

# SLEEPinFairfax Candidate Questionnaire 2011

Jane K "Janie" Strauss, Dranesville 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?

No earlier than 8:00 AM

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?

*I think the first step is allowing students to take online courses in place of a period or two during the day. Students can then choose to come in later in the morning if they wish. As money becomes more available we need to continue to find a way to compress the entire bell schedule so that all schools can open between 8:00 and 9:15 in the AM and dismiss between 3:00 and 3:45 PM. If we can find a no cost solution that the community can agree to, that would be the best solution of all. In the last few years, many of the cost saving efficiencies suggested by the Transportation Task Force were adopted. The savings helped save classroom positions but were not used to buy more buses needed to compress the bell schedule. The recession called for tough decisions. Going forward, many areas of change would help relieve the need and thus cost of school transportation such as more safe walking paths and more public transportation. The FCPS bus routes must be as efficient as possible. The new GPS systems on buses have created valuable efficiencies. The constant look for more efficiencies must continue.*

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

Yes

No

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.

Students and parents need to find a realistic balance of school and community activities so that students are not so overscheduled and do not take on unrealistic class loads. Parents and students often find themselves caught between trying to prepare the best college admissions resume while trying to adopt a healthy lifestyle that includes enough sleep and downtime. Our high schools tell students and families that the choice of a college should be based on the best fit for what the student is interested in. However if the parents and students are trying to gain admission to one of the highly selective in-state or private colleges/universities, there is often a commitment to take on an extremely heavy load of classes and extracurricular activities. The competition to get into these schools is fierce and there are many, many very well qualified students applying, including large numbers from FCPS. Counselors tell students and families there is a place in college for all who want to attend, but caution students to be resilient if their top choice rejects them.