



**Howard County | Maryland**

health, safety and equity in education

## BOE Election Candidate School Hours Questionnaire

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

Candidate Name: Matthew D Molyett District: D1

1. Will you sign Start School Later's 2013 petition at <https://sign.moveon.org/petitions/changing-howard-county>? If you won't sign it, please explain why.

I did.

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?

Decreasing absenteeism and increasing graduation rates are both goals that the Board of Education should be seeking policy solutions for. According to the 2018 Maryland Report Card, HCPSS was maintaining over a 90% graduation rate, which is a very respectable stat. Digging into the data presents a very different story. Overall graduation rates across the Special Service categories climb to 93.33% for ADA 504, but plummet to 67.41% for all students with IEPs,

rebound to 78.28% for students receiving Free or Reduced Meals, and bottom out at 43.44% for English Learner students. We cannot accept a partition of the student body to graduate less than half of the students.

**3. What hours would you define as healthy, safe, and age appropriate? The current school hours are: Elementary 8:15-9:25 a.m. start times, Middle School 7:40-8:25 a.m. start times, and High School 7:25 a.m. start time.**

Elementary School: I don't have any evidence that our elementary times are not healthy, safe, and age appropriate.

Middle School: American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recommends that middle and high schools start no earlier than 8:30 a.m. for the sake of sleep, health, and learning. I defer to their expert recommendation.

High School: AAP recommends that middle and high schools start no earlier than 8:30 a.m. for the sake of sleep, health, and learning. I defer to their expert recommendation.

**4. On December 19, 2017, Staff proposed four models for bell times that could be implemented. All four models had Elementary starting between at 8:30 a.m. and 9:30 a.m. and Middle between 8:00 a.m. and 8:45 a.m. Model 1: High school at 8 a.m. Model 2: High School at 8:15 a.m. Model 3: High School at 8:30 a.m. Model 4: High School at 8:45 a.m. What do you think about these four proposed models?**

All of four models look to be improvements over the status quo. I would need to explore the full details, including budgetary and logistical implications, of each to be able to vote for any.

**5. With the Board of Education purchasing a new bus routing system for the Department of Transportation, what would be your timeline of implementation healthy school hours?**

My timeline would have to be derived from when HCPSS Department of Transportation would provide logistically sound model bus routes that can support a significantly altered bell schedule. I would be open to updating the bell schedules to a healthier schedule as soon as the '22-'23 school year. Such an impactful change would need a reasonable study time for the new board which would make the decision unlikely to occur before the end of the '20-'21 school year. It would be an unreasonable action for the Board to drop such a change on staff, parents, and the community at large with just a few weeks notice.

**6. Currently, HCPSS services 5 parochial schools with 21 bus routes dedicated to those schools at a price tag of \$800,000 annually to HCPSS. The HCPSS Transportation department uses their manpower to design and maintain those routes. The BOE's Legal Counsel stated that the school system is not legally required to supply bus service if a student does not reside on**

**a public school bus route. What are your thoughts about HCPSS providing this extra service to these parochial schools?**

HCPSS funds this service with pass-through funding provided by the County Council. It is a block of funding that the Board of Education could not apply differently. I would not support HCPSS using funds for this purpose that could be applied toward other expenses.

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

I have voted for and worked to elect candidates whom I believed prioritized the health, safety, physical wellbeing, and mental wellbeing of all students. Healthy, safe, and age appropriate school hours impact all four of those categories.

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

I would use my position on the Board of Education to vote in favor of healthier school start times. I would recommend the school administration provide updated and optimized models for busing and bell schedules to allow for logistically sound and fiscally achievable updates. I would introduce a resolution requesting that the Superintendent present the Board with options that ensure all all Howard County Public School students have healthy, safe, and age appropriate school hours

**9. 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 am myself a product of a public school education. For thirteen years I attended a system that collected K-12 students on the same bus and as such I know that it is possible to have all students begin around the same time. I also recognize that the logistical realities of HCPSS are vastly different challenges than the ones that my school had faced.

I have two children in the school system right now. They are both happier, kinder, and more in touch with their creative side right now. Their class check-ins and tasks have allowed them to wake up on their own.