



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

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For Immediate Release

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ANNE ARUNDEL COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS WILL START A LITTLE LATER IN 2017-2018

Start School Later Anne Arundel County, Maryland, is pleased that the Anne Arundel County Public Schools Board of Education recognizes the importance of safe, healthy and developmentally-appropriate school hours and has affirmatively voted to delay morning bell times for its high schools by 13 minutes and all other schools by 15 minutes.

This change, which will take effect beginning in August 2017, comes after two decades of on-and-off discussion about the district's 7:17 a.m. high school start time, which is the earliest in the state.

The decision by the AACPS Board of Education is the district's first concrete step toward school hours that reflect the evidence-based recommendations of the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), the American Medical Association (AMA), the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and many other experts in children's health, safety and education.

It is heartening that the Board has asked Anne Arundel County Public Schools Superintendent George Arotto to provide an update, no later than March 1, 2017, with options for improving the start and release times of the handful of schools that may release after 4 p.m. due to a 15 minute shift.

In examining the AACPS budget, Start School Later Anne Arundel County has identified additional transportation funding that can be used to improve upon the approved start time slide. Excess funds exist within the transportation budget due the continuing low-cost of diesel fuel, as well as a new state law that exempts school bus operators from paying fuel taxes. As a result, AACPS has an estimated \$2.2 million in addition to the \$618,000 currently set aside by the county for improving school hours.

Start School Later Anne Arundel County is hopeful that the AACPS Board of Education will plan a second adjustment in start times for the 2018-2019 school year and we look forward to continuing this discussion with them. A second modification is necessary to move middle and high schools even closer to the recommendations of the AAP, AMA and CDC that adolescents start school no earlier than 8:30 a.m. A second phase of implementation can also fine-tune and improve upon school schedules due to the expected use of the State-recommended transportation routing software AACPS purchased in 2015.

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Start School Later Anne Arundel County, MD is a chapter of Start School Later, Inc., a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization that works at local, state, and national levels to raise awareness about and advocate for safe and healthy school start times.

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