

SLEEPinFairfax Candidate Questionnaire 2015

*Dalia Palchik
Providence District*

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

1) Are you in favor of this year's change to an 8:10 a.m. start time for high school students and an 8:00 a.m. start time for secondary schools?

Yes

2) The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) has recommended that school districts shift middle and high schools to 8:30 a.m. or later. Are you in favor of FCPS continuing to work toward later start times for middle school students?

Yes

3) The current middle school start time is 7:30 a.m. What do you think is the best approach to shifting middle schools to a later time?

As with the previous move for later start-times for high school students, additional changes to middle school schedules will have to be implemented over time, and depending on budget requirements. However, even a small change to start times, such as 15-30 minutes, can have a significant positive impact on students' health and school performance. If elected, I will work with board members, students, teachers, and families to work towards a more reasonable start time for middle school students.

4) I believe later middle and high school start times benefit adolescent:

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

All of the above

5) What changes (if any) should be made to elementary start times?

My primary concern with elementary school start times relates to childcare for families who, prior to the new high school start times, depended on older students to take care of siblings. We need to look at the childcare options offered at our schools as well as elementary school start times to make sure that families with two working parents aren't negatively affected by the changed times. Additionally, we need to make sure young students aren't walking to or from the bus when it's dark.

Please respond with more detail below:

6) What else should FCPS do with regard to start times and the issue of sleep health?

Many families I've spoken with say that we need to look at homework policies because even with the change in start times, students will still be sleep-deprived because of their extensive workload. Working as a community and across the school system to encourage healthier schedules and workloads will have a significant impact on the amount of sleep students get, and on their mental health.

We also need to work with teachers and school staff on the ground to consider unanticipated scheduling adjustments that need to be made to make the new schedules run more smoothly. Because every school is so different, FCPS needs to get feedback from every school to see what, if any, unique adjustments need to be made.

If elected, I plan to work with the SLEEP advocates and other stakeholders to ensure we continue to evaluate and improve on any future changes.