

2024 Regular Session

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 72

BY REPRESENTATIVE LAFLEUR

SCHOOLS: Requests that the state Department of Education study and report relative to school start times

1 A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

2 To urge and request the State Department of Education to conduct a comprehensive study
3 on school start times and submit a written report of findings and recommendations
4 to the House Committee on Education and the Senate Committee on Education not
5 later than February 1, 2025.

6 WHEREAS, sufficient sleep is essential for the healthy development and daily
7 functioning of children and adolescents, and emerging research suggests that later school
8 start times promote better sleep hygiene, which leads to improved health, academic
9 performance, graduation rates, school attendance, behavior, and overall well-being among
10 students; and

11 WHEREAS, a significant number of schools and school districts in Louisiana suffer
12 from high rates of truancy and chronic absenteeism and low academic achievement; and

13 WHEREAS, adjusting school start times to align more closely with adolescents'
14 natural sleep is an evidence-based strategy to improve attendance rates, enhance students'
15 ability to learn, and contribute to the overall success and welfare of Louisiana's youth; and

16 WHEREAS, research demonstrates that the majority of adolescents are sleep
17 deprived at school, that the natural biological rhythms of adolescents are a poor fit with early
18 school start times, and that most adolescents get their best sleep between 11:00 p.m. and
19 8:00 a.m.; and

20 WHEREAS, many national organizations, such as the American Academy of
21 Pediatrics, American Medical Association, and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and

1 Prevention, recommend later school start times, particularly for middle school and high
2 school students; and

3 WHEREAS, the need to start the high school day later is a public health concern;
4 sleep loss in adolescents has been associated with increased risk of obesity, eating disorders,
5 and cardiovascular morbidity, which are likely to lead to increasingly poor health and mental
6 instability as adolescents progress to adulthood; and

7 WHEREAS, additionally, research identifies numerous consequences and impacts
8 on adolescent brain development associated with sleep deprivation, including lack of
9 attention to learning tasks, poor retention of information taught, low grades, increased risk
10 of automobile accidents, increased disciplinary problems, impaired judgment, increased
11 suicidal thinking, increased levels of anxiety and depression, decreased motivation,
12 increased substance abuse, and other negative consequences; and

13 WHEREAS, the community can support parents and families to ensure that
14 adolescents get appropriate sleep by adjusting school schedules; even small changes to
15 school start times can result in significant improvements to student health and academic
16 performance; and

17 WHEREAS, school districts have flexibility in setting calendars and school start
18 times and would benefit from an analysis of how later school start times may benefit
19 students, including research on best practices from other states; and

20 WHEREAS, it is appropriate that the impact of school start times on student health
21 and performance receive a thorough evaluation.

22 THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby
23 urge and request the state Department of Education to conduct a comprehensive study on
24 school start times and submit a written report of findings and recommendations to the House
25 Committee on Education and the Senate Committee on Education not later than February 1,
26 2025.

27 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the department shall:

28 (1) Evaluate school start times across the state with a particular focus on middle and
29 high schools.

1 (2) Assess potential benefits and challenges associated with later school start times,
2 including impacts on student achievement, truancy, chronic absenteeism, and student health
3 and well-being.

4 (3) Examine the scientific evidence regarding adolescent sleep needs and the impact
5 of school start times on sleep.

6 (4) Explore the logistical, financial, and community implications of adjusting school
7 start times.

8 (5) Engage and consult with stakeholders, including students, parents, educators, and
9 community members, to gather diverse perspectives and insights on the issue.

10 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the report shall include a comprehensive
11 overview of findings, recommendations for potential adjustments to school start times, and
12 proposed strategies for implementing any recommended changes and shall address potential
13 challenges and outline steps for successful transition.

14 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to the
15 president of the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education and the state
16 superintendent of education.

DIGEST

The digest printed below was prepared by House Legislative Services. It constitutes no part of the legislative instrument. The keyword, one-liner, abstract, and digest do not constitute part of the law or proof or indicia of legislative intent. [R.S. 1:13(B) and 24:177(E)]

HCR 72 Original

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Requests that the state Dept. of Education study school start times and submit a written report of findings and recommendations to the House and Senate education committees not later than Feb. 1, 2025.