Kids need more sleep, but forcing school to push back their start times is not the answer

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Abstract

Working and single parents in some districts may not have the ability to adjust their work schedules, transportation demands and costs must be considered, and changing end-times in turn limits students who rely on part-time work or access to local community colleges. Elementary school kids are now up watching "American Horror Story," playing on their electronic devices or yakking and texting on cellphones.

Full Text

Wendy M. Troxel and Marco Hafner skulk over the real and serious reasons why the California School Boards Assn. has rightly opposed SB 328: This legislative overreach is not the "small change" they suggest. ("If teenagers get more sleep, California could gain billions," Opinion, Sept. 7)

School start times aren't the issue. Surely more sleep would be beneficial for teenagers, which is one reason why my own district went to a later high school start time years ago. But we oppose the one-size-fits-all approach from Sacramento.

School start times at the roughly 3,000 secondary schools in California are set for many reasons: Working and single parents in some districts may not have the ability to adjust their work schedules, transportation demands and costs must be considered, and changing end-times in turn limits students who rely on part-time work or access to local community colleges. The list of unintended consequences goes on.

The logistical challenges that Troxel and Hafner dismiss so casually are serious matters for locally elected governing boards, which are better placed than Sacramento to know what is right for their district.

Angela Cutbill, Agoura Hills

The writer is a trustee on Las Virgenes Unified School District Board of Education.

To the editor: As a kid, I had a bedtime that was enforced because it was good for me. That idea seems to have disappeared from the parenting landscape.

Elementary school kids are now up watching "American Horror Story," playing on their electronic devices or yakking and texting on cellphones. Parents attend social events mid-week and drag their children with them. Bedtime and sleep is so "old school," yet somehow my peers and I all went to bed between 8 and 10 p.m., as kids, and we wake in school starting at 8 a.m., with reasonable success.

Moving back the school start time also pushes teachers and students into rush hour traffic they now can avoid, Plus, how many students won't make the bell because the bus is stuck on the freeway?

Let's not adopt a bogus fix that enables bad habits.

Mitch Paradise, Los Angeles

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Details

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