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September 17, 2019

Governor Gavin Newsom
c/o Jennifer Johnson
State Capitol Suite 1173
Sacramento, CA 95814

SENT VIA EMAIL: jennifer.johnson@gov.ca.gov

RE: SB 328 (Portantino) Healthy School Start Time – **REQUEST FOR SIGNATURE**

Dear Governor Newsom:

On behalf of the American Academy of Sleep Medicine (AASM), and nearly 600 AASM members and 123 accredited sleep facilities in California, I am writing to express strong support for Senate Bill No. 328 (SB 328), “Pupil attendance: school start time,” which would require the school day for middle schools to begin no earlier than 8 a.m. and high schools to begin no earlier than 8:30 a.m.

In puberty a natural shift occurs in the timing of the body’s internal “circadian” clock, causing most teens to experience a biological drive for a late-night bedtime. Therefore, early middle school and high school start times make it difficult for students to get the 8 to 10 hours of nightly sleep that the AASM recommends for optimal teen health. Simply going to bed earlier is not a realistic option for most teens. As a result, nearly 73 percent of high school students report getting fewer than 8 hours of sleep on an average school night, increasing their risk of depressive symptoms, suicidal ideation and motor vehicle accidents.

Teen students in California deserve the opportunity to start each day awake, alert, and ready to learn. While the local governing boards of some school districts in the state have been able to implement healthier school start times, school boards in other districts continue to maintain the status quo, failing to prioritize the health and safety of their students and putting them at a competitive disadvantage. SB 328 would promote education and health equity for children in California and help level the playing field for all students to succeed.

By passing SB 328, California legislators have set an example for the rest of the nation. Please demonstrate the importance of prioritizing student health by signing this bill into law.

Sincerely,

Kelly A. Carden, MD, MBA
President

cc: Senator Anthony Portantino
Steve Van Hout, AASM Executive Director