

2024 Regular Session

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 72

BY REPRESENTATIVES LAFLEUR, BAYHAM, BOYD, BRASS, CARPENTER,  
CARVER, CHASSION, DICKERSON, FREIBERG, GREEN, JORDAN, KNOX,  
LYONS, MARCELLE, MENA, SCHLEGEL, SELDERS, TAYLOR, WILLARD,  
AND YOUNG

A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

To create a task force and urge and request the State Department of Education to conduct a comprehensive study on school start times and submit written reports of findings and recommendations to the House Committee on Education and the Senate Committee on Education not later than February 1, 2025.

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

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

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

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

WHEREAS, many national organizations, such as the American Academy of Pediatrics, American Medical Association, and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, recommend later school start times, particularly for middle school and high school students; and

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

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

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

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

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

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

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force shall be composed of the following members:

- (1) The state superintendent of education or his designee.
- (2) The president of the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education or his designee.
- (3) One member appointed by the chief executive officer of the Baton Rouge Area Chamber.

(4) One member appointed by the president of the Council for a Better Louisiana.

(5) One member appointed by the president of the Louisiana Association of Business and Industry.

(6) One member appointed by the president of the Louisiana Association of Educators.

(7) One member appointed by the executive director of the Louisiana District Attorneys Association.

(8) One member appointed by the president of the Louisiana Federation of Teachers.

(9) One member appointed by the executive director of the Louisiana School Boards Association.

(10) One member appointed by the executive director of the Louisiana School Superintendents Association.

(11) One member appointed by the president of the Public Affairs Research Council of Louisiana.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the member appointed by the chief executive officer of the Baton Rouge Area Chamber shall chair the task force and shall call the first meeting no later than August 30, 2024.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force and department shall simultaneously do the following:

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

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

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

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

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

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force's and department's reports shall respectively include a comprehensive overview of findings, recommendations for potential adjustments to school start times, and proposed strategies for implementing any recommended changes and shall address potential challenges and outline steps for successful transition.

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

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SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE