

Press Release



Battle Ground Public Schools

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Schools to start, end, later in 2011-12

The science is clear: teens need more sleep

With countless experts and studies concluding American teenagers need more sleep at night if they are to be successful learners in the morning, most Battle Ground schools will start and end 30 minutes later beginning this fall.

Due to busing complications, Amboy Middle School and Yacolt Primary School each will start and end their days 20 minutes later than this past year. All other Battle Ground Public Schools will start and end 30 minutes later than in 2010-11.

“All the research is clear and overwhelming,” said Superintendent Shonny Bria. “Much of the population of middle and high school students is sleep-deprived. We would rather have them sleeping at home than in school.”

Cornell University psychologist James B. Maas, Ph.D, one of the nation's leading sleep experts, says, “Almost all teen-agers, as they reach puberty, become walking zombies because they are getting far too little sleep. You can be giving the most stimulating, interesting lectures to sleep-deprived kids early in the morning or right after lunch, when they're at their sleepest, and the overwhelming drive to sleep replaces any chance of alertness, cognition, memory or understanding.”

(www.apa.org/monitor/oct01/sleepteen.aspx)

Bria said there are two “good questions” that crop up most often in any discussion of later start and ending times for the school day.

1. “Why should school hours change just because older students don’t go to bed when they should? Their parents should see that they get to bed earlier.”

Even if teens would quit what they’re doing at 9 or 9:30 p.m., turn out the lights, crawl into bed and turn off all electronic devices, most of them couldn’t sleep.

Kyla Wahlstrom, director of the Center for Applied Research and Education Improvement in St. Paul, Minn., says, “From the onset of

puberty until late teen years, the brain chemical melatonin, which is responsible for sleepiness, is secreted from approximately 11 p.m. to 8 a.m.

“This secretion is based on human circadian rhythms and is rather fixed. In other words, typical youth are not able to fall asleep much before 11 p.m. and their brains will remain in sleep mode until about 8 a.m., regardless of what time they go to bed.”

(www.cehd.umn.edu/research/highlights/Sleep/)

2. I understand about adolescents. But why start the day later for the little kids?

The answer to this one isn't science. It's money. There are 113 school buses running a total of 10,170 miles daily on multiple regular routes in the Battle Ground district. Any change in a school's schedule affects transportation not only to that school but to other primary, middle and/or high schools served by that same bus. Several scenarios were considered, but they would have resulted in higher transportation-labor costs, which the district cannot afford.

Safety, after-school activities also considered

The safety of older students driving to high school in time for the 7:30 a.m. start of the day, especially on dark winter mornings, was also a factor. Now, Prairie and Battle Ground high schools will start at 8 a.m.

According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, drowsiness and fatigue cause more than 100,000 traffic accidents each year--and young drivers are at the wheel in more than half of these crashes.

(www.apa.org/monitor/oct01/sleepteen.aspx)

District-level and high school administrators also took into account the potential effect on athletics, other after-school activities and older students' jobs and home responsibilities, along with the potential benefits to learning.

Each school's hours for 2011-12 are on the following page.

Here are the new starting and ending times for Battle Ground Public Schools. Classes begin Wednesday, Sept. 7, 2011.

Battle Ground High	8:00-2:30
Prairie High School	8:00-2:30
Amboy Middle School	9:00-3:30
Captain Strong Primary	9:10-3:40
Chief Umtuch Middle	8:15-2:45
Daybreak Middle School	9:10-3:40
Daybreak Primary	9:10-3:40
Glenwood Hts. Primary	9:00-3:30
Laurin Middle School	8:15-2:45
Maple Grove Middle	8:15-2:45
Maple Grove Primary	9:10-3:40
Pleasant Valley Middle	8:15-2:45
Pleasant Valley Primary	9:00-3:30
Tukes Valley Middle	8:10-2:40
Tukes Valley Primary	9:10-3:40
Yacolt Primary School	9:20-3:50

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