

SLEEPinFairfax Candidate Questionnaire 2011

Patricia S. "Patty" Reed, Providence 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?

8:35

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:

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

First, I would propose that the School Board immediately adopt a definitive policy that acknowledges the interrelationship between student health and well-being, academic performance and sleep. The policy would outline and advertise the existing non-transportation options for students to gain more sleep (as listed in question 6 above), so that more students can take advantage of these alternatives right away.

Second, in the context of the FY2012-13 budget development process, I would propose that the Board direct the Superintendent to work with a Board-appointed group (including SLEEP representatives and a contractor) to devise a Teen Wellness Program that would be implemented in fall 2012. This program would be developed with goals of: 1) later start times for teenagers, while accommodating transportation challenges as well as public concerns regarding after-school activities and 2) improving student mental health. The Superintendent would be directed to solicit stakeholder involvement prior to the implementation of the program, and would measure and disseminate results.

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.

The message in this film, along with results of the Fairfax County Youth Survey, tell us that many of our students feel enormous pressure to "succeed", and, as a result, feel stressed, anxious and depressed, and are not getting enough sleep. Schools, parents, students and communities must address the root causes of these symptoms. We can start by encouraging students to take a balanced courseload, and by focusing on their physical and emotional well-being to a greater extent. Although research tells us that the current teenage bedtime/rising time is not conducive to optimal learning or functioning--and best practices exist--FCPS has yet to resolve this very real challenge. The time has come to do so.