

[https://www.dailylocal.com/news/local/after-unionvilles-success-other-school-districts-considering-delayed-school-start/article\\_f7858558-520d-11e9-b62f-737f47aa9fd1.html](https://www.dailylocal.com/news/local/after-unionvilles-success-other-school-districts-considering-delayed-school-start/article_f7858558-520d-11e9-b62f-737f47aa9fd1.html)

## After Unionville's success, other school districts considering delayed school start

Fran Maye [fmaye@21st-centurymedia.com](mailto:fmaye@21st-centurymedia.com)

Mar 31, 2019



Unionville High School

FRAN MAYE - MEDIANET [Support local journalism.](#)

Get unlimited access for \$0.99 first month!

---

Want local news?

**Sign up for our newsletter and stay informed**

Enter your email to subscribe. [Already a subscriber? Log in](#)

## SIGN UP

EAST MARLBOROUGH—For the past two years, Unionville High School and Middle School students have been starting the school day about 25 minutes later than most other schools in Chester County. School directors were confident the extra sleep for students would be beneficial to wellness when they passed the measure 8 to 1 in 2017.

Now, several other school districts are seriously considering delaying school start times after seeing the success at Unionville. This week, Lower Merion School District formed a committee to study delayed school start time. Radnor and Tredyffrin-Easttown school districts are seriously studying the issue. Phoenixville Area School District followed Unionville to become the second school district to adopt later start times.

In an interview with WHY? earlier this week, John Sanville, superintendent of the Unionville-Chadds Ford School District said feedback has been overwhelmingly positive.

“I’d say the positive to negative is 10 to 1,” Sanville said. “It has made family life better. There isn’t a battle every day. Kids are more alert. It’s been tremendous in terms of feedback.”

The students catch the bus at 7 a.m., instead of 6:17 a.m. Classes at Unionville High School and C.F. Patton Middle School start at 8 a.m. instead of 7:35 and elementary school classes. The school day at Unionville ends at 2:43 p.m.. It had ended at 2:18 p.m.

The district made the change, Sanville said, purely from a student wellness perspective.

The National Sleep Foundation recommends nine to 11 hours of sleep for children ages 6 to 13, with teens up to age 17 needing eight to 10 hours of sleep. Anything less than seven hours of sleep is deemed inappropriate and unhealthy.

A recent study published in the Journal of Developmental and Behavioral Pediatrics reports that even a 25-minute delay in school start time at the high school level shows improvements in sleep duration. **Support your journalist. Get unlimited access for \$9.99 first month!**

Administrators at Unionville made tweaks to transportation and athletics. Because the district employs in-house transportation, they were able to work with transportation directors to develop bus routes that work. And Sanville said administrators are still looking to address some of the

**SUBSCRIBE**  
Already a Subscriber? Log in

problems that affect student athletes during the last period of the day.

Sanville said he hopes other school districts across the region make the change.

“I’d like to see more and more districts make the change,” he said. “In fact, I’d like to revisit this and look at an 8:30 start, once we have friends who join us. To other districts, I say be brave. When we surveyed our community, students, and staff, we were split 50-50 (on the delayed school start). At the end of the day, we looked at health benefits for our kids, and made a recommendation to the school board. Our school board was brave enough to pass it 8 to 1.”

State lawmakers have recently launched pilot projects that could eventually make it routine for kids to start high school and middle school at 8 a.m. or after.

---

**Fran Maye**

@dailylocal on Twitter

---

Support local journalism.  
Get unlimited access for \$0.99 first month!

**SUBSCRIBE**

Already a Subscriber? [Log in](#)