



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

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For Immediate Release

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AACPS SUPERINTENDENT FAILS TO INCLUDE FUNDING FOR SAFE, HEALTHY AND DEVELOPMENTALLY APPROPRIATE SCHOOL HOURS IN FISCAL YEAR 2018 BUDGET PROPOSAL

Start School Later Anne Arundel County (SSL AACo) is grateful that the majority of members on the Anne Arundel County Board of Education have repeatedly demonstrated their support for safe, healthy and developmentally-appropriate school hours for all K-12 children. We hope they will continue to champion this cause in the FY2018 budget by adding the funding needed to properly shift school hours for the 2018-2019 school year.

We — along with many exhausted students — are extremely disappointed that Superintendent George Arlotto is failing to provide school hours that allow students to learn and narrow achievement gaps. Our current high school start times are more than an hour earlier than recommendations by the American Academy of Pediatrics, American Medical Association, U.S. Centers for Disease Control, and other public health organizations.

It is difficult to reconcile Superintendent Arlotto's budget message of "Hope for All Children" — and his call to address the emotional well-being, anxiety, depression, and coping skills of students — without acknowledging or addressing the impact chronic sleep deprivation has on the health and academic potential of adolescents.

The elementary school community has concerns about late starts and consequently late releases. Those valid concerns require solutions.

Superintendent Arlotto's budget proposal and failure to establish proper school hours for our children is not acceptable to SSL AACo, and we hope it is not acceptable to the Board of Education, County Executive, and County Council. We implore the BOE to include funding to alter school hours in the 2018-2019 school year, so no child is required to travel to or from school in the dark and all children are taught during school hours that meet their developmental needs, as recommended by our children's doctors.

As Lisa VanBuskirk, Chapter Leader of SSL AACo said, "I give Superintendent Arlotto a Failing grade on this assignment."

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Start School Later Anne Arundel County, MD is a chapter of Start School Later, Inc., a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization that works at local, state, and national levels to raise awareness about and advocate for safe and healthy school start times.

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