

---

## School Start Time

---

**Michelle Hoffman** <Hoffman942@outlook.com>

Tue, Apr 20, 2021 at 4:22 PM

To: "publiccomment@mcpsmt.org" <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>, Robert Watson <rwatson@mcpsmt.org>, Jennifer Courtney <jccourtney@mcps.k12.mt.us>, "javgeris@mcpsmt.org" <javgeris@mcpsmt.org>, "kmercer@mcpsmt.org" <kmercer@mcpsmt.org>, "gdecker@mcpsmt.org" <gdecker@mcpsmt.org>

I am hearing that there is a recommendation to continue with the mid-morning (9 or 9:30 am) start time for the Missoula County high schools. People have stated that other schools have benefited from starting later so I felt that I needed to do some research on the subject.

According to an article written by the American Academy of Pediatrics, studies have shown that high school students do benefit from later school start times. [School Start Times for Adolescents | American Academy of Pediatrics \(aappublications.org\)](#) As I read further, the article discusses changing from a 7:15 am start time to an 8:30 start time. I agree that 7:15 am is very early and can see why they have seen improvements in some metrics.

Improvement in test scores is one such metric. Reading through the statistics and the articles, I repeatedly find that this improvement occurred in schools with original start times of 7:15 or earlier. When the schools changed to 8:15, 8:30 or 8:40, improvements were realized.

For students at an Iowa high school, practices are later for athletes, musicians and actors which pushes back these students' entire evening and often doesn't result in any additional sleep for these students. This school had to move some extracurricular activities before school because practices were running until 10:30 p.m. due to gym availability. [Later High School Start Times Yield Mixed Results, Say Parents, Educators - US News](#)

In my opinion, a start time of 9 am or later would put a serious strain on the participation level of our students in extracurricular activities. This strain could be detrimental to our students and those programs. Some of these programs are what kept my children from becoming depressed over the last year. Additionally, Missoula County would be the only school in Montana starting this late and it would impact our activities involving other schools. To some, a move like this makes it seem as though MCPS is not promoting after school activities or community involvement.

According to the CDC, "42 states reported that most (75%-100%) public middle and high schools started before 8:30 a.m." <https://www.cdc.gov/sleep/features/schools-start-too-early.html>

I would like to see your evidence that shows a school start time of 9 or 9:30 am is beneficial to our students and our community. In lieu of that, please provide me with a list of schools that start at 9 or 9:30 am. I would like to contact those schools and communities to see how this schedule has worked for them. I believe a discussion regarding the pros and cons with the benefit of their experience would aid our decision-making process.

Thank you,  
Michelle

---