**Make a Claim: Should Windham High School move its start time from 7:25 to 9:00?**

Please read the following discussion of pros and cons of later school start times for high school students. Then create a well-supported argument in support of, or against, shifting Windham’s start time to 9:00. Make sure that you develop strong claim-evidence-reasoning to support your argument.

**3 Pros and Cons of Later School Start Times:**

Many attempts have been made to switch school start times to later hours. High schools in the U.S. generally start at 8 a.m. if not earlier. Considering commute and morning preparations, students are rising long before dawn to spend six to eight hours of dealing with academic and other school activities. The National Sleep Foundation recommends at least nine hours of sleep for teens, but they get much less than that because they are required to wake up early on school days.

**Advantages of Later Start Times**

1. *Teenagers need at least 8.5 to 9.25 hours of sleep based on their biological clocks.* Sleep deprivation affects physical and mental performance because the body’s peak ability depends on its circadian rhythm. Several studies show that high school students are among the most sleep-deprived groups due to a combination of academic workload, sports, extra-curricular activities and starting their day too early. A study conducted jointly by Harvard and Oxford found recommended that school districts adjust schedules to match the biological wake-up times of each age group. At 16, this is around 10 a.m.; at 18, 11 a.m. is the optimum wake-up time.

2. *Schools with later start times showed significant improvements in school performance*.

School districts that experimented with later start times found that students coped with academic workloads much better. A study that included 9,000 high school students conducted by the University of Minnesota found that grades, test scores and overall performance in core subjects advanced significantly when school start times were switched to later hours.

3. *Later start times reduced tardiness, truancy and dropout rates.*

The same study cited above also found that starting the school day at a later time improved school attendance. When students slept adequately, they were less sluggish in the morning and more enthusiastic about going to school.

**Disadvantages of Starting Late**

1. *It becomes difficult to schedule sports practice and extra-curricular activities.*

It is difficult to squeeze academic schedules, sports events and extra-curricular activities into available daytime hours if schools started later.

2. *A late start time will disrupt parents’ schedules*.

In households where adults work traditional hours, adjusting the first bell schedule to the recommended 10 a.m. start time will disrupt the household’s schedule. Students who have no bus service may have problems getting to and from school.

3. *Starting later in the day will affect time available for after-school tutoring.*

Students who receive extra services such as one-on-one tutoring and other after-school support may find limited resources as tutors and volunteers may not have the ability to adjust their schedules.

**Assessment: My Argument about school start times at Windham High School**

Name:

**Claim**: Clear statement of your position on changing the school start time at WHS.

**Evidence**: Provide at least TWO pieces of evidence in support of your argument. Use complete sentences.

**Reasoning:** Explain how/why your evidence supports your claim. Use complete sentences.