

RESOLUTION ON THE GOAL OF THE FAIRFAX COUNTY SCHOOL BOARD

TO START HIGH SCHOOLS AFTER 8 A.M. AND TO DIRECT THE SUPERINTENDENT TO IDENTIFY AND REPORT ON SCHOOL DIVISIONS WITH LATER STARTING HIGH SCHOOLS

WHEREAS, the National Institutes of Health (NIH), the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), and the National Sleep Foundation (NSF) all conclude that adolescents on average need about nine hours of sleep per night for optimal performance, health, and brain development; and

WHEREAS, most teens experience delayed sleep onset during puberty, and the hormones that help regulate sleep make it difficult for most teens to fall asleep before 11 p.m. or to be alert before 8 a.m.; and

WHEREAS, Fairfax County Public School (FCPS) buses begin picking students up at 5:45 a.m. and drop students off at high schools between 6:45 and 7 a.m., at a time when teen bodies typically demand sleep; and

WHEREAS, the 2010 Fairfax County Youth Survey found that two-thirds of FCPS 8th, 10th, and 12th grade students report sleeping seven hours or less on an average school night, resulting in a large nightly sleep deficit; and the survey further found that nearly one-third of teen students showed signs of depression; and

WHEREAS, sleep plays an important role in learning and memory; and sleep debt affects teens' ability to think, perform, and react appropriately; and

WHEREAS, there is ample evidence that later high school start times result in adolescent students getting more sleep on school nights; and,

WHEREAS, research shows there are many benefits from later high school start times, including decreases in teen depression, car crashes, behavior problems, discipline referrals, absenteeism, tardiness, and dropout rates ; and,

WHEREAS, these benefits serve the Board's Student Achievement Goals that students will "achieve their full academic potential in the core disciplines" (Goal 1.1) and "make healthy and safe life choices" (Goal 2.8), as well as Operational Expectation 7 that "The Superintendent shall establish and maintain a learning environment that is safe, healthful, nondiscriminatory, respectful, and conducive to effective learning";

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that, because of the benefits to student health, well-being, and performance, it is a goal of the Fairfax County School Board to achieve high school start times after 8 a.m. **so that students are able to obtain a healthy and sufficient amount of sleep, as defined by sleep research and medical experts;** and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Fairfax County School Board direct the Superintendent to identify and provide a list of practices in school divisions that start high schools after 8 a.m. -- including successful approaches in school districts that have changed from before to after 8 a.m. and in school districts that have traditionally had later morning start times (including, but not limited to: Arlington County and Loudoun County, VA; Minneapolis, MN;

Wilton, CT; and Brevard, FL) -- to determine and report to the School Board by June 2012 on how such school districts:

- Scheduled elementary, middle and high schools
- Arranged transportation for elementary, middle and high school students to and from school
- Scheduled sports and after-school activities for high school students around their start and end times
- Used successful change management techniques to involve and prepare parents, teachers, students and other stakeholders and the school division for a different schedule, in cases where a shift to later start times has occurred.