



Pediatricians' warning won't force CPS to push back start times

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BY FRAn SPIELMAN City Hall Reporter August 26, 2014 6:31PM

Mayor Rahm Emanuel and his handpicked schools CEO on Tuesday resisted a pediatricians' push to roll back school starting times so middle- and high-school students can get more sleep.

Emanuel is the son of a pediatrician. He's also the father of three teenagers who knows, only too well how much they love to sleep late.

But the mayor said he's not about to use "preliminary research" that's "not conclusive" as grounds to mess with the starting time of Chicago Public Schools — especially not with the first day of school next Tuesday.

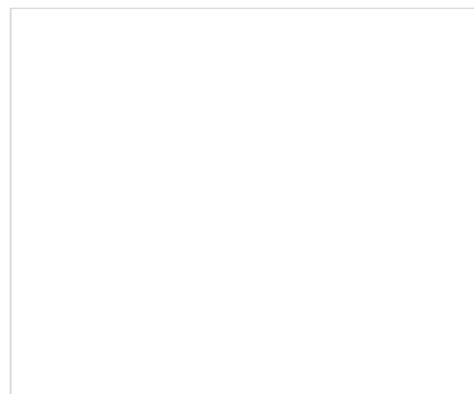
"I've read the report about kids at teen years — because of what's going on physically and otherwise — need more sleep," Emanuel said.

"I joked with Barbara [Byrd-Bennett] the other day — I joked with my wife, Amy, also —that we're gonna start the school day a little later. I would like the mayor's day to start a little later, too. We're gonna tie the two together. She said, 'Good luck.' "

Schools CEO Barbara Byrd-Bennett agreed with the decision not to offer a knee-jerk reaction to the American Academy of Pediatrics' decision to declare teen insomnia a public health issue.

"There's a lot of research and it's all pretty contradictory about children needing to start their high school day at a later start time. And I don't think the research is conclusive on that.

"Right now, we want to stay very focused on what we're doing and not make any kind of significant changes because those changes in start time have a ripple effect. What I believe will get us to the goal is to remain relentlessly focused. Although the research is



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there, we're not planning any changes right now."

To help sleep-deprived high school students get more shut-eye, the American Academy of Pediatrics wants to turn back starting times for middle- and high-school students by 30 minutes.

The pediatricians noted that the average American teen is sleep-deprived to the point of having a sleep disorder. That can impact everything from mood, memory, behavior and focus on driving and car accidents.



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