

# Status Report: OPPAGA Research on School Start Times

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Presentation to the House Choice & Innovation Subcommittee



# OPPAGA

Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability

FEBRUARY 9, 2023

# Project Scope

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At the direction of the Legislature, OPPAGA is examining school start times; the research will be completed in March 2023 and will include

- Florida statute and rules regarding regulations on school start times
- Florida school district start times by school type
- Information on school start times in other states and national trends
- National trends in school start times by school type, with an emphasis on high schools
- Recent legislation in other states
- Detailed information on 12 Florida school districts regarding changes to school start times

# School Start Times in Florida

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# State-Level Regulation of School Start Times

Florida statutes and rules address many aspects of school operations but do not mandate school start times.

OPPAGA's review did not identify any statutes or rules related to school start times or a minimum number of hours per school day; however, Florida statutes and rules do specify when the school year may begin and the minimum yearly instructional hours.

- Section 1001.42(4)(f), *Florida Statutes*, states that schools may not start earlier than August 10 of each year.
- Rule 6A-1.09512, *Florida Administrative Code*, requires students to receive instruction for 180 actual school days, or a minimum of 170 actual school days and the hourly equivalent of 180 actual school days determined by grade level.

# Average Florida School Start Times

Although school start times vary across the state and within school districts, on average, Florida high schools begin at 7:47 a.m., elementary schools begin at 8:14 a.m., and middle schools begin at 9:06 a.m.

The average start time of Florida high schools is earlier than elementary and middle schools

7:47 a.m.

High Schools (n=522)

8:14 a.m.

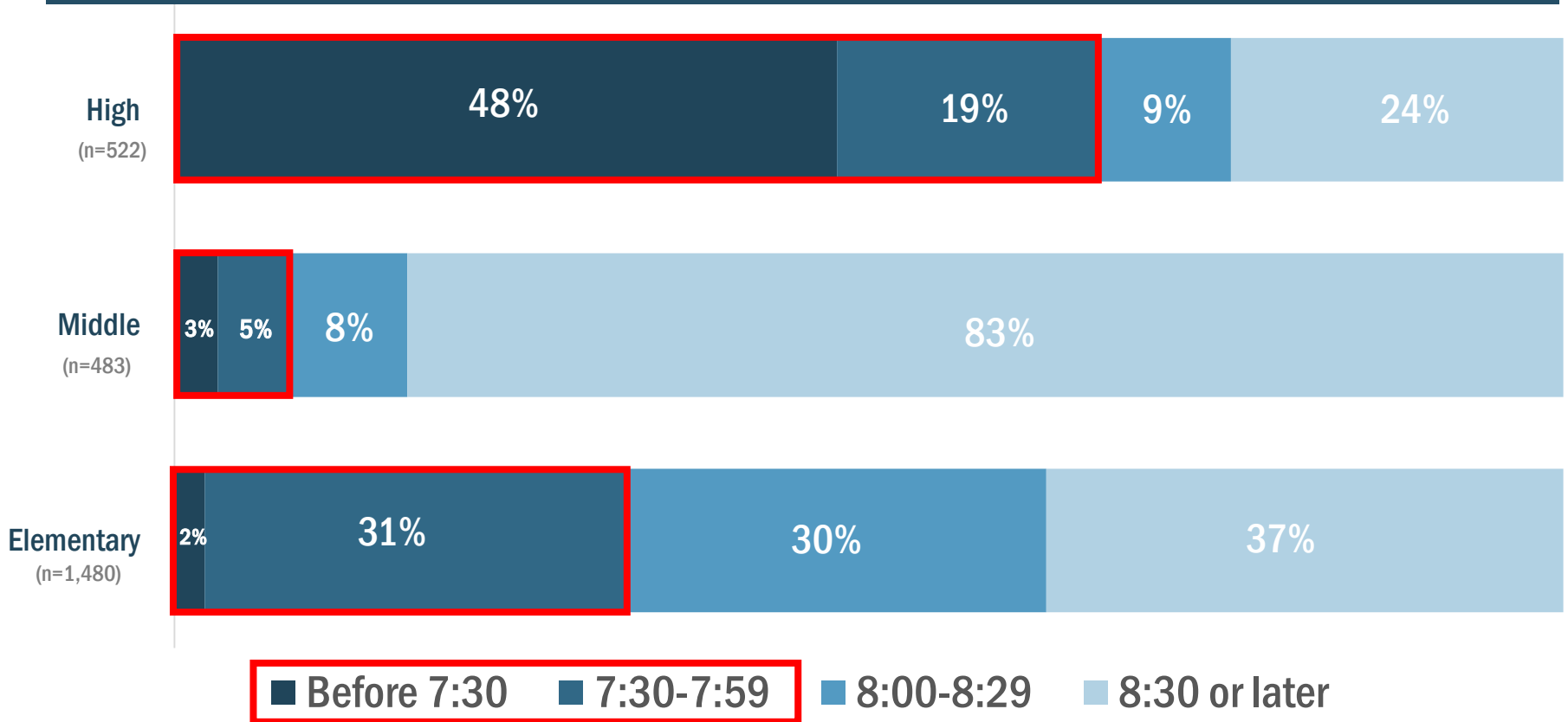
Elementary Schools (n=1,480)

9:06 a.m.

Middle Schools (n=483)

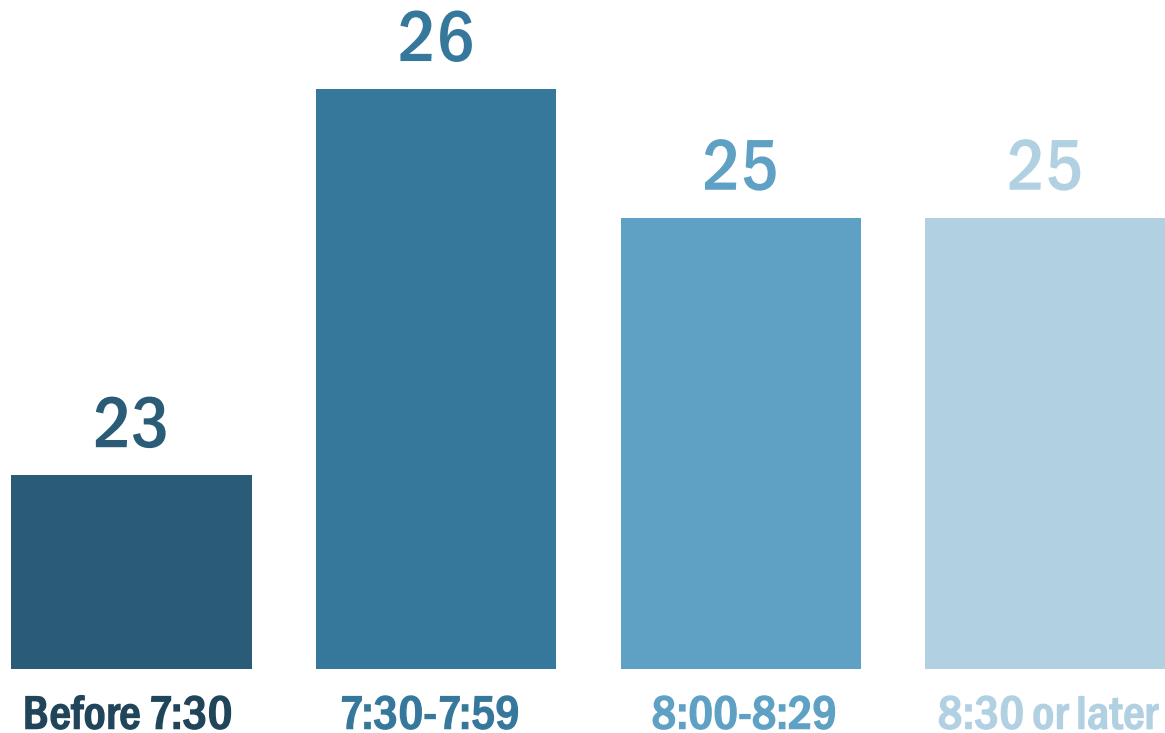
# Distribution of School Start Times by Type

Statewide, 67% of high schools, 8% of middle schools, and 33% of elementary schools start before 8:00 a.m.



# High School Start Times Distribution by School District

Count of school districts having at least one high school per start time, districts may be counted more than once. Of 67 school districts, 23 have high school(s) starting before 7:30 a.m., and 26 have high school(s) with a start time from 7:30 a.m. to 7:59 a.m.



Note: Adds to more than 67 school district because school districts can have high schools in multiple time categories.

Source: OPPAGA analysis of information available on school district and school websites from December 14, 2022 to December 21, 2022.

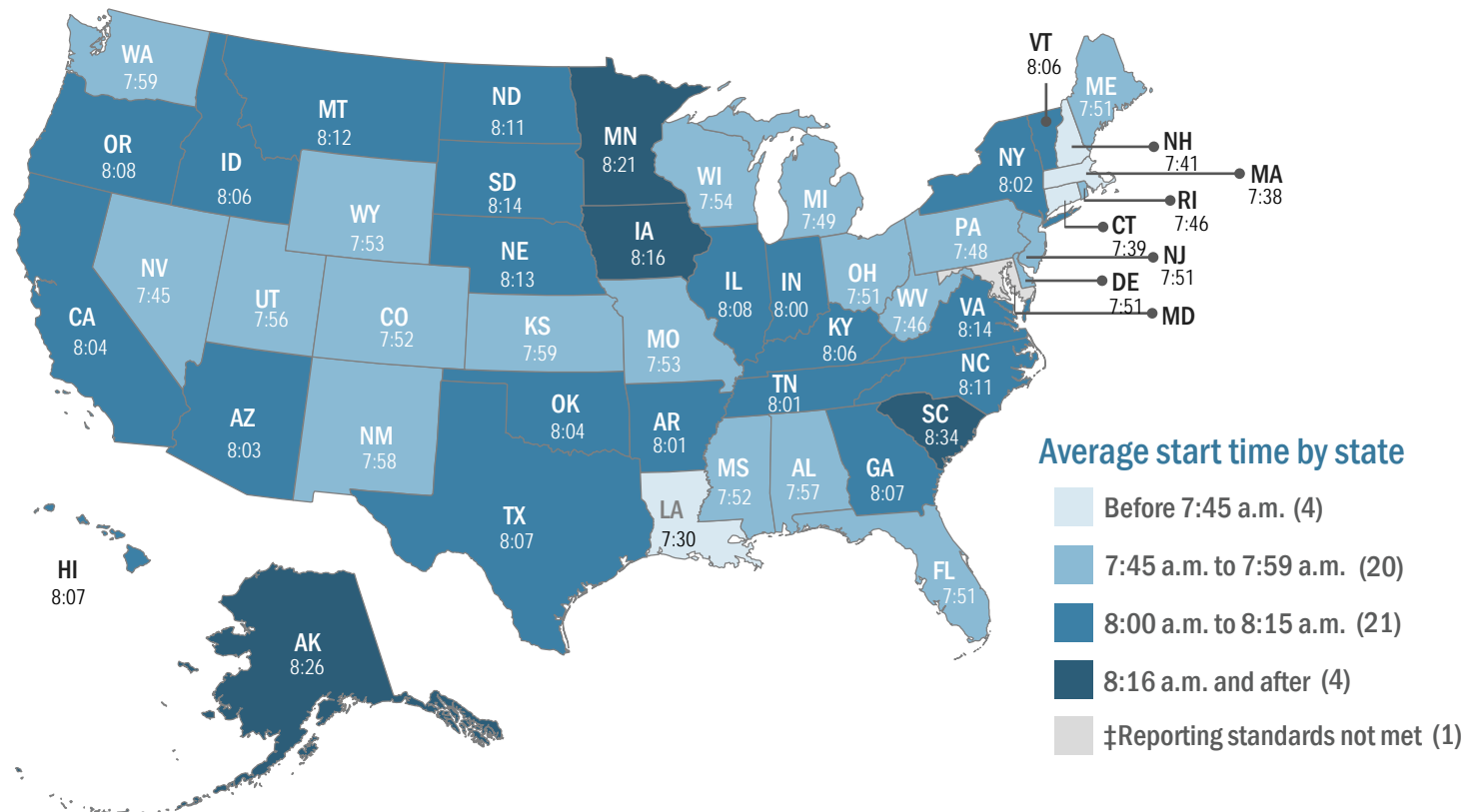
# Other States' High School Start Times

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# Average High School Start Times in Other States

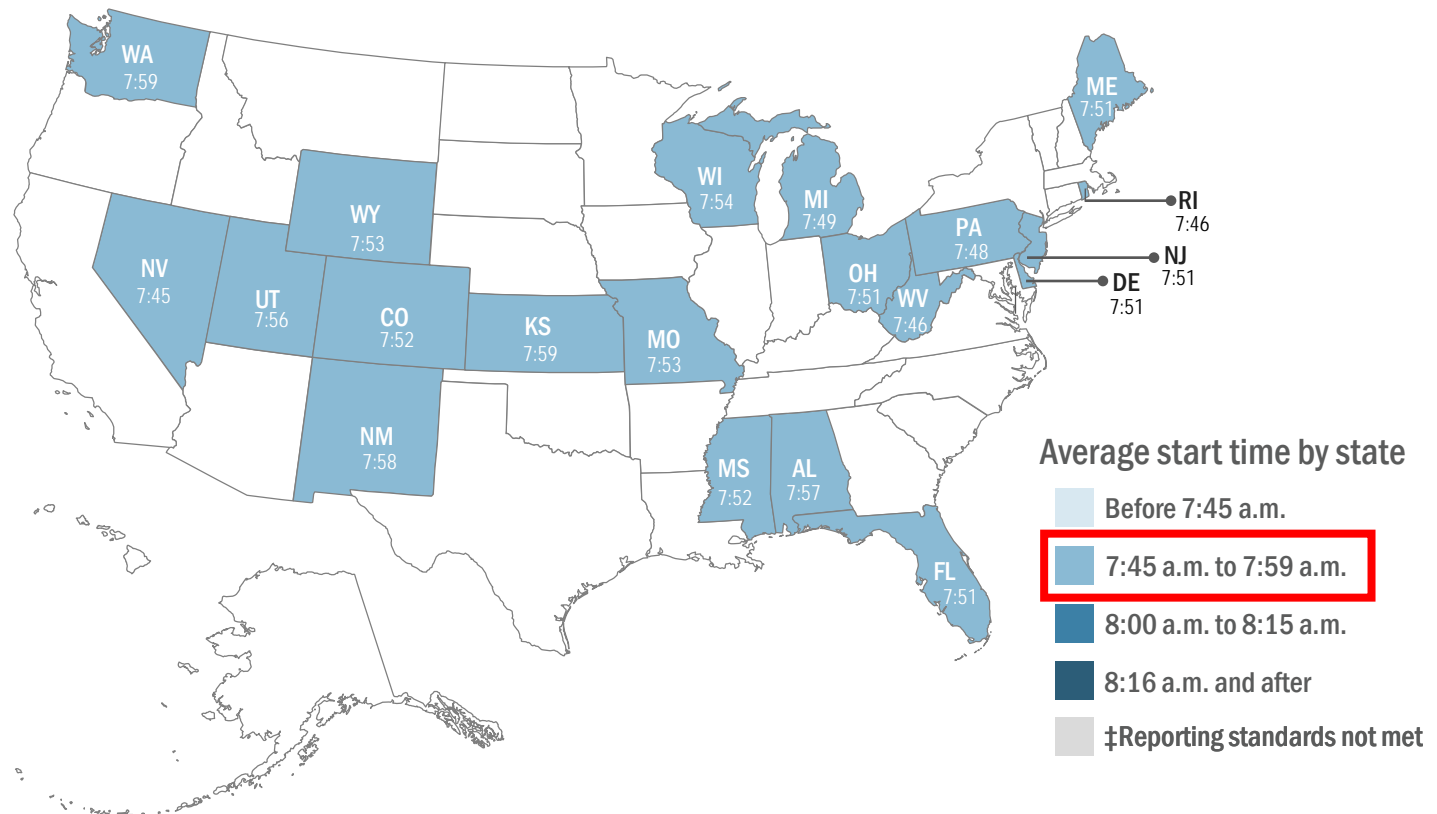
According to a 2017-18 U.S. Department of Education (USD OE) survey, the average high school start time nationally is 8:00 a.m.



‡ Reporting standards not met. The response rate is below 50%. NOTE: Schools with afternoon start times were not included in the average.

# Average High School Start Times in Other States

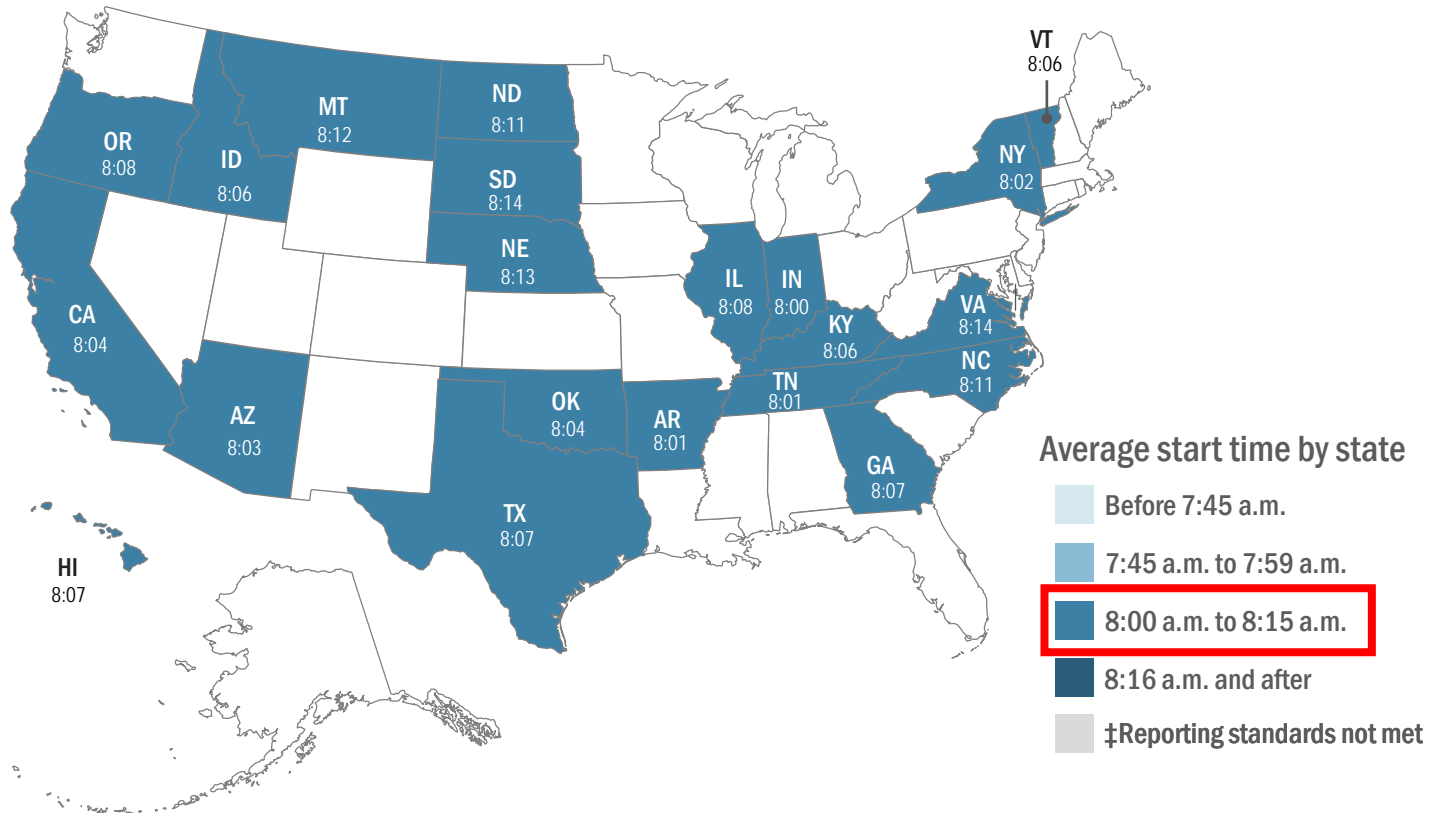
Florida is among 20 states with average high school start times from 7:45 a.m. to 7:59 a.m.



‡ Reporting standards not met. The response rate is below 50%. NOTE: Schools with afternoon start times were not included in the average.

# Average High School Start Times in Other States

The largest number of states (21) have high school start times from 8:00 a.m. to 8:15 a.m.



‡ Reporting standards not met. The response rate is below 50%. NOTE: Schools with afternoon start times were not included in the average.

# Recent Legislation in Other States

OPPAGA identified three states that recently passed legislation related to school start times: California, Maryland, and New Jersey. At least eight other states have recently examined the issue but not passed legislation.



In 2019, California passed SB 328, requiring high schools start no earlier than 8:30 a.m. and middle schools start no earlier than 8:00 a.m., by July 1, 2022, or later under certain circumstances. This requirement does not apply to rural schools.

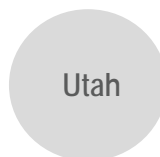
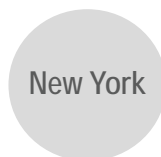
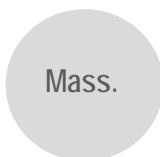
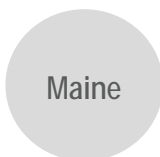
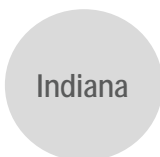
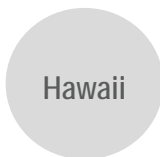


In 2016, Maryland passed HB 39, which created the Orange Ribbon for Healthy School Hours certification to recognize school districts with no elementary schools that start before 8:00 a.m. and no middle or high schools that start before 8:30 a.m.



In 2019, New Jersey passed SB 3160, which created a four-year pilot program for later high school start times in five select school districts.

At least eight other states have examined the issue but not passed legislation or initiated pilot programs

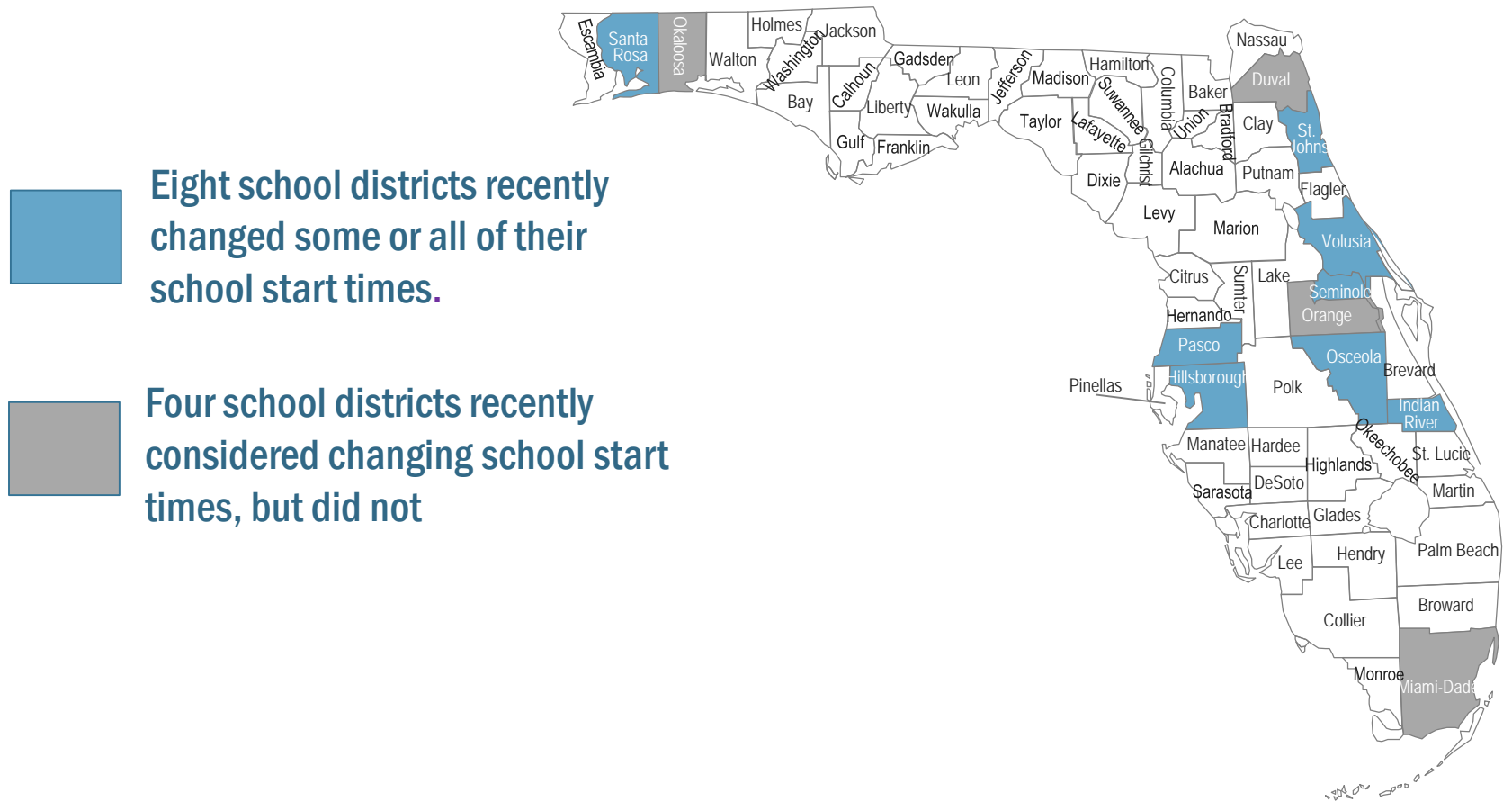


# Florida School District Experiences With Changing School Start Times

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# School Districts From Which OPPAGA Requested Information

OPPAGA requested information on changes to school start times from 12 school districts through a questionnaire; all 12 districts responded.



# Summary of District Experiences

The issue of changing school start times was often raised within the school district, most frequently to address transportation concerns.

## Who Raised the Issue

The issue of examining school times was raised by district personnel, most often transportation staff (seven school districts); other stakeholders raising the issue included parents, law enforcement, teachers, and students.

## Reasons for Proposing the Change

District administrators cited several reasons for proposing alternative school start times, with the most frequent being transportation concerns (six school districts); other reasons included student health, student safety, and the needs of the school staff.

## Barriers Confronted

The most frequently cited barrier to revising school start times was child care and student supervision issues (five districts); other barriers included afterschool activities and student safety concerns.

## Length of Process

The length of time involved in changing the start times varied between districts. Pasco County School District reported that it completed the process in about six months, while Hillsborough County School District reported that it took about two years.

## Reasons for No Change

District administrators cited several reasons for not changing school start times, including concerns being addressed through other changes (Duval), proposals being exploratory studies (Miami-Dade and Okaloosa), or stakeholder feedback (Orange).

# Contact Information

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**FLORIDA LEGISLATURE OFFICE OF PROGRAM POLICY ANALYSIS AND  
GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY**

OPPAGA supports the Florida Legislature by providing data, evaluative research, and objective analyses that assist legislative budget and policy deliberations.