



## LOYOLA UNIVERSITY MARYLAND

— 1852 —

March 5, 2025

Dear Chair Benson and respected members of the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee,

I am writing to express my strong support for **Senate Bill 0468: Public Middle, High, and Charter Schools – Start Time for Instruction** establishing guardrails where public middle schools and high schools commence instruction no earlier than 8:00 a.m. and 8:30 a.m., respectively, with provisions for waivers under certain circumstances. Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony on this critical issue.

My name is **Heather Moore**, I am the **Assistant Dean of the Loyola University Maryland School of Education**. I am also the proud parent of two children who attend **Baltimore City Public Schools** and have been a Maryland resident since 1997 (Baltimore City since 1998).

This legislation represents a critical step forward in aligning educational practices with the well-established research on adolescent health and academic performance.

Numerous studies have shown that later school start times contribute significantly to improved mental and physical health, higher academic achievement, and reduced rates of absenteeism among students. Adolescents experience a biological shift in their sleep-wake cycles, making it difficult for them to fall asleep before 11:00 p.m. and wake up early in the morning. By adjusting school start times, we can better support the natural sleep patterns of our students, enabling them to arrive at school rested and ready to learn.

The research is clear. Major health, medical, and education organizations—including the American Academy of Pediatrics, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and the American Medical Association—recommend that middle and high schools start no earlier than **8:30 AM** to support student health, well-being, and academic success. This is not a new conversation in Maryland.

- In **2014**, the Maryland State Department of Education and the Department of Health released a **joint report** on the impact of early school start times.
- In **2016**, the Maryland Legislature passed **HB 83 – the Orange Ribbon Bill for Healthy School Hours**.
- Just this year, the **Abell Foundation** published a nearly [50-page report](#) detailing the benefits and feasibility of later start times in **Baltimore City Public Schools**.

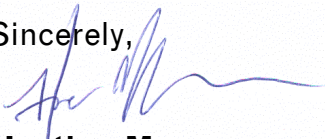
- Also this year numerous publications—including [The Baltimore Sun](#), [The Baltimore Banner](#), [Maryland Matters](#), and [TIME Magazine](#)—have highlighted the urgency of this issue.

Furthermore, the bill's requirement for a public service campaign to raise awareness about sleep deprivation and the benefits of later start times is equally vital. Educating families, educators, and the broader community will foster a supportive environment for this change, ensuring its successful implementation and maximizing its positive impact on student well-being and learning outcomes.

As a parent, a Baltimore City resident, and the Assistant Dean of the School of Education, I am deeply invested in the education and development of Maryland's youth. Maryland has long been a leader in education innovation and student-centered policies. **Senate Bill 0468 provides the necessary structure and support for MSDE and local school systems to implement healthy school start times statewide.** I urge you to support this bill. Prioritizing student health through evidence-based policies like adjusted start times is an investment in our future, empowering the next generation to thrive both inside and outside the classroom.

Thank you for considering this important legislation.

Sincerely,



**Heather Moore**  
**Assistant Dean, Loyola University Maryland School of Education**  
**Parent, Baltimore City Public Schools**