



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

Election Candidate School Hours Questionnaire

Please return to: sslaaco@gmail.com

Candidate Name: **Michael Peroutka**

In lieu of completing Start School Later' questionnaire, Mr. Peroutka met with a representative of SSL to discuss school hours in Anne Arundel County. The following is a summary of the meeting on March 9th.

Mr. Peroutka sees many parental education advocacy groups being ignored by the Board of Education and Anne Arundel County Public Schools, including Start School Later, the Shady Side Cell Tower group, and the parents concerned about bullying. The lack of responsiveness and transparency is concerning to him. He has been impressed with SSL's multi-year advocacy efforts before the County Council.

Regarding school hours, Mr. Peroutka doesn't trust all of the research regarding later high school start times, but does agree people perform better when well rested. Mr. Peroutkas voted in favor of County Council Resolution 6-15 on school start times. However, consistent with his budget views, he has voted against funding for Anne Arundel County Public Schools, including school start times, in 2015 and 2017 (he was absent during the 2016 vote).

Mr. Peroutka agreed that the County Council, acting as Board of Health, could work with the Department of Health and its Acting Health officer Ms. Fran Phillips regarding a position on school hours. He promised to discuss this issue with his fellow County Councilmen in the near future.

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:

Start School Later Anne Arundel County 2018 Election Candidate Questionnaire

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.

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?

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

Elementary School:

Middle School:

High School:

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?

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.

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

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?