government because it would benefit both students, teachers, and the state as a whole. They have the authority to fix the problem, and we have the solution. Our proposed solution isn't asking for much, but it would make a big difference and improve the students' attitude surrounding school.

In California, they have passed a law saying that high school cannot start any earlier than 8:30 am, and no earlier than 8:00 am for middle schools, which is a variation of what we are asking for in our proposed public policy solution. In California, it is an adequate solution, and if

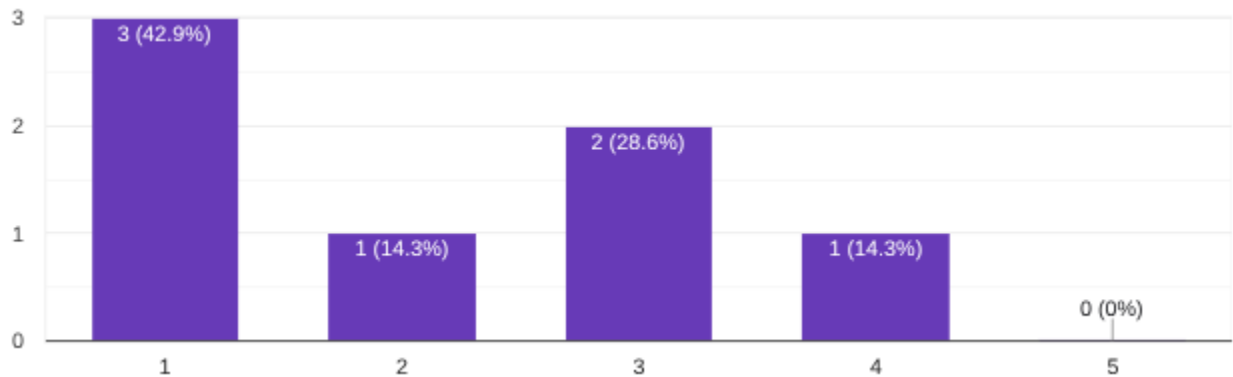
we could apply a variation of this law to our public school system, we believe that we would see positive results.

This issue has not been handled by any government entity so far, but we are hopeful that it will eventually be solved. Pretty much everyone involved in public education feels as if we are woken up too early in the morning to be just going to high school. Teenagers and adults function better with adequate sleep, proven by research and studies.

The Board of Education wants to get school done as early and as efficiently as possible, without taking into consideration the negative impacts that inadequate amounts of sleep have on students. The students want to sleep a little more to feel more energized throughout the school day and improve their academic success.

The advantages of the Board of Education's viewpoint is that school is done by an earlier time in the day, but at the cost of students losing valuable time to sleep and feel more energized in class. From the students' standpoint, they would get to sleep later and fully rest before going to school, but they would have fewer daylight hours to complete jobs or extracurricular activities.

This issue should be handled at the state level of government, hopefully changing school start times for all of West Virginia's students.



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