

**The Florida Senate**  
**BILL ANALYSIS AND FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT**

(This document is based on the provisions contained in the legislation as of the latest date listed below.)

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Prepared By: The Professional Staff of the Appropriations Committee on Education

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BILL: SB 1112

INTRODUCER: Senator Burgess

SUBJECT: Middle School and High School Start Times

DATE: April 11, 2023

REVISED: \_\_\_\_\_

	ANALYST	STAFF DIRECTOR	REFERENCE	ACTION
1.	<u>Sabitsch</u>	<u>Bouck</u>	<u>ED</u>	<b>Favorable</b>
2.	<u>Gray</u>	<u>Elwell</u>	<u>AED</u>	<b>Pre-meeting</b>
3.	_____	_____	<u>FP</u>	_____

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## I. Summary:

SB 1112 provides requirements for middle school and high school start times. Specifically the bill requires that, by July 1, 2026, district school boards must implement a school start time no earlier than 8:00 a.m. for middle schools and 8:30 a.m. for high schools.

The bill requires each district school board to inform its community concerning impacts of sleep habits of middle and high school students, and to discuss strategies to implement the later school start times.

The bill also specifies that charter schools must comply with the school start times required in the bill.

The bill has no impact on state revenues or expenditures, but could have a significant fiscal impact to school districts.

The bill takes effect on July 1, 2023.

## II. Present Situation:

### District School Boards

Each district school board is responsible for the establishment, organization, and operation of schools in the district's geographic area. Each district school board is required to adopt policies for the opening and closing of schools within the district, however the opening date of schools may not be earlier than August 10th of each year.<sup>1</sup> Current law does not prescribe daily start times for schools. However district school board policy must ensure that no more than one and

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<sup>1</sup> Section 1001.42(4)(f), F.S.

one-half hours will elapse between the time a student boards a district operated bus and the time school begins.<sup>2</sup>

### **Charter Schools**

Charter schools are tuition-free public schools created through an agreement or “charter” that provides flexibility relative to regulations created for traditional public schools. All charter schools in Florida are public schools and are part of the state’s public education system. During the 2021-2022 school year, 361,939 students were enrolled in 703 charter schools in 47 districts.<sup>3</sup> Charter schools are afforded a number of exemptions from certain requirements which include matters related to the overall operation of the school such as facilities, operations, and finance. However, charter schools must comply with certain statutory requirements which are described in law.<sup>4</sup> Like other public schools, no law directs charter schools to establish specific daily start times for the schools.

### **Importance of Sleep for Adolescents**

The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recognizes insufficient sleep in adolescents as an important public health issue that significantly affects the health and safety, as well as the academic success, of our nation’s middle and high school students. Although a number of factors, including biological changes in sleep associated with puberty, lifestyle choices, and academic demands, negatively affect middle and high school students’ ability to obtain sufficient sleep, the evidence strongly implicates earlier school start times (i.e., before 8:30 a.m.) as a key modifiable contributor to insufficient sleep, as well as circadian rhythm disruption, in this population. Furthermore, a substantial body of research has now demonstrated that delaying school start times is an effective countermeasure to chronic sleep loss and has a wide range of potential benefits to students with regard to physical and mental health, safety, and academic achievement. The AAP strongly supports the efforts of school districts to optimize sleep in students and urges high schools and middle schools to aim for start times that allow students the opportunity to achieve optimal levels of sleep (i.e., 8.5 to 9.5 hours) and to improve physical and mental health (e.g., reduced obesity risk and lower rates of depression), safety (e.g., drowsy driving crashes), academic performance, and quality of life.<sup>5</sup>

The Florida chapter of the AAP stresses that medical and academic research on teens’ developing bodies and brains show that sleep is directly linked to their physical and mental health, learning, and academic success. Teenagers in high school need, on average, 8 to 10 hours of sleep each school night. A policy change to start high schools after 8:00 a.m. is needed. School districts across the nation, where 8:00 a.m. school start times have been implemented, have decreased tardiness, decreased sleeping in class, increased attendance, increased graduation rates, and higher standardized test scores. Students are reported to be better prepared, more alert,

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<sup>2</sup> Rule 6A-3.0171(6), F.A.C.

<sup>3</sup> Florida Department of Education, Fact Sheet Office of Independent Education & Parental Choice, *Florida’s Charter Schools* (September 2022), available at <https://www.fldoe.org/core/fileparse.php/7696/urlt/Charter-Sept-2022.pdf>.

<sup>4</sup> Section 1002.33(16), F.S.

<sup>5</sup> American Association of Pediatrics, School Start Times for Adolescents, Policy statement, (Sept 1., 2014), available at: <https://publications.aap.org/pediatrics/article/134/3/642/74175/School-Start-Times-for-Adolescents?autologincheck=redirected> (last visited Mar. 14, 2023).

and motivated to do well. Economists suggest that delaying school start times would have a substantial benefit-to-cost ratio (9:1). This finding is based on a conservative estimate of both costs per student largely related to transportation and the increase in projected future earnings per student in present value because of test score gains related to moving start times 1 hour later (approximately \$17,500).<sup>6</sup>

### **School Start Times in Florida**

According to the Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability (OPPAGA), the average start time for all Florida high schools (541 schools) is 7:45 a.m. Forty-six percent of high schools start before 7:30 a.m., and 19 percent of high schools start between 7:30 a.m. and 8:00 a.m. There were 49 Florida school districts with at least one high school that started before 8:00 a.m. and of those, 22 districts had a least one high school that started before 7:30 a.m. For Florida middle schools (490 schools) the average start time is 9:03 a.m., with only eight percent of schools starting prior to 8:00 a.m.<sup>7</sup>

OPPAGA requested specific information from twelve districts that had either recently changed or are considered changing school start times to determine motivations and barriers. Eight of those school districts had recently changed some or all of their start times while four school districts had considered changes to start time but did not make changes. Reported motivations among the respondents included:

- Transportation issues to improve on-time bus schedules, address driver shortages, reduce transit times, comply with Center for Disease Control (CDC) social distancing recommendations, and improve operational efficiencies.
- Student health and safety issues to improve general student health and to address the health needs of high school students in particular.
- Student learning issues to promote student academic achievement, increase learning time lost due to weather-related closures, and increase the length of the elementary school day.

Reported barriers that were confronted when considering start time changes included:

- Child care and student supervision issues concerning care for siblings, childcare arrangements, limited school staff and concerns about child safety in dawn/pre-dawn hours.
- Afterschool activities issues concerning afterschool employment for high school students, effects on extended day programs, and the ability to attend afterschool activities.
- Transportation issues concerning costs of adding bus routes and buses, rising bus driver wages and limited bus drivers, and capital funding issues.<sup>8</sup>

### **III. Effect of Proposed Changes:**

The bill amends s. 1001.42 F.S., regarding school start times for middle and high schools. Specifically, the bill requires each school district to adopt policies regarding middle school and high school start times such that, by July 1, 2026, the instructional day:

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<sup>6</sup> Email, Florida Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics, *Position Statement: Start Schools after 8:00 a.m.* (Mar. 13, 2023) (on file with Senate Committee on Education).

<sup>7</sup> Email, OPPAGA Report: *OPPAGA Research on School Start Times*, (Mar. 13, 2023) (on file with Senate Committee on Education).

<sup>8</sup> *Id.*

- For a middle school begins no later than 8:00 a.m.
- For a high school start times begins no later than 8:30 a.m.

The bill requires each district school board to inform parents, students, teachers, school administrations, athletic coaches, and other stake-holders about the health, safety, and the academic impacts of sleep deprivation on middle and high school students and the benefits of a later school start time. The bill also requires the board to discuss local strategies to successfully implement the later school start times.

The bill amends s. 1002.33, F.S., to clarify that charter schools must comply with the start time requirements for middle and high schools established in the bill.

The bill takes effect on July 1, 2023.

#### **IV. Constitutional Issues:**

A. Municipality/County Mandates Restrictions:

None.

B. Public Records/Open Meetings Issues:

None.

C. Trust Funds Restrictions:

None.

D. State Tax or Fee Increases:

None.

E. Other Constitutional Issues:

None.

#### **V. Fiscal Impact Statement:**

A. Tax/Fee Issues:

None.

B. Private Sector Impact:

None.

C. **Government Sector Impact:**

There may be a significant, but indeterminate, fiscal impact to school district transportation costs in preparation for a July 1, 2026, implementation.

**VI. Technical Deficiencies:**

None.

**VII. Related Issues:**

The bill does not modify the provision in State Board of Education Rule 6A-3.0171(6), F.A.C., authorizing up to 1.5 hours between a bus pickup and the school start time. Therefore, the positive effect of a later school start time may be moderated by an early bus pickup time.

**VIII. Statutes Affected:**

This bill substantially amends sections 1001.42 and 1002.33 of the Florida Statutes.

**IX. Additional Information:**

A. **Committee Substitute – Statement of Changes:**

(Summarizing differences between the Committee Substitute and the prior version of the bill.)

None.

B. **Amendments:**

None.