

# Adolescent Well-Being: A Focus on Sleep

## EAST PENN SCHOOL DISTRICT

During the Spring of 2019, a task force was convened to examine adolescent sleep and school start time within the East Penn School District. The task force reviewed the existing research on sleep in middle and high school, and developed surveys to better understand the issue of adolescent sleep in our community. Over 3,200 students, parents and teachers completed the surveys.

Below is a summary of the research on adolescent sleep and effects on well-being, as well as findings from the community wide survey.

### Why is sleep so important during the adolescent years?



Sleep supports **growth** and development- body and brain still growing into late adolescence



Sleep is critical for **learning**- affects ability to focus, problem solve, and remember



Sleep helps teens manage their **emotions**- inadequate sleep is linked to depression and anxiety



Sleep promotes healthy **decision making**- inadequate sleep puts teens at risk for substance use and sleepy driving

### How much sleep do adolescents need?



Adolescents need between 8 and 10 hours of sleep per night for optimal functioning.



We asked students at East Penn to report on number of hours slept.

Percentage of US students that do NOT get a minimum of 8 hours:

**60% of Middle Schoolers**

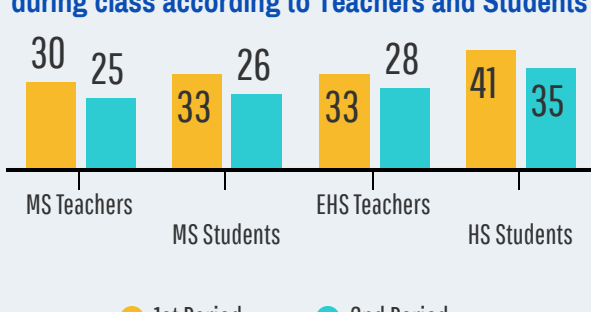
**70% of High Schoolers**

Those that do NOT get minimum 8 hours:

**34% of Middle Schoolers**

**79% of High Schoolers**

What % of students are struggling to stay awake during class according to Teachers and Students?



**72%** High School parents who believe their child sleeps too LITTLE on a school night

**58%** Middle School parents who believe their child sleeps too LITTLE on a school night

### What affects how much sleep teens get?

**Puberty leads to changes in how the body regulates sleep**



Other factors that influence sleep

Hormonal changes lead to a circadian shift from...

Morning Lark to...

Night Owl



Stress and well-being



Activities outside of school



Academic demands



School start time

Late to bed and early to rise is the reality for too many East Penn students

**54% of Middle Schoolers and 87% of High Schoolers**

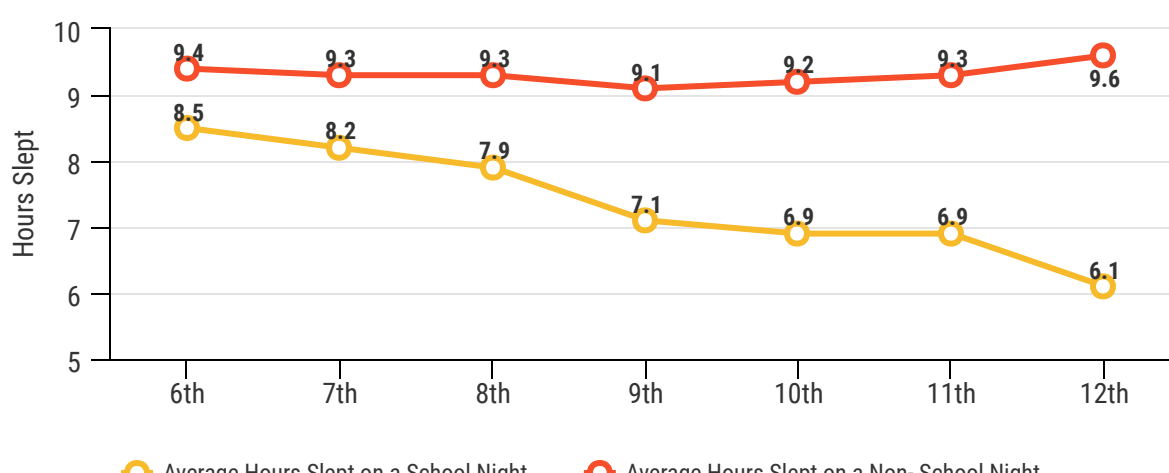
report going to bed after 10:00pm on school nights

Average wake time at Eyer and LMMS is **6:05 a.m.** and at EHS is **5:54 a.m.**

Pressures to stay up and need to wake early make getting 8-10 hours of sleep per night very challenging

### How much sleep are EPSD students getting?

EPSD Student Report on School Nights vs. Weekends



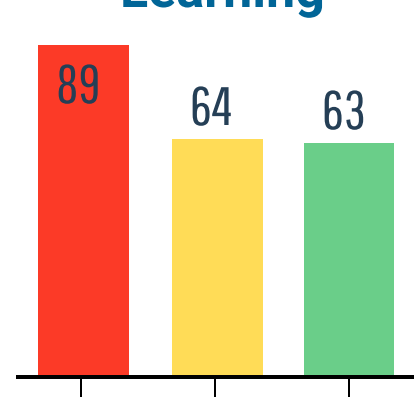
Irregular sleep schedules such as the variability between school nights and non-school nights make it harder for teens to fall asleep AND to wake up- "catching up" on weekends can make things worse!

**10th and 11th graders in EPSD indicated the highest level daytime sleepiness**

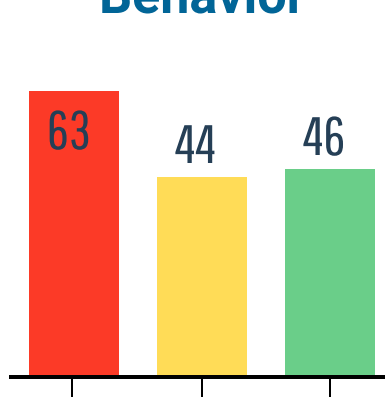
### Where do we see the effect of sleepiness?

Percent who agreed that lack of sleep had a **negative effect** on...

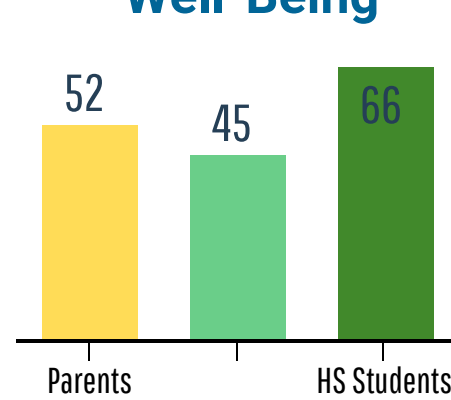
#### Learning



#### Behavior



#### Well-Being



**24% of HS Students** nap during the week to cope with sleepiness

**24%** drink caffeinated beverages to cope



**18%** eat sugary foods



**36%** of students indicate driving while sleepy



**24%** of HS and **20%** of MS report being late 3 or more times due to tiredness.



**18%** of HS and **10%** of MS report being absent 3 or more times due to tiredness.

### Can we help teens sleep more?

#### Getting in the Way of Sleep

- Rise in anxiety and pressure to compete with peers academically and socially
- Increased emphasis on taking AP courses, involvement in extra-curricular activities, athletics, and work experience
- Opportunities for entertainment and socializing are a constant distraction



#### Making Room For Sleep

Amount of sleep is determined by BOTH **bedtime** and **wake time**



Education about healthy sleep and time management can improve adolescent sleep habits

Research shows parental set bedtimes continue to help teens get adequate sleep

At East Penn,

**30%** of High Schoolers and **56%** of Middle Schoolers report having a set bedtime

### What happens when schools start later?

#### Adolescents sleep longer

Despite predictions that adolescents will simply go to bed later, research suggests that a 1 hour change in school start time results in **~45 minutes more sleep/night**

#### Improvement in overall well-being

A recent **30 minute** push in school start time at Unionville-Chadds Ford School District resulted in improvement in **17** out of 20 wellness factors. Athlete concussions dropped by **one-third** since the change.

The Rand Corporation found that school start time changes lead to:

- Reduction in motor vehicle crashes
- Delinquency and tardiness rates decrease
- Improved test scores and graduation rates

#### Wide Agreement...

Later school start times have been endorsed by:

**Centers for Disease Control, American Academy of Pediatrics, and The National Educational Association**

