Your Question:
You asked for examples of school start time policies.

Our Response:
When Gov. Gavin Newsom signed S.B. 328, California became the first state to mandate that schools start after a certain time.

Decisions on school start times are generally made at the school or district level. Start School Later, an organization whose mission is to advocate for later school start times, attempts to track state, district and school policies that push middle and/or high school start times back for the current school year.

Enacted State Legislation
Though California is currently the only state to mandate school start times, below you will find examples of enacted bills in three states related to later start times — including studies and a pilot program.

Indiana
Indiana H.B. 1005 (2016) urged the Legislative Council to assign to the appropriate study committee the topic of school start time effects on “student safety, student achievement, and lost instruction time for students.”

Maryland
Maryland H.B. 883 (2014) required the department of health and mental hygiene to conduct a study of safe and healthy school hours for public schools, specifically reviewing the science of sleep needs of children and adolescents. Enacted in 2016, H.B. 39 established the Orange Ribbon for Healthy School Hours certification in the Maryland State Department of Education that recognizes, through this certification, local school systems that create, implement and enforce school start times that are consistent with those recommended by the Maryland State Department of Education, the Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene and the American Academy of Pediatrics. To receive Orange Ribbon certification, a local school system may not have (1) an elementary school requiring a student to be in class before 8 a.m. and board a school bus before 7 a.m. and (2) a middle or high school requiring a student to be in class before 8:30 a.m. and board a school bus before 7:30 a.m. Other certification criteria are specified.

New Jersey
New Jersey S.B. 2484 (2015) directed the department of education to conduct a study on the issues, benefits and options for instituting a later start time to the school day in middle school and high school. The study culminated in this 2017 report, which noted that though pushing back start times would present logistical challenges, it would result in positive outcomes for “students’ health, safety, well-being, and academic performance.” However, it ultimately concluded that school start times should not be mandated by the New Jersey Legislature or the New Jersey Department of Education but rather should be determined by local school districts. This year, the state passed S.B. 3160, which creates a four-year pilot program on later school start times for high school students in five selected school districts.
Considered State Legislation

Though not an exhaustive list, we found the following examples of bills related to mandated start times that states have considered:

- **Hawaii H.B. 318** (2019) would have require the department of education to convene a Staggered School Start Times Task Force to study and evaluate the issues and implications of instituting staggered school start times, including effects on school bus schedules. (The bill was not passed prior to the end of the 2019 legislative session.)
- **Maine L.D. 468** (2017) would have required that secondary schools start no earlier than 8:30 a.m. (Failed.)
- **Minnesota H.F. 1614** (2019) would have required school boards to establish school start times for secondary schools no earlier than 8:30 a.m. (Failed.)
- **Rhode Island H.B. 5888** (2017) would have required an 8:30 a.m. start time for high schools in all school districts. (Failed.)

Research

Research on later start times for adolescents in high school, middle school or both tends to focus on the amount of sleep students get. The link most often made is that later start times allow students to get more sleep, which leads to better health, better academic performance and more positive social outcomes. This literature review from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention looks at 38 reports examining the link between start times, sleep and other outcomes. Most of the studies reviewed found that delaying school start times, even by half an hour, resulted in a significant increase in weeknight sleep duration.

In 2014, Paul Kelley, a well-known sleep researcher who studies school start times, wrote a guest paper for Education Commission of the States: Later Education Start Times in Adolescence: Time for Change. In it, he dives into the research on adolescent biology and sleep, specifically outlining the academic and health risks of early high school start times. He refers to two papers that show links between start times and tests or performance in class (North Carolina study and U.S. Air Force Academy study). He also points out a study conducted at high schools in the Minneapolis School District that found a correlation between later start times and positive social outcomes.

A 2014 study conducted with over 9,000 high school students across three states found that later start times correlated with more students getting an adequate amount of sleep, as well as improvement in academic performance outcomes and attendance rates. Later start times also correlated with reductions in tardiness and car crashes for teen drivers.

Implementing later school start times does not come without challenges. The New Jersey report mentioned above notes that difficulties would include changes to after-school activities, transportation and child care for elementary students if schedules do not match those of high school students. These changes might also include upfront costs to districts.

In 2017, the RAND Corporation released a report that analyzes the economic impact of later start times for high school students. Based on its modelling, RAND found that the U.S. would see an annual economic gain of about $9.3 billion each year if the 47 states they looked at delayed their school start times to a universal standard of 8:30 a.m.