



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

Election Candidate School Hours Questionnaire

Please return to: sslaaco@gmail.com

Candidate Name: **Lisa Brannigan Rodvien**

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> ?

If No, will you sign it? If you won’t sign it, please explain why.

I have signed this petition and I wholeheartedly agree that AACPS needs to set healthy school hours for all of its students.

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?

AACPS’ failure to create healthy school hours, despite mountains of testimony and evidence of benefits for students, demonstrates that AACPS is *not* a leader in K-12 education.

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

Elementary School: **While more research is needed, most parents of elementary age children agree that they are alert and awake as early as 7:00 or 7:30am. That said, no child should be walking to school or waiting for a bus in darkness. Therefore, AACPS should set elementary hours as early as possible, without leaving any child travelling in the dark.**

Middle School: **AACPS should follow the recommendations of major medical organizations and begin middle school no earlier than 8:30am.**

High School: **Like middle school, AACPS should follow the recommendations of major medical organizations and begin high school no earlier than 8:30am.**

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?

After teaching for 3 years in a state where high school did not start until 8:00am, I was shocked to learn that there was so much resistance to changing AACPS' 7:17am start time. I witnessed dramatic differences in alertness between AACPS high school students and students in my former 8:00am high school. As a result of these observations, I began reading about the subject and discovered the enormous body of evidence supporting later start times for middle and high school students. I began advocating the AACPS Board of Education as well as the Anne Arundel County Council. I have testified at local and state-level hearings on this subject and I have even written an op-ed on this subject. I have been quoted on my personal observations in newspapers around the nation.

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.

As a member of the County Council, I will lead a renewed call to create healthy school hours in Anne Arundel County. I will happily do this in the form of a resolution. I will also work with colleagues on the County Council to hold the Board of Education accountable for implementation of the transportation software and to create a realistic estimate of the cost of the best options. I will also support requests from the Board of Education for funding related to healthy school hours. I understand that community involvement in the process will be critical to its success and as a result, I will encourage the Board of Education to engage the community in conversations about *how* to make the change successful.

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

I would like to accomplish this goal within my first 1-2 years in office. With a new school board in place by early 2019, making the change in next year's budget is a realistic possibility. Ideally, healthy start times would be in place by the beginning of the 2019-2020 school year.

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?

While any changes in a community can be difficult, the evidence regarding benefits for young people are so strong that we need to be courageous, work through the logistical obstacles, and make the change.