

# SLEEPinFairfax Candidate Questionnaire 2011

(Please fill in your name and the name of your district or "at-large").

Ryan McElveen, At-large

(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?

8:00 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:**

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

*Although our current school bell schedules have produced smart and well-rounded students, they have harmed student health. We need to find ways to adjust school start times to allow students to maintain healthy lifestyles. The opt-out plan for first-block is probably the most politically feasible for a short-term fix to the problem at no cost to taxpayers.*

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.

As a former FCPS student who participated in many activities, I understand the pressure and time constraints of the daily lives of students that were portrayed in "Race to Nowhere". This time management helped me prepare for college, but it also cost me my health. When school board members make policy, in addition to providing high-quality academics and student programs, they must always take into account the health consequences of their actions. After all, the learning experience should include learning about the best ways to maintain a healthy lifestyle. Much like healthy school policies, health education will save taxpayers in health care costs in the future.

The movie also detailed the test-driven culture of today's schools. I firmly believe this is something we must change. Tests are important to determine whether our schools are succeeding, but they should not make or break a student's future. We need to find ways to allow students to be creative without being judged merely by multiple-choice tests.