

Unfettered Letters

Letters to the editor from The Kansas City Star

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March 23, 2012

Teens need more sleep

Although studies show various benefits, schools are still reluctant to adopt later start times for high schools. Many find it's because the community shows resistance because later start times (and dismissal times) could mean decreased work hours or a decline in extracurricular activities. Some families depend on older siblings for child care or income.

While these are valid concerns, teen health should come first.

Even in schools where start times are later, teenagers still don't procure the amount of sleep our bodies need (9 ¼ hours). Most current school start times would require students to go to sleep at 9 p.m. to acquire optimal sleep. This is simply impossible with high school students' course load, extracurriculars or jobs.

Schools that have implemented changes have noticed improved grades, attitudes and overall student performance. They have fewer reports of disciplinary issues and see more alert teenagers. There was little drop in extracurricular participation, and bedtimes stayed constant.

We teens are an important societal group whose needs are underrepresented. Our health should come before sport practice, and businesses should show leniency for students who undertake employment.

Our health is on the line. Please act on our call for change.

Erin Sellers

Prairie Village

Posted by Letters Editor at Mar 23, 2012 8:47:07 AM | [Permalink](#)

Comments



First thought is teens running the streets. I am thinking the writer is probably not the teen we should be concerned about.

Whether right or wrong, Miss Sellers did something many kids don't...she presented a well-written letter for public thought, instead of pitching a tent and occupying her high school.

Now 25 years ago I went to high school from 7-2:30. And being a

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guy my maintenance was a bit less and I lived near school so I could get up at 6-6:15 range and get to school on time. Her 9:00 bedtime is realistic for 9 hours of sleep.

I get her point, but there are too many things that would get disrupted with later start times. Many high schoolers are charged with watching their younger siblings (or sitting others). School must end earlier for that to work out. This also allows sports games/practices to take place at a reasonable time on weekdays, clubs to meet, etc. and be done before dinner.

The problem is probably with increased homework. So much teaching is done with standardized tests in mind now that more homework is forced than in my day when I could do most of it while the teacher is lecturing.

Erin, your concern is valid. You are being thrust into an adult world a bit soon, but it will be like this then. I figure high school should run about 7-3 or so, and get most everything in those hours. I know I work 8-5 now and when I leave my work is done...and homework for me is on my home.

Posted by: NDP | [March 25, 2012 at 03:43 AM](#)



.....I love a farmers daughter reference....even a clean one....

Posted by: solomon | [March 23, 2012 at 04:38 PM](#)



Yes, sol, real drawers - and we didn't have to share them with the chicks, either. Eat your heart out! :)

Posted by: Kate | [March 23, 2012 at 03:22 PM](#)



.....you had a chest of drawers?...I am so tired of you holier than thou change of clothes owners whining about how tough it was for you....

Posted by: solomon | [March 23, 2012 at 01:42 PM](#)



Too good to sleep in a drawer, was he? ;)

Posted by: Kate | [March 23, 2012 at 01:15 PM](#)



.....sure....it was my oldest brothers bassinet....

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Posted by: solomon | [March 23, 2012 at 01:00 PM](#)



You had a bed!?!

Posted by: Kate | [March 23, 2012 at 11:58 AM](#)



.....nine of us, all in the same room, same bed, same underwear....

Posted by: solomon | [March 23, 2012 at 11:49 AM](#)



I can't speak for sol, but my sister and I shared a pair of shoes, so we only went barefoot every other day. And we didn't mock or whine. We were perfect angels as children . . . industrious, cheerful, helpful and polite . . . which is why I'm certain young people can benefit from my example.

Posted by: Kate | [March 23, 2012 at 11:36 AM](#)



Kate and Sol left out barefoot...of course they may have been the fancy people with airs who wore shoes to mock the poor.

Posted by: [Smarter Than You](#) | [March 23, 2012 at 11:23 AM](#)



.....in conversation with young people I have to remind myself that when I was 19 "Charlie's" last name wasn't Sheen and the "boondocks" wasn't a comic strip...

.....sorry kid, you come in here telling us old folks how sick you are of our attitude I feel the need to remind you that so far you don't know much about life at all.....

Posted by: solomon | [March 23, 2012 at 11:22 AM](#)



Jaded did happen pretty quick, I suppose.

All I was saying is that everyone complains. Go ahead and embrace it. You complain about younger people. I complain about people my age.

When adults were my age they did the same. I'd just like a bit of clarity rather than the older generation acting like whining is a

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trait unique to my generation.

Posted by: Kyle | [March 23, 2012 at 11:02 AM](#)



.....at 19 it didn't take Kyle long to become jaded, now did it?....

.....and there's probably a million strong army of 19 year old's named Kyle, telling us first to get over ourselves then repeating what we said.....

Posted by: solomon | [March 23, 2012 at 10:59 AM](#)



I'm sure that our parents and grandparents complained about a lot of things. They just didn't have the internet to do so.

Unless you can legitimately say you never whined a bit as a child, I'm sick of older generations acting holier-than-thou.

Just because you remember the good parts of your childhood doesn't mean the bad parts didn't happen, and it doesn't mean that you didn't complain about them.

As to this article: As a 19-year old, I can effectively say: Get over it. Go to bed earlier if you need more sleep, because the rest of the world is not about to change for a minority group (especially a minority in age group).

Posted by: Kyle | [March 23, 2012 at 10:54 AM](#)



....after dozing in Latin class I defended my nap by saying between being up by 4 running every morning, boxing after school, homework and a part time job I only was getting about 5 hours of sleep....the aged Sister promptly told me that was more than enough....

.....oh, and dearest.....my morning run was somehow always uphill even though run on the neighborhood track....

Posted by: solomon | [March 23, 2012 at 09:44 AM](#)



While I am reluctant to paint all teenagers with the same brush, later start times would only mean many teen agers could stay up later running the streets.

Parental involvement establishing reasonable hours for study, extracurricular activities and use of technology might be a better solution to the 'sleep deprivation' problem.

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Posted by: LRC | [March 23, 2012 at 09:41 AM](#)




Kinda gives you a new respect for your parents and grandparents who juggled their schoolwork, sports and jobs or farm work . . . without whining about sleep.

And they walked to school every day - uphill both ways, in three feet of snow . . .

Posted by: Kate | [March 23, 2012 at 08:59 AM](#)

wood burning
Writing
Wyandotte County

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