

City of Palo Alto
Office of the Mayor and City Council

August 28, 2018

The Honorable Anthony Portantino
State Capitol, Room 3086
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: Concerns with SB 328: Pupil attendance: school start time

Dear Senator Portantino:

I write today to express concerns with SB 328 and its potential safety implications, noted below. The City of Palo Alto appreciates the intent of the legislation, and agrees that adolescent sleep patterns are an important consideration when setting school start times. In fact, next year one of the two high schools in Palo Alto will shift to an 8:30 a.m. start time, with the other maintaining a 8:25 a.m. start time. In setting these times, the school board is aligning the high schools with an American Academy of Pediatrics recommendation.


However, the middle schools in Palo Alto have earlier start times, in part, because a significant number of Palo Alto students bike to school. In 2017, 52% of high schoolers and 56% of middle schoolers biked to school.¹ And they did so on the same street as cars, as the picture illustrates. 8:30 a.m. is when the peak commute traffic in Palo Alto begins, and our school board is deliberate in setting school start times in a way that mitigates the risk of cars to biking students. By shifting start times of all middle and high schools to no earlier than 8:30, SB 328 is demanding that students bike on streets with more vehicle traffic than they do now.



This additional traffic creates a safety issue, one that was not contemplated fully when the legislature reviewed the bill. Therefore, we ask that you hold SB 328 until local traffic and student safety concerns can be addressed. The City of Palo Alto is happy to participate in this conversation with stakeholders in 2019. The safety of our students traveling to school during our peak commute traffic time is an issue just as important as their sleep, and we hope to work with you next year on this significant issue.

Thank you for your consideration

Sincerely,


Liz Kniss
Mayor, City of Palo Alto

¹ See "[2017 Safe Routes to School Travel Tally Data](#)" from the Palo Alto Safe Routes to School Partnership

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**Cc: Members, California State Senate
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