



Anne Arundel County Chapter | Maryland
health, safety and equity in education

Election Candidate School Hours Questionnaire

Please return to: sslaaco@gmail.com

Candidate Name: Tom Gardner

The American Academy of Pediatrics, American Medical Association, American Academy of Sleep Medicine, U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and other public health groups recommend that middle and high school start no earlier than 8:30 a.m. These experts base their recommendation on numerous studies that connect changing adolescent sleep patterns and early school start times to lower academic achievement, negative physical and mental health conditions, and risky behaviors among teens.

A 2014 Start Time Task Force by Anne Arundel County Public Schools (AACPS) recommended several potential options to improve school hours, and in February 2015, the County Council unanimously passed Resolution 6-15 urging AACPS to follow the recommendations of its 2014 Task Force and “expeditiously take measures to establish safe and healthy high school hours for all students.”

Despite shifting start times by 13-15 minutes this year, AACPS and the Board of Education have thus far been unable to fully implement safe, healthy, and age-appropriate school hours. Therefore, Start School Later Anne Arundel County asks:

1. Will you sign Start School Later’s 2017 petition at <https://actionnetwork.org/petitions/establish-safe-and-healthy-school-hours-in-anne-arundel-county> ? **Yes**

If No, will you sign it? If you won’t sign it, please explain why.

2. Based on the research that later middle and high school start times increase graduation rates and decrease absenteeism, with disadvantaged students benefiting the most from age-appropriate school hours, do you feel the current school hours affects the County’s ability to be a leader in K-12 education for all students?

With everyone 8 hours of sleep is optimal which leads to better awareness, thinking and performance. I know from personal experience with 4 children (all adults now) they would do better in school and in interpersonal relationships when they got their sleep. Often, they would sleep in on the weekends to catch up. I would think that AACPS would want their students to be most productive and receptive to learning that they can be. If we are not giving them this opportunity how can be a leader to these students.

3. What hours would you define as healthy, safe, and age appropriate for:

Elementary School: **8:00 AM – 2:25 PM**

Middle School: **8:30 AM – 3:10 PM**

High School: **9:15 AM – 4:03 PM**

4. In your prior experience and positions, what have you done to ensure all Anne Arundel County Public School students (K-12) have healthy, safe, and age appropriate school hours?

None. I can speak to the importance of rest. As an Army Aviator we lived under strict rules on crew rest. It did cover time not only off duty time, but the amount of sleep required. We as leaders should recognize our children do better when they obtain a good night's sleep.

5. In your elected position, what will you do to ensure healthy and safe school hours for all of Anne Arundel County Public School Students? Please be specific: Resolutions, recommendations, funding requests, educational outreach, implementation efforts, etc.

I would support a resolution that changes the school start times as recommended.

I would support legislation if the County Executive submits as part of his budget.

6. What is your timeframe for your actions in Question 5 Please be specific, Fiscal Year, School Year, etc.

For both in FY 2020

7. Is there anything else you would like your constituents and future voters to know about your position on safe, healthy, and age-appropriate school hours?

I think the additional benefit of our teens having less time home alone is so important.