



MARYLAND | MONTGOMERY COUNTY  
health, safety and equity in education

## BOE Primary 2024 Election Candidate School Hours Questionnaire

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

Candidate Name: **Rita Montoya**

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.**

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 think a transportation assessment must be done first to determine the impact of a change in start times on county roads and the MCPS bus transportation system. Provided the assessment is properly done and shows a viable path towards implementing the later start schedule, I will work with my colleagues to set later start schedules as a goal and take concrete action towards achieving it.**

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?

**I strongly believe middle and high school youth would be better served with later start times (and elementary school children with earlier start times) based on the science and my experience as a mom of two elementary school children, aunt of two early 20's young adults and former teenager. As mentioned in question 3, I believe that a transportation study is a pre-requisite to determining whether a shift in start times is feasible from a logistical standpoint and in order to create a plan of action. If elected, I will commit to working with my colleagues and other stakeholders to begin the process of a implementing a transportation 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.<sup>i</sup>

**Yes—it was signed.**

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?

**With chronic absenteeism rates increasing, achievement gaps widening and behavior challenges widespread in MCPS post-COVID, later start times just make sense. The American Psychological Association cites numerous studies in support of later start times which bring a variety of benefits including: decreases in disciplinary action, student sleeping during instruction and in student-involved car accidents and increases in student GPA Increased attendance rates; state assessment scores; college admissions test scores; Increase in student attention and quality of student-family interaction. MCPS should begin to address this proposal more seriously.**

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<sup>i</sup> 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.