



Start Times Advisory Committee

Masconomet, Boxford, Middleton, Topsfield

2016 Start Times Survey Executive Summary

September 1, 2016

The Start Times Advisory Committee (STAC) received survey responses from 2,461 parents, staff and students from the Boxford, Middleton, and Topsfield Elementary school community and the Masconomet middle and high school community (1,293 parents, 373 staff, 795 students grades 5-12), representing the three towns and four school districts evenly.

How our children are sleeping

The survey found that according to doctors' recommendations from the National Sleep Foundation (NSF), our elementary students in grades preK-2 get enough sleep on average. Our children's average in grades 3-6 decreases to the low end of the recommended sleep range. In grades 7-12, our children are getting significantly less sleep than doctors' recommendations, on average.

9hr 54min
PreK-2 needs
9-11 hrs

Parents of students in **grades PreK-2** report that their children are getting 9hr 54min of sleep on average. In **grades 3-6**, parents report 9hr 6min on average. Our grade 5-6 students themselves report 24 min less than their parents: 8hr 42min. NSF Doctors recommend that these children get 9-11 hours of sleep.

9hr 6min
Grades 3-6
needs 9-11 hrs

Parents of students in **grades 7-8** report that their children are getting 8 hours of sleep on average. These students report 30 min less: 7hr 30min each night, on average. 6% of our middle school students report getting 5.5 hours or fewer, while 32% get the minimum recommended 8 hours or more sleep. NSF Doctors recommend 8-10 hours for all adolescents, grades 7-12, and researchers say that the average adolescent needs an average of 9hr 20min of sleep.

8hr
Grades 7-8
needs 8-10 hrs

7hr 18min
Grades 9-12
needs 8-10 hrs

Parents of students in **grades 9-12** report that their children are getting 7hr 18min of sleep on average. Students report less: 6hr 30min each night on average. 17% of our high school students report getting 5.5 hours of sleep or less and 8% get 8 hours or more.

95%
Don't wake
naturally

95% of our **high school children** (88% of our middle schoolers) need an alarm or person to wake them up – sleep scientists cite this as an indicator that these children are not getting enough sleep. In preK-2, 43% need an alarm, while in **grades 3-6**, 70% of children need an alarm to wake up.

2 in 10
Sleep in school
once a week

57% of our high schoolers (41% of grade 7-8) report feeling sleepy at school almost every day. An *additional* 30% of high school students and 28% of middle school students report feeling sleepy at least once a week. 21% of **high school students** and 11% of middle school students report falling asleep at school at least once a week. In grade 5-6, 14% of students feel sleepy at school almost every day and 2% report falling asleep in school at least once a week.

51%
Nap routinely

51% of **high school students** and 33% of middle school students report taking naps routinely, while 9% of students in grades 5-6 nap. Sleep scientists say that naps can provide short term relief but do not make up for chronic sleep deprivation.

90%
Want more sleep

90% of our **high school students** and 82% of our middle school students report that they want more sleep. 51% of our students in grades 5-6 want more sleep. 65% of high school parents, 41% of middle school parents, and 40% of parents of children in grades 3-6 report that their children get too little sleep.

How much earlier do they wake up on school days?

31 min

Grades PreK-2

1 hr 4 min

Grades 3-6

2 hr 48 min

Grades 7-8

3 hr 24 min

Grades 9-12

The survey asked parents to report on their child's sleep schedules: what time they go to bed, go to sleep, and wake up. Ideally, these times would not change between school days and non-school days. In **grades preK-2**, the times are very close – on average, these young children fall asleep at 8:37pm on school nights and at 8:57pm on non-school nights – a 20min difference. They wake at 6:44am on school days and 7:15am on non-school days – a 31min difference. In **grades 3-6**, the difference in wake up time increases to 1 hr 4min.

For **grades 7-8**, the difference in wake up time increases to 2hr 48min. For **grades 9-12**, the difference in wake up times grows to 3hr 24min, even though they only go to sleep 39min later on average.

3 in 4

Parents and students say Masconomet starts too early

Three quarters of **all parents and students** feel that Masconomet starts either too early or much too early (48% of staff agree, 22% said that it's just right). Fewer than one out of five parents and high school students feel that the current Masconomet start time is "just right". Examining what start times would be acceptable, the students, parents and staff agree that the elementary schools could start between 8:00am - 8:45am. At Masconomet, parents and staff agree that school could start between 7:55am - 9:00am.

Other interesting findings from our survey

Over scheduled

6 in 10

Grades 9-12

4 in 10

Grades 7-8

More than 6 out of 10 of our **high schoolers** reports being over scheduled. Among our **middle schoolers**, it's nearly 4 out of 10, and in grades 5-6, three out of 10 report being over scheduled. High school students spend on average 8 hr in school, 2 hr 11min in athletics and school activities, and 1hr 38min in jobs and non-school activities (these averages all include transportation times). After adding in the 2hr 42min they spend on homework and the 9 hours of sleep they need, the average student would have 29min left each day for eating meals and relaxing with family and friends.

Homework

30m

Grades PreK-2

1 hr 55m

Grades 3-6

2 hr 14m

Grades 7-8

2 hr 42m

Grades 9-12

In **grades preK-2**, parents report an average of 30 min of homework - this closely aligns with the National Education Association's recommendation of 10min of homework per night per grade (e.g. grade 5 should have 50 minutes). In **grades 3-6**, parents report an average of 1hr 55min of homework. In **grades 7-8** the average increases to 2hr 14min. In **grades 9-12** the average time spent on homework increases to 2hr 42min. Staff estimate less homework overall: 2hr 11min in high school, 1hr 35min in middle school, and 1hr 8min in grades PreK-6 (staff data is not broken down by elementary grade).

At Masconomet, both parents and students agree that there is too much homework: 43% of high school students say that they have too much homework. An *additional* 37% say that they have so much homework that they cannot give it the attention it needs. Students report spending 3 hours per night on homework in high school on average, and just over 2 hours in middle school. 50% of high school students and 30% of their parents report that they have 3 or more hours of homework on a typical day.

What's next?

There will be a public presentation of these findings on **October 4 at 7:00 p.m.** at the Masconomet High School Library. All are welcome to attend. The full set of survey results and responses are available at the Masconomet web site: <http://www.masconomet.org/Page/380>

Dr. Judith Owens, director of Pediatric Sleep at Boston Children's Hospital, will be at Masconomet on **September 27 at 7:00 p.m.** to present her talk, *Teenagers: decoded. The link between Sleep, Health, and Behavior*. She will share the results of research on the sleep needs of adolescents.

While there may be evidence that a later start time for Masconomet is good, we still must carefully consider whether making any change is the right thing for our community overall. Obviously, any change in start time would have wide-ranging impact, and our process is guided by the principle that we should consider and discuss this as a community. In addition to start time, the survey results reveal a need to look at student schedules and homework load, and the role that they play in student health.