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# What Is the Advantage of Having School Start Early?

By Marie Anderson

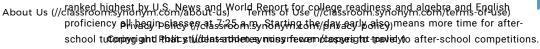


Starting the school day before 8 a.m. might be a struggle at first, but there are benefits.

School days beginning after 8 a.m. have many benefits for students, especially those in middle and high school, according to Psychology Today. These benefits include better academic performance, fewer absences and even improved health. However, early start times do have some advantages that may be worth considering. Students who begin earlier have more time for after-school jobs and activities; schools may benefit by saving some money; and parents might find that an early start works better with their schedules.

## **Academics**

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A 2001 study showed that school administrators cited extracurricular activities as a major reason why high school campuses would rather stated a students walking home from these activities can take advantage of the extra day/Inginesion may hear the start and release may mean more time in the evening for homework and family. High school students also have more time for after-school jobs.



# **Transportation Costs**

Schools may also be able to save up to 30 percent on transportation costs by starting some campuses early and staggering start times within the district. This method saves money by allowing drivers to run more than one route at a time, so fewer buses and drivers are needed. Lubbock ISD in Texas is anticipating saving more than 1 million dollars by utilizing start times prior to 8 a.m. at some campuses. Suffolk Public Schools in Virginia estimates that by starting some campuses at 7:25 a.m. they will be able to save around \$680,000 a year. This schedule also means shorter bus rides for students and less time sitting in traffic.

# **Better for Parent Schedules**

There are specific advantages for parents if younger grades have early start times. Starting school early may eliminate the need for morning childcare if parents are able to drop off their kids before work. They may drop them off at a center that buses them to their campus later in the morning. After school, the daycare picks up the students and parents retrieve their children in the evening from the center. This is necessary for some parents to have time to travel to work, especially if they have a longer commute.

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#### Resources

National Sleep Foundation: Eight Major Obstacles to Delaying School Start Times (http://www.sleepfoundation.org/article/hot-topics/eight-major-obstacles-delaying-school-start-times)

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# About the Author

Houston area native Marie Anderson began writing education articles in 2013. She holds a Bachelor of Science in exercise and sports science and a Master of Science in education administration. She has seven years of teaching and coaching experience within the Texas public school system.

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