



Later School Start Time: Fad or Need?



New legislation is under consideration to push back the start time of Connecticut schools to 8:30 a.m. "I was motivated by my observation of kids dragging themselves to the bus well before the start of my day and other people's workdays," commented supporter Senator Kevin B. Sullivan; fellow supporters add that teenagers need the extra time to receive adequate rest. Critics argue that instead of reorganizing schools, complex busing schedules, and sporting events, teens should simply go to bed earlier. One issue both sides tend to agree on is that teenagers do not receive enough sleep.

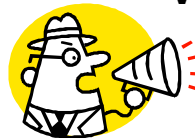
The sleeping needs of teenagers are quite different from adults. Teens require an average of nine to ten hours of sleep each night. Since many teenagers view staying up late as a sign of maturity and fail to recognize their body's sleep requirements, they are more apt to push themselves to stay up beyond their bedtime. The average teenager gets six hours of sleep each night, creating a sleep deficit of 15 to 20 hours by the weekend. In addition to not receiving enough sleep, teenagers are sleeping at the wrong time of day, according to studies by Brown University and the University of Minnesota. Melatonin helps to set the body's circadian rhythm, or biological clock, by inducing sleepiness. In teenagers, secretion begins around 9:30 p.m. to 10:30 p.m. and tapers off after 8:00 a.m. The final hour of dreaming (REM sleep) is the most restful, and is missed by teenagers who, during the week, often have to rise early to meet a 6:30 bus. Sleep deprivation interferes with mental functioning, especially for creative problem solving, and seems to cause emotional instability and irritability.

However, this research is used by critics to point out that an 8:30 start time would still not resolve the issue of sleep deprivation since students would need a 9:00 or 9:30 start time to accommodate the melatonin pattern. The option of sending teenagers to bed early is supported by research at the St. Mary Medical Center in Washington. They found that if teenagers consistently go to bed at the same time throughout the week and are exposed to bright light for 30 to 40 minutes after waking, their biological clock will be reset. The difficulty arises in convincing teenagers to go to bed at 8:00 p.m. each night.

Schools that have opted for later start times resolved busing issues by switching high school start times with elementary schools, or starting all schools later. One school in Washington even chose to have an evening high school, with the school day starting at 2:00 p.m. and ending at 8:00 p.m. For those schools that have made the change, results have been reported as positive - there have been marked decreases in absenteeism and tardiness and increases in student performance and positive attitude. Difficulties arose in protests from parents who have intricate schedules balancing work and their children's activities, and reorganizing sporting schedules.

For related articles, visit the St. Mary Medical Center Web site at www.smmc.com/sleep; WebMDHealth at my.webmd.com/content/article/1728.60579; or the Hartford Courant at www.hartfordcourant.com.

Let CCRN Work for You - Voice Your Opinions!



Connecticut Career Resource Network (CCRN) seeks to promote improved career decision-making by students and other individuals, and to support lifelong learning. Help us to improve our services by taking a moment to complete the enclosed survey and mail to the address provided. If you prefer, you may contact Carol Bridges by phone at (860) 263-6258, or e-mail to carolyn.bridges@po.state.ct.us.



Occupational Profile: Computer Engineers

By Jungmin Charles Joo, Associate Research Analyst, Connecticut Department of Labor

With today's rapidly evolving Information Age, some of the fastest-growing occupations are in computer-related fields both in the nation and Connecticut. One of these occupations is computer engineers, of which there are currently 4,850 employed (1998-99 estimate) in the State.

What Do They Do?

Computer engineers work with the hardware and software aspects of systems design and development. They usually apply the theories and principles of science and mathematics to design hardware, software, networks, and processes and to solve technical problems. They often work as part of a team that designs new computing devices or computer-related equipment, systems, or software.

Education & Training

Computer hardware engineers generally need a bachelor's degree in computer engineering or electrical engineering; software engineers are more likely to hold a degree in computer science or software engineering. For jobs in research laboratories or academic institutions, a Ph.D., or at least a master's degree, in computer science or engineering is usually required. Employers usually look for people who have broad knowledge of and experience with computer systems and technologies, strong problem solving and analysis skills, and good interpersonal skills. Employees in this field usually need several years of work-related experience or on-the-job training. Continuous study is usually necessary to keep skills up to date, because of rapid technological advances in the computer field.

Where Do They Work?

Nearly half of all the computer engineers in Connecticut work in the business services industry. The second largest number of computer engineers is employed in the engineering and management services industry, followed by the transportation equipment manufacturing industry. Nearly half of the computer engineers work in the Capital region.

Earnings

National median annual wages for computer engineers were \$61,910 in 1998-99. In Connecticut, the Stamford Labor Market Area's median annual wage was the highest at \$79,150 during the 1998-99 period, while the median was \$65,280 for the State. On the other hand, computer engineers in the Danbury area were paid the lowest median wage of \$53,680.

On an industry level, computer engineers in the chemicals and allied products sector were paid the highest median annual wage of \$75,230. The lowest wage rate was in the insurance agents and brokers sector at \$49,940.

Employment Outlook

In 1998, 299,300 computer engineers were employed in the United States. It is projected that by the year 2008 employment in this occupation will grow by 108 percent, an increase of 322,800 positions, and 81,000 job openings are expected annually.

In Connecticut, computer engineers will be among the fastest growing occupations, with employment projected to rise by 63 percent in this field, increasing from 5,200 in 1998 to 8,500 by 2008. The Capital region will see the most growth in this occupation, with about 130 job openings expected to be available each year.

Jungmin Charles Joo is an editor of the monthly magazine, The Connecticut Economic Digest. This article was taken from the January 2001 publication and is available on-line at www.ctdol.state.ct.us/lmi.



... A Web Site to Bookmark

CTMentor is an on-line resource for choosing a college or university in Connecticut, designed to be useful throughout the admissions process, from the time a person begins research to the time he or she attends the school of choice. The information is provided in five basic groups - planning for college, select a campus, financial aid, on-line applications and ask an expert.

The select a campus section allows a person to set criteria for a prospective college, and matches are made with percentages of criteria met. The criteria include, but are not limited to, average class size, town setting, availability of on-line courses, sport programs, and tuition. Links are available to official campus sites.

Planning for college offers high school students the opportunity to plan their education to meet college entrance requirements and transfer students to meet requirements of their next school. A student recruiter option allows individuals to fill out a personal profile to be released to colleges and universities for recruitment purposes.

CTMentor is sponsored by the Connecticut Department of Higher Education and the Connecticut Conference of Independent Colleges, and can be visited at www.ctmentor.org.

The Governor's Career Internship Program



Working with the Connecticut Department of Education, The Governor's Career Internship Program (GCIP) acts as a liaison between schools and employers to place high school and college students with disabilities in career internships.

The GCIP program meets with schools to become acquainted with qualifying students before matching them in an internship at a state agency or in a private business. Necessary accommodations are made and the students' progress is monitored to ensure a successful work-based experience.

For more information, please contact GCIP Coordinator Marianne Rosa Guay at (860) 529-9652.

CONNECTICUT JOB FAIRS



The Connecticut Department of Labor is sponsoring several job fairs this spring. All are held from 2:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. and are free to job seekers. For a listing of participating employers and directions, visit the Connecticut Department of Labor Web site at www.ctdol.state.ct.us, or call Deb Barr at (860) 263-6280. Scheduled job fairs include:

Waterbury

April 9th
Waterbury Sheraton

Trumbull

May 22nd
Trumbull Marriott

New London

May 10th
Connecticut College

New Haven

June 5th
U.S. Post Office

Healthcare to Pet Care: The Best of Employers' Benefits

The top eighteen benefit packages offered by Connecticut companies, recently named by *Connecticut Magazine*, proved to be not only impressive, but creative, with benefits ranging from day care reimbursement to on-site car care.

Family needs were recognized in company benefits of family leave time, on-site day care, and at-home care for sick children. Companies with a majority of women workers, such as Aetna and CIGNA, offer special accommodations including lactation rooms and prenatal care reminders. Adoption reimbursement programs and assistance in purchasing new homes were also among the benefits.

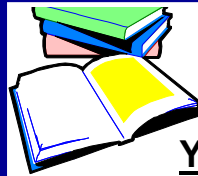
Many companies on the list offered time savers for employees by arranging for on-site car washes, DMV services, manicures, dry cleaning, and even grocery deliveries. Hewitt Associates pick up the tab for baby and pet sitters when associates are sent out of town, and offer free cab fare to intoxicated employees.

Education assistance was noted by Bob's Stores, the clothing retail chain that reimburses associates 100 percent of work-related degree study as long as a C grade or better is maintained. The Hospital of St. Raphael addresses a nursing shortage by assisting LPNs in financing their RN education, and working through project HOPE to train welfare to work women in job skills, hiring 30 percent of the participants.

Does pure generosity inspire these benefits? Employers gain by maintaining a skilled staff; in a tight labor market, the expense of benefits may offset the cost they would incur with constant recruitment and training. One company stood out for the simplicity of its benefit: the Davis-Standard Corp. advances workers based on their skill. The reward for both employee and employer is an average tenure of close to 15 years.

Companies in the report included: American Skandia, Axiom8, Bayer Corp., Bristol-Meyers Squibb, Cendant Mobility, Deloitte & Touche, Outpost.com, People's Bank, Pfizer, Inc., Pitney Bowes, Xerox, and Yale-New Haven Hospital.

Taken from www.connecticutmag.com article "Top Places to Work," written by Debra Judge Silber and published in the December 2000 issue of Connecticut Magazine.



Reference Shelf

Your Job Search Guide

by The Connecticut Department of Labor

Looking for work can be an intimidating project, and many are ill-prepared to formulate an efficient job search with satisfying results. This 45-page publication, provided free of charge, prepares the job seeker with the basics in securing and maintaining employment.

Readers will learn when and where to look for work and find exercises to help determine skills and career goals. Examples of chronological, functional, and electronic resumes are included, along with detailed advice on what employers look for during their initial 30-second review. Special tips are included for the mature worker, overqualified applicants, and those with criminal records. Learn how to tackle the all-important salary negotiation.

To request a copy of *Your Job Search Guide*, contact Erin Wilkins by phone at (860) 263-6279, or by e-mail at erin.wilkins@po.state.ct.us. This publication is also available on-line at www.ctdol.state.ct.us/lmi.

"I am always willing to learn. I do not, however, always enjoy being taught."

- Winston Churchill

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