

SLEEPinFairfax Candidate Questionnaire 2011

Megan McLaughlin -- Braddock District

(Please mark an X in the appropriate space and fill in as necessary)

1) Are you in favor of later start times for high school students?

- Yes
 No

1a) What is your definition of "later"? What do you believe is the optimal time for high schools to start?

Later start-times are 30 minutes or more than the current high school bell schedule. Optimal high school start times range from 8:00-8:30am.

2) Are you in favor of later start times for middle school students?

- Yes
 No

3) I believe later secondary school start times would benefit adolescent:

- Physical Health and Well-being
 Safety (injury and drowsy driving reduction)
 Emotional and Mental Health
 Academic achievement
 All of the above

4) Would you vote in favor of a new FCPS policy to require that high schools start after 8:00 a.m. in the morning?

- Yes
 No

5) Would you put forth a motion to vote on such a policy?

- Yes
 No

6) Which non-transportation alternatives would you support to help students get healthy amounts of sleep? (X all you support)

- Adding information about child and teen sleep needs to the FCPS health curriculum, including the negative impact of inadequate sleep on physical, mental and academic health.
 Providing parents with a sample schedule to show how students can achieve adequate sleep (8 ½ to 9 ¼ hours a night) within the constraints of the current bell schedule.
 Changing policy to allow an opt-out of first block(s) for students who present a plan to earn enough credits for graduation; with no transportation provided.
 Offering an alternative schedule to allow students to replace first period with a late class, an "eighth-period," with no transportation provided.
 Allowing high school students to take online courses in place of one or more first block classes.
 Identifying and evaluating best practices, i.e., successful approaches used to change bell schedules in other school systems.

Please respond with more detail below:

(This word document form will allow you to write as much as you want. It may be easier to write your response in a separate word document and cut and paste it into the grey box below.)

7) How would you proceed on the issue of school start times?

As a School Board member, I would approach the SLEEP issue in the following manner. I would meet with SLEEP's leadership team to gather the latest finding about new bell schedule options that would protect after-school sports and activities. I would speak with my new colleagues to hear their current views and determine what is needed to gain their support. I would reach out to Braddock District principals, teachers, parents and students via public meetings and email to gather their input and concerns. And then I would recommend a public hearing, as well as have SLEEP & FCPS collaborate on a community-wide survey that "controls" for one-time respondents.

8) Have you seen the documentary *Race to Nowhere*?

- Yes
 No

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This film explores the anxiety of students competing in a pressure-packed culture. Tell us your thoughts on the film's message as it relates to FCPS.

This film presented a powerful message regarding teen stress and the pressure "to succeed". School systems like FCPS need to actively address issues such as heavy homework loads, lack of honors options to AP/IB courses, teen depression, anxiety, and sleep deprivation. Parents, teachers, guidance counselors and principals need to directly engage with students and identify ways to reduce the stress and anxiety. As a trained social worker, I deeply appreciate the importance of a healthy learning environment. Therefore, parents and school officials need to help students find a healthy balance between academics and personal interests.