



Town of Boxford

7A Spofford Road
Boxford, Massachusetts
01921
Board of Health

27 March 2017

Masconomet School Regional School Start Times Advisory Committee c/o Kevin M. Lyons
20 Endicott Road
Boxford, MA 01921

Masconomet Start Times Advisory Committee:

The Boxford Board of Health has discussed the potential impact on high school student health from insufficient sleep associated with early school start times during our previous two monthly meetings (January 23rd and February 27th). During these meetings we discussed the research from various medical associations on school start times and concur with the Policy Statement on School Start Times for Adolescents presented by the American Academy of Pediatrics (2014).

Research has shown a phase-delay shift in sleep onset and wake times of 1-2 hours occurs in adolescents around the time of puberty onset. It is not practical to force students to an earlier sleep time because of this shift and they are not ready to sleep prior to 11:00 pm. This change in circadian phase and sleep disruption due to early wake times may lead to diminished physical activity and mental alertness. An increased use of stimulants (such as caffeinated beverages and prescription medications) has been observed in an attempt to offset the effects of sleepiness and poor academic performance. In addition, an increased incidence of anxiety and mood disorders has been linked to insufficient sleep.

Our Board agrees with the conclusions of the AAP Policy Statement and unanimously supports the STAC's consideration of delaying the Masconomet High School start time. We support efforts to help students achieve 8.5 – 9.5 hours of sleep per night and recommend that if a delay in start time is considered that it should be more than a 30-minute change, and closer to 1 hour, enabling a school start time around 8:30 am.

Respectfully,

Hans C. Jeppesen
Chair, Board of Health