

## Building Language Skills with The Seattle Times

November 19, 2015

**Article: “Wake-up call: Seattle schools may take leap”**

**Wednesday, November 18, 2015** in the e-Edition of The Seattle Times, Main pages A1

### **Pre-Reading:**

Before reading the article, read the title. What does “wake-up call” mean? What kind of leap do you think Seattle schools may take?

### **Vocabulary:**

As you read, look for the following vocabulary words that appear in today’s article. Write down what you think the words mean based on the “context,” or how the words are used in the sentence in which they appear. Next, look up the definitions in a dictionary and see how close your guess was for each word.

*advocates*

*logistics*

*daunting*

*cap*

*advocates*

*instrumental*

*behest*

*neurology*

*mounting*

*staggering*

*unanimously*

*fizzled*

*outcry*

*optimal*

*advocate*

### Comprehension:

1. In what way is pushing back school start times supported by science?
2. Why has this task become so daunting that only 70 districts across the nation have moved forward with it?
3. What time has Seattle School District proposed to start the school day for high-schoolers and middle-schoolers?
4. If approved, when would the changes take effect?
5. What evidence do scientists cite for pushing back school start times?
6. What fraction of Washington's middle and high schools start at 8:30 a.m. or later?
7. What are some school district's concern about elementary students waiting at bus stops in the early morning?
8. When and how did the effort to push back start times begin in Seattle?
9. Why are some parents of elementary students concerned about moving the start times?
10. What change in start times did Bellevue school district make last month?
11. One national advocate critiques which city in its approach to the school-time change?

### Post-Reading:

**Read the following passage from the article and discuss the following questions in a group:**

**“It wouldn't be easy for Seattle, either, but after a four-year campaign led by parents, teachers and local sleep scientists, Seattle Public Schools is scheduled to vote Wednesday on whether it will become one of the largest districts in the country to start high school at 8:30 a.m. or later, as recommended by the American Academy of Pediatrics.”**

Do you think Seattle schools should move the high school start time to 8:30? Why or why not? Site examples from personal experience and that of your friends and family. Why do some parents, teachers and local sleep scientists push for this change? What would the effects be on after-school activities, families and teenagers themselves?

### Building Language Skills:

**Read the following passage, and complete the activity below:**

**“Scientists have long known that in adolescence, teenagers become biological night owls who are more alert later in the day and find it hard to fall asleep at night. Evidence has been mounting for years that later school start times improve their health, mood, attendance and, in some cases, learning.”**

Do you agree with the above statement based on your own biological clock or the alert times of teenagers you know? Why or why not? Research when elementary school students, middle school students and teenagers are most alert and how many hours of sleep they each need. What differences did you find? Summarize your research.

### Comprehension Question Answers:

1. Pushing back school start times would better match teens' biological clocks.
2. The challenging logistics of this change would include coordinating buses, child care, sports practices, after-school programs and other activities.
3. Seattle School District has proposed 8:45 a.m., almost an hour later than now.
4. The changes would take effect in fall 2016.
5. Scientists state that evidence has been mounting for years that later school start times improve students' health, mood, attendance and, in some cases, learning.
6. One-fifth of Washington's middle and high school students start at 8:30 a.m. or later.
7. Districts are concerned that elementary students may be standing in the dark.
8. The latest effort in Seattle started about four years ago, in part because Cindy Jatul, a biology teacher at Seattle's Roosevelt High School, noticed that her first-period students were frequently absent or late.
9. Some parents have expressed concerns about elementary students not being in school during their optimal learning window and the effect the change would have on afterschool activities.
10. Bellevue School Board unanimously voted to move high-school start times later than the 7:30 a.m. current start, with a goal of eventually having schools start at 8:30 a.m.
11. Chicago