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Let's talk Dearborn

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## Student Urges Dearborn School Start Time Change

School start times have been a contentious issue in Dearborn and now a petition is being circulated with the goal of pressuring the Dearborn School Board to consider rolling back the start time of high school students until after 8:15 a.m.

Fatima Shareef, a senior at Edsel Ford High School, penned the column below and makes a pretty compelling, commonsense argument regarding the sleep time needs of people between the ages of 11 – 22.

Opinions vary but early school start times are a medically proven detriment to health and education. We wrote about this very topic in [2009](#).

You can sign her petition [HERE](#)

Her column begins below.

By *FATIMA SHAREEF*

*It's a Monday morning. It's dark outside, and your head is throbbing, but you force your melted eyes open to start getting prepared for the day and think to yourself, "why do I have to attend school so early?"*

*Last spring, the school administration offered to have our high school start time moved up, but at the expense of not offering transportation for 30 percent of students who ride the buses, 27 percent of students who play sports, and 9 percent of DCMST students.*

*For yet another year, we are left to deal with the consequences of starting school so early. Students are putting their heads down on the desks, dozing off, and not focusing on the lessons. This is not entirely due to waking up early in the morning, but it is a major factor that the failed plan could have easily eliminated.*

*Some people argue that going to bed early, reading a chapter of a book, and eating a healthy breakfast are all you need to wake up feeling refreshed and alive. The issue—for teenagers, anyway—is much more complicated than that.*

*According to the research done at Brown University by Mary Carskadon, for students between the ages 11 to 22, the brain chemical melatonin is distributed to the body at 11 p.m. and ends at 8 a.m. This means that unless students are going to sleep by 9 p.m., they will miss an entire cycle of rapid eye movement and remain sleepy all morning as a result.*

Monday, April 21, 2014

Not sure what Deep said?  
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### SECTIONS

- » [Around Town](#)
- » [Arts & Entertainment](#)
- » [Business](#)
- » [City Hall](#)
- » [Education](#)
- » [Events](#)

### January 2013

M	T	W	T	F	S	S
		1	2	3	4	5 6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			
« Dec			Feb »			

### UPCOMING EVENTS

» No events.

[Entries \(RSS\)](#) and [Comments \(RSS\)](#)

*Dr. Charles Czeiler, a professor of sleep medicine at Harvard Medical School, says that when students don't get an adequate amount of sleep, the sleep deprivation accumulates, and within a week, that deficiency is equivalent to being awake for 24 hours. He says that the deficiency also has the same impact as being legally drunk in terms of reaction time and other measures of performance.*

*Helena Thornton, a DHS parent and Edsel graduate, said, "I'm concerned about the fact that the data shows that the students are missing an entire REM sleep cycle with an average of seven hours sleep when studies show they need nine, and how sleep deprivation builds up over the week and has been shown to measurably affect performance comparable to being under the influence of substances."*

*Recently, Ms. Thornton asked me to conduct a survey with students from our school about their sleep patterns. In my sample of 42 students from grades nine to twelve, the average amount of sleep that students get is 7.17 hours. Compared to the nine hours that we are supposed to get, the results are quite alarming.*

*I was also asked to survey them about their opinions on changing the school start time from 7:20 a.m. to 8:20 a.m. Only forty percent of them said yes. The others argued that they would like to be able to wake up a later time, but if it means that they have to stay after 2:15 p.m., then they would rather just wake up earlier and "get it over with."*

*This careless attitude towards our learning is dangerous. Instead of thinking about which start-time plan gets us out of school the earliest, we should be supporting a plan that will make our learning experience as productive as possible. We are going to be in school for the same amount of time anyway, so we might as well make the best use of it. Any parent, student or community member who understands and supports this issue is asked to join in our communication to Dearborn Public Schools by signing the following petition: [HERE](#)*



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