



Senator Sandra Williams
21st Ohio Senate District

Committees:

- Energy and Public Utilities –Ranking Member
- Ways and Means – Ranking Member
- Higher Education – Ranking Member
- Insurance and Financial Institutions
- Rules and Reference

Senate Bill 218 Sponsor Testimony
Education Committee
February 4, 2020

Chairman Lehner, Vice Chair Brenner, Ranking Member Fedor, and members of the Senate Education Committee, thank you for the opportunity to present sponsor testimony on Senate Bill 218.

Senate Bill 218 would prohibit any school that is operated by a school district, community school, STEM school, or college-preparatory boarding school from beginning the school day earlier than 8:30 a.m.

Research has shown the positive impact of delaying school start times has on both families and educators. Numerous health organizations and educational agencies have also conducted research showing that early school start times cause direct harm to children.

California recently implemented legislation concerning the start of the school day. State legislation modifying school start times allows local schools to exercise control as they see fit. Schools can decide, based on community needs and preferences, whether to start elementary or secondary schools first, or at the same time. Similarly, schools can decide whether to keep zero-hour classes or other extra-curricular classes offered to students at the start of a school day.

Across Ohio, there are examples of various stakeholders who have advocated for changes in district start times. These include, but are not limited to: parents, teachers, school board members, students and superintendents.

The impact of early wake times on teens can be harmful as it hinders students' abilities to focus and retain information. According to a 2017 study conducted by National Center of Biotechnology Information, 29 high schools in 7 states, found that moving morning start times after 8:30am resulted in an average 9% increase in graduation rates, with the lowest-performing schools improving their graduation

rates 17%¹. Additionally, anxiety, depression, low frustration tolerance and increased school violence have been attributed to loss of sleep and sleep disruption. Furthermore, increases in substance abuse, sports injuries, automobile accidents and pedestrian accidents are some of the tragedies caused by sleep deprivation. The goal of this legislation is to ensure that children are arriving to school safely.

Chairman Lehner, Vice Chair Brenner, Ranking Member Fedor, and members of the Senate Education Committee, this concludes my testimony and I will be happy to answer any questions the committee may have.

¹ <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/28346158>