

JAN 21 2026

A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO EDUCATION.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF HAWAII:

1 SECTION 1. The legislature finds that, during puberty,
2 youth experience a shift in their circadian clocks that tends to
3 cause them to fall asleep later in the night. This then
4 requires youth to sleep later into the morning to obtain the
5 requisite number of sleep-hours. As a result, simply having
6 earlier youth bedtimes is not biologically feasible.

7 The legislature further finds that the American Academy of
8 Pediatrics recommends that the first school bell ring no earlier
9 than 8:30 a.m. nationwide so that youth can sleep later into the
10 morning. According to recent research, more sleep correlates
11 with better academic performance and improved health benefits
12 for students. Compared to students who started school from
13 8:00 a.m. to 8:29 a.m., students who started school from
14 8:30 a.m. to 8:59 a.m. slept longer, had fewer negative moods,
15 and experienced better socioemotional health, cognitive
16 development, behavior health, and physical health.
17 Comparatively, the students who started school from 8:00 a.m. to



1 8:29 a.m. slept fewer hours, experienced more irritability and
2 fatigue, and had more difficulty paying attention in class,
3 which all negatively affected academic performance. Other
4 research has found that later school starting times correlated
5 with better attendance, less tardiness, less falling asleep in
6 class, better grades, and few automobile accidents.

7 The legislature also finds that later school starting times
8 allow teachers and parents to sleep longer which improves
9 teacher performance in the classroom and correlates with fewer
10 parents reporting feeling tired. In Hawaii, all but five public
11 high schools begin their school days before 8:30 a.m.

12 Accordingly, the purpose of this Act is to require all
13 public elementary, middle, and high schools to start school days
14 no earlier than 8:30 a.m.

15 SECTION 2. Chapter 302A, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is
16 amended by adding a new section to be appropriately designated
17 and to read as follows:

18 "§302A- School day start time. (a) Notwithstanding
19 any other law to the contrary, beginning with the - school
20 year, all public elementary, middle, and high school classes in



1 the State shall begin no earlier than 8:30 a.m.; provided that
2 this section shall not apply to charter schools.

3 (b) The board, in its discretion, may grant a waiver to
4 any school that is subject to this section. The board shall
5 adopt policies and procedures to grant a waiver under this
6 subsection.

7 (c) This section shall not exempt any school from the
8 requirements under section 302A-251."

9 SECTION 3. The department of education shall adjust
10 state-provided school bus and school meal schedules for public
11 schools to align with the class start times set forth in section 2
12 of this Act.

13 SECTION 4. New statutory material is underscored.

14 SECTION 5. This Act shall take effect upon its approval.

15
INTRODUCED BY: BTG



S.B. NO. 2215

Report Title:

DOE; School Classes; Start Time

Description:

Beginning with the - school year, requires public elementary, middle, and high school classes to start no earlier than 8:30 a.m. Requires the Department of Education to adjust state-provided bus and school meal schedules accordingly.

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