



# Lincoln Savage Middle School

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School has started and October is almost here!

My name is Damian Crowson. I am the new Principal at Lincoln Savage Middle School. I am so excited about this school year and all the great things we have going on so far. Football, Volleyball and Cross Country are in full swing. Teachers have been working hard on lessons and plans for the year. And, the students have been SPECTACULAR!

This is my 15<sup>th</sup> year in education and 14 of them have been at the middle school level. So, you might say I know middle school kids. Some people may see the early teenage years as chaotic or crazy. I see them as fun, entertaining and memorable. Thank you for letting me work with your children at such a challenging time in their life.

One thing I do know about our students is their need for sleep. Below is an article summary from the New York Times that may shed some light on sleep and middle schoolers.

## More on Adolescent Sleep Deprivation

In this *New York Times* article, Jane Brody sums up the National Sleep Foundation's guidelines on the amount of sleep children need as they grow up:

- Newborns: 12-18 hours a day
- Toddlers 1-3 years old: 12-14 hours
- Preschoolers 3-5 years old: 11-13 hours
- Elementary school children 5-10 years old: 10-11 hours
- **Teenagers: 8½ -9½ hours**

The problem for teenagers is that they don't readily fall asleep before 11:00 p.m. and most school opening times necessitate getting up at 6:00 a.m. or earlier. The result, says Cornell University psychologist James Maas, is that most adolescents are "walking zombies" in school.

A study conducted in 1998, before smartphones and iPads, found a correlation between poor grades and less sleep. Mary Carskadon of Brown University, one of the coauthors, says that adolescence and sleep collide in a "perfect storm." She calls early start times in high schools "abusive" and says that sleep deprivation results in "three strikes against learning... Students aren't awake enough to attend to information they're supposed to be learning, their knowledge acquisition is impaired and their ability to retrieve information is reduced. What is learned during the day is consolidated during sleep." Catching up on sleep over the weekend further distorts their biological clocks, she says, making it even harder to

get up for school on weekdays. The result is “an erosion of happiness – an increased risk of depression and other mood disturbances” for adolescents.

Here are some tips to help Lincoln Savage Middle School Students with this issue:

- School should start later for adolescents. That is part of the reason why we added guide group to our daily schedule. It helps transition students into a learning environment.
- Having some physical activity early in the morning. Lincoln Savage has an early morning intramural schedule to help get and keep students physically active.
- Late-evening school-sponsored events should be minimized. We have also moved start times for many events to 4:00 or 4:30 to improve return times for our student athletes.
- Give students and their families information about sleep and biological rhythms so teens can make better choices about their sleep schedules. We are hoping this information will help families and students with sleeping habits.
- Parents should set “an appropriate bedtime.”
- Families should establish relaxing pre-sleep rituals, reminiscent of bedtime stories for younger children.
- Teens should avoid bright light and stimulating activities in the evening and be exposed to light in the morning.

Source: “Zombie Prevention: Your Child’s Sleep” by Jane Brody in *The New York Times*, May 24, 2011,

We hope these tips help you and your middle school son or daughter transition back to school. The days are getting shorter and it is time to get back to the business of teaching and learning. I hope this newsletter finds you all well. Again, thank you for the opportunity to serve this wonderful community.

Sincerely,

Damian Crowson  
Principal  
Lincoln Savage Middle School