



Representative Hoa Nguyen  
Oregon House District 48

HB 2359 - LATER SCHOOL START TIMES

3/26 House Committee on Education

Thank you, Chair Neron, Vice-Chairs Dobson and McIntire, and my esteemed fellow members of the committee. I am State Representative Hoa Nguyen, and I represent House District 48, which includes outer Southeast Portland and North Clackamas County.

As an educator deeply invested in combating chronic absenteeism in our schools, I am glad to support **HB 2359**, which would require high schools to start at or after 8:30.

School start times have long been linked to academic outcomes. Research shows us that adolescents need more sleep than adults, and naturally have a later sleep-wake cycle — starting school too early can easily lead to chronic sleep deprivation, which takes a heavy toll on developing minds. Insufficient sleep is in turn associated with poor physical health, decreased memory and attention capacities, and a range of other detrimental outcomes. Our high school students already have enough on their plates: they deserve the grace to pursue their education without having to shoulder these additional burdens.

School start times are also closely tied to attendance. Countless examples across the country demonstrate that pushing back school start times significantly improves rates of absenteeism and tardiness. Educators, parents, and students alike attest to the positive impact of later high school start times. When well rested, students are more willing and better able to not only show up to school, but also learn and engage with a much greater capacity. Many districts in Oregon have already implemented these changes over the years and have reaped the benefits — this bill seeks to spread those benefits statewide, and ensure that students' opportunities for healthy sleep and success do not vary across zip codes or school districts.

It is crucial to acknowledge that this bill was brought to the legislature by youth, many of whom witness and experience the challenges associated with school start times firsthand. The Multnomah Youth Commission, the City of Portland and Multnomah County's official youth policy body, boasts over a decade's worth of work on chronic absenteeism. This bill is a result of their extensive research and advocacy, and is a thoughtfully curated effort to tackle some of the issues at the forefront of our students' minds as they navigate academic life. When considering legislation regarding our students and schools, it is imperative that we uplift their perspectives and priorities as those most impacted.

HB 2359 is an essential investment in the well-being of our students, another vital step towards ending our chronic absenteeism crisis, as well as a meaningful outlet for youth voice. I strongly urge your support, and am grateful for your consideration.