

# SLEEPinFairfax Candidate Questionnaire 2011

Elizabeth Schultz, Fairfax County School Board, Springfield District candidate

(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?

Starting in a timeframe post-8 am may be optimal - the logistical complexities required for transportation optimization and related integral issues (as further enumerated in #7 below) would, however, need to be addressed.

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?

*I support the science of later start times for the overall health of adolescents. The complexities of logistical implementation in a school system the student population and geographic size of Fairfax County remain enormous. Transportation schedules and bus optimization have to be a priority for the next School Board for the welfare of students, fiscal efficiency and consideration of traffic impact to those who live and work in Fairfax County. In particular, as a family significantly involved in youth sports, the infrastructure of athletic fields and their availability for school, intramural, youth and other sports - must be a major consideration in any the development of solutions to start times.*

*Identifying improved methodologies in the transport of our students by partnering with a major logistics industry expert will be one of my earliest suggestions. In optimizing transportation, we will have a more clear understanding how we can begin to legitimately look at the issue of start times with increased efficacy of busing our students. Pilot programs within Fairfax County Public Schools, presenting options with flexibility for students and reviewing best practices from other school divisions who have successfully transferred to later start times are all worthy of consideration. When evaluating best practices, however, a*

*critical assessment of that which works in one school division should take into account that Fairfax County is a unique region with respect to its metropolitan, suburban and rural composition, the significant roads and traffic issues and the sheer expanse of its geography and number of students.*

*With the tremendous amount of data both supporting the health, achievement and safety issues related to inadequate sleep - in youth and adults - this is something that is worthy of pursuing in terms of better educating students in the classroom on the issue's aspects and developing solutions as a community. Any implementation must ensure the logistical complexities are identified and fully addressed in advance to mitigate negative or unanticipated consequences.*

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.