



MARYLAND | MONTGOMERY COUNTY
health, safety and equity in education

BOE Primary 2024 Election Candidate School Hours Questionnaire

Please return to: startschoollatermontgomery@gmail.com

Candidate Name: Laura M. Stewart

1. 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 agree that MCPS secondary schools should start at 8:30 am or later?

Yes, I am supportive of moving start times to 8:30 or later, based on the research done which shows that this policy is best for adolescent health. I acknowledge that there are other logistical issues, which we should explore and look at possible solutions to address those concerns. For instance, younger children needing supervision from an older sibling could be addressed through after school programming that could work in conjunction with community school grants.

2. Are you willing to commit to enacting a Board of Education Resolution within your first 100 days in office to officially establish a goal to start secondary schools in Montgomery County at 8:30 a.m. or later?

I am willing to enact a resolution to establish this goal. It is also important to do a comprehensive study in

order to work out partnerships with the county department of transportation as well. With this in mind, the resolution should also include that a transportation study be done in order to reach the 8:30 or later start time goal with the least amount of fiscal impact.

3. Before implementing later secondary school bell times, both Anne Arundel and Howard Counties each conducted a transportation study to inform this decision; Fairfax County is now in the process of doing the same to further adjust their bell times. Are you willing to commit to work toward funding a comprehensive transportation study during your first 100 days in office to look at all transportation resources the county has available, in addition to MCPS school buses, to achieve healthy bell times?

See the answer above. The start secondary school after 8:30 resolution should include direction to MCPS to fund such a study.

4. Will you sign our [new petition](#) regarding bell times for teens, designed to replace petition from 2012 that has nearly 14,000 signatures on it? If not, please explain why.ⁱ

Yes, I have signed it. I believe I also signed the original petition.

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

As a parent, I was extremely grateful for the extra 20 minutes of time given to students at the high school level when MCPS last looked at start times, but now we need to do more for our kids. Some elementary schools start too late and high schools too early, with some high school buses arriving at stops before 6:30 am. Other districts have worked out the complexity and I know we can do that here as well.

ⁱ Please note that the iPetition survey hosting company may solicit a donation. No payment is required for your signature to be captured and counted. Such requests have nothing to do with Start School Later, which doesn't receive any funds from iPetition.