



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

Election Candidate School Hours Questionnaire

Please return to: sslaaco@gmail.com

Candidate Name: **Dawn Myers**

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> ?

Yes.

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?

Yes. There are many issues that affect the County’s ability to be a leader in K-12 Education. Namely, lack of resources, teacher compensation, overcrowded classrooms, and a budget that spends proportionately more on Administration than our peers. Given the strong science on the issue and the benefits that other school districts who have implemented time changes have obtained, I believe that implementing safe, healthy, and age-appropriate school hours would positively impact student potential and performance.

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

I would not presume to set school hours, but would rely on established experts in the field.

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?

My advocacy efforts have been concentrated on making AACPS spend less money on administration and more money on classroom expenditures that directly benefit student performance like high performing, competitively compensated teachers, smaller class sizes, adequate facilities, and educational supplies. AACPS currently spends more proportionately on Administration than our more successful peers. As a County, we underpay our teachers, and have failed to catch them up on promised raises that were skipped during the financial crisis. As such, AACPS struggles to attract and retain the best teachers. There are many issues keeping AACPS from being a leader in K-12 education, and while I support healthy and appropriate school hours, there are other issues that also need to be addressed in our school system. As SSL advocated extremely effectively for its goals, I advocated in areas where I could apply my experience most effectively.

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.

Should the Board of Education and the County Executive present the Council with a budget that includes funding for healthy and safe school hours after a transparent process and vigorous public debate, as a member of the County Council, I would support this funding in the budget.

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

My timeframe is dependent on the actions of the School Board and the County Executive.

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?

As a graduate of Broadneck High School who had to attend during the earlier start times, I can absolutely testify that the kids showing up to class were exhausted and falling asleep during class. I had a friend who was an "A" student, but endanger of failing her first period class for attendance reasons because she simply could not get up in time for the 7:17 start time. A tired, sleepy child cannot learn effectively.