

Photo Illustration

2013 KSPA STATE CONTEST

Assignment

Using the information provided in the story, design a photo illustration that is no larger than 8 inches wide by 10 inches high (though it can be smaller). It can be vertical or horizontal. The photo illustration may be submitted in color or black and white, and should be printed on 8.5 x 11-inch paper.

You must include a brief paragraph describing the effects applied to the photo and explaining how your photo illustration helps tell the story.

Description

You are a staff member of Ad Astra High School's The Star. Your editor has asked you to create a photo illustration based on the story provided.

School Info

Name: Ad Astra High School
Location: Aspera, Kansas
Mascot: Box Turtles
Enrollment: 850 (grades 9-12)
School Colors: Green & Gold
Yearbook: The Honeybee
Newspaper: The Star

Contest Info

This is a carry-in contest.

Please attach your assigned contest number in the upper right-hand corner on the back of your photo.

Do not put your name on the entry. If you do, your entry will be disqualified.

Students are not to request help or advice from anyone other than the KSPA Executive Director. All work must be that of the contestant.



The effects of sleep deprivation on Ad Astra students

Take a look inside an Ad Astra classroom. You will most likely find a teacher at the front of the class and students sitting at their desks. Yet, look closer, and you might notice a familiar trend: many of these students are not paying attention. Instead, they are dozing off or even completely asleep.

Today, an overwhelming majority of high school students are not getting enough sleep. This lack of sleep is a serious problem, especially as students are doing more than ever with their time. They come to school early, spend hours listening to teachers and taking tests, then run off to practices and meetings, and come home to be faced with even more work. And the homework load these days is not light; teachers assign hours worth of homework each night. Teenagers require just as much sleep as they did when they were younger, and they are simply not getting this much needed rest.

"I sleep about five hours a night during the week," said junior Mickey Dolenz. "As a cheerleader, I just have so much to do. And you add in softball, volleyball and ballet after school . . . well, I'm just worn out most of the time.

Most kids need at least nine hours of sleep per night in order to function properly. Yet the period of this nine hours shifts as a child gets older, according to research done at the University of Kansas. After puberty, the body's internal clock changes so that it is difficult for teens to fall asleep before 11 p.m.

So even if a student falls asleep at 11, she would need to sleep until at least 8 a.m. to get a full night's sleep. Considering Ad Astra starts classes at 7:30 a.m., there's little chance that those students are getting proper sleep. However, there are schools that have paid attention to this research and pushed forward the start of their school day. Kassebaum High School in Liberal doesn't start classes until 8:30 a.m.

"I'm sure that works for them, but we have to worry about bus schedules, athletics schedules, and a lot of students who work after school," said AAHS Principal Emmylou Harris. "If we don't start until 8:30, we won't get done until nearly 4 p.m.."

At Liberal Kassebaum HS, the faculty and staff believe that there has been a real change in their students. They note that the students miss class less, pay more attention in class, perform better in class, and report lower levels of depression.

These changes are clearly not just coincidental. Researchers say that the results are quite significant and that more schools should consider pushing up their

start times. Another issue is the time when standardized tests are given. Most of these tests are given at 8 a.m., which can, in fact, hinder the performance of otherwise intelligent kids. Out of all of the times in the school day, 8 a.m. results in the poorest scores, since the brains of the kids are not fully functional at this time.

"I have no idea why schools are testing students at the start of the day," said Peter Tork, a professor in the School of Education at the University of Kansas. "But it doesn't surprise me. These schools operate like factories anyway."

So exactly how much sleep are Ad Astra students getting? Health teacher Michael Nesmith's class did a survey and got some interesting results.

More than 50 percent of Ad Astra students said that they sleep seven hours or less each night, and about one in five get less than six hours. And 82 percent said that they woke up tired and unrefreshed, and more than half had trouble concentrating in school.

The consequences of not getting enough sleep are severe, Nesmith said. The short-term consequences include bad moods, a deterioration in learning ability, being wearier, being less alert, having to expend greater effort to learn, and an increase in skipped classes.

More specifically, Nesmith said the loss of REM sleep (rapid eye movement) may result in memory loss, a decline in information processing, increased irritability and anxiety, decreased socialization and humor, hypersexuality, mental fatigue, decrease in creativity, and a decline in the ability to handle complex tasks.

Nesmith said with consistent lack of sleep, the effects become more serious. The long-term consequences can range from being misdiagnosed with ADHD, to diabetes, serious sleep problems, rebelliousness, cigarette smoking, depression, heart disease, obesity, and even a shortened life span.

Another large consequence of tired teens is that they are more likely to get behind the wheel when they are tired, leading to accidents caused by simply not getting enough sleep. But many school administrators are hesitant to change school start times.

"Unless there's a huge demand from the community, we're not going to change our start time at Ad Astra," Harris said.

That's good news for Dolenz, even though she's tired.

"I'd rather sleep through physics than miss cheer practice," Dolenz said. "I know what's important about school."