



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: Natalie Zimmerman

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?

I agree that the research is clear that our middle and high school students need later start times.

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 commit to starting an exploratory committee to investigate the possibility of starting secondary school later. We know what research says for our students, but we must work with all of our stakeholders to find solutions because this is not something we can make happen overnight. Parents, students, educators, transportation, coaches, and other community members need to be

included in this endeavor. Once we know more about the impact and desires in the community, we can move forward with supporting our secondary students from there.

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?

As stated above, I am willing to commit to starting an exploratory committee to investigate the possibility of starting secondary school later. We know what research says for our students, but we must work with all of our stakeholders to find solutions because this is not something we can make happen overnight. Parents, students, educators, transportation, coaches, and other community members need to be included in this endeavor. Once we know more about the impact and desires in the community, we can move forward with supporting our secondary students from there. Part of this endeavor would include a transportation study to investigate the potential and possibilities for MCPS.

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

I agree that research shows the benefits of starting school later for students. I still believe that we need more local information about implementation of this for MCPS.

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?

I am always willing to follow data and research from experts when it comes to our students. I appreciate the advocacy of this group to make sure we are doing all we can to support our students in every capacity. I find student

voice to be particularly important when it comes to healthy bell times.

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.