

Statement of Support for Bill SB 1090

By Marc Chenard

As an undergraduate student studying biology and interdisciplinary neuroscience at Portland State University's honors college, and a volunteer at NW Noggin (nwnoggin.org), I strongly support bill SB 1090. NW Noggin, a 501(c)(3) neuroscience education outreach nonprofit, also formally supports bill SB 1090. I'm currently writing my honors thesis on the research-supported benefits of a potential start time shift to an hour later for high schools in the Vancouver Public School district. In working on this thesis, and by doing neuroscience education outreach through NW Noggin, I have learned how essential adequate and regular sleep is to the health and performance of adolescent students. Permanent standard time in Oregon, and the sleep benefits that will accompany it, will have positive impacts on the health, well-being and success of Oregonian students.

Standard time aligns better with our natural circadian rhythms which are regulated by exposure to sunlight in the morning. Sunlight in the morning helps synchronize our internal clock with the external environment and maintain a consistent sleep-wake cycle. This is especially important to manage in teenage students due to a natural shift in circadian rhythms that occurs during adolescence, and the prevalence of delayed sleep phase syndrome (DSPS).

Daylight savings time, on the other hand, reduces student exposure to morning sunlight. This delays melatonin production at night making it harder for students to fall asleep and wake up on time for class.

There is ample research showing that adequate and regular sleep is essential for optimal brain function and learning, mood regulation, and overall well being. With these things in mind, NW Noggin and I support bill SB 1090 to make standard time permanent in our state. This will not only eliminate the confusion of changing our clocks twice a year, but improve our health, well-being and performance at school.