



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

Election Candidate School Hours Questionnaire

Please return to: [sslaaco@gmail.com](mailto:sslaaco@gmail.com)

Candidate Name: **Ray Leone**

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> ?

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

**Signed**

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?

**It is one factor to be sure. In the context of Anne Arundel being a K-12 leader, class size, teacher retention and salaries, and the need for more guidance counselors, social workers and psychologists are just as important. Financially any one of these issues can be quite daunting. I feel each one needs to be brought to the table and worked against the current financial model to finds ways to fund each.**

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

Elementary School: **Between 7:45 am and 8:15 am for bus pick up**

Middle School: **Between 8:15 am and 8:30 am for bus pick up**

High School: **Between 7:30 am and 7:45 am for bus pick up**

**We need to look at ways of shared bus usage, routing buses in ways that the same bus can be used for multiple trips between different levels of schools to save some money. But ultimately to do it right would require many more buses.**

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?

**I encouraged PTA participation in County Surveys and meetings to ensure as many voices as possible were heard.**

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 recommend a new look at previous analysis data and usage of the new routing software. I want to do a top to bottom audit of current spending and look for efficiencies that will offset the costs of changing hours, teacher pay and additional school based positions. Then we can go to the county with a well thought out budget/plan to meet the objectives listed above. If elected I will take my seat December 1, after the Superintendent releases his budget and before the January hearings and Budget workshop. I will do what I can to influence that budget and work tirelessly on the rest in the next cycle. I will work to partner with new Council members to address issues early as they take office.**

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

**As described above; I would be addressing issues going into the 2020 budget cycle having to work on the back of any gains made in the 2019 budget. With a goal of Healthy Safe Hours by the 2021 budget cycle, teacher salaries by 2023 budget (Steps and match with other MD Counties) and a renewed focus on Counselors, Social Workers and Psychologists in 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?

**Start times are a very important part of a much larger school safety picture. We need to provide safe nurturing environments for children to learn. This means reasonable start times, smaller class sizes, mental health supports and consistent community outreach. Parental engagement is critical to student success. We need to continue school feeding programs as well, like Breakfast in the Classroom, Free/Reduced lunches and outside organizations providing take home meals for disadvantaged students like Back Pack Buddies.**