



# Fairfax Zero Tolerance Reform

**Mission:** Transform the Fairfax County Public School discipline system from a criminal and punitive approach to a restorative, educational, and therapeutic process by working with families, FCPS, county staff, civil rights and child development specialists, and legal representatives.

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## Fairfax Zero Tolerance Reform Endorses Candidates in Race for At-Large School Board Race

The leadership of Fairfax Zero Tolerance Reform (FZTR) issued the following statement today, September 26:

For three at-large seats available on the school board, FZTR urges the election of Steve Stuban, Sheree Brown-Kaplan, and Lolita Mancheno-Smoak.

The November 8 election of Fairfax County School Board members is going to have an enormous impact on our county schools, students and teachers. The incoming school board will be asked to make pivotal decisions that include selecting a new superintendent; deciding on a proposal to install video surveillance in high school cafeterias and common areas; overseeing a \$2.2 billion budget; and managing policies and practices that ensure transparent, accountable oversight with honest public feedback and engagement.

FZTR leadership believes discipline reform efforts begun by the current school board were an important step but did not go far enough. To learn where candidates stand on these pending reforms, we conducted question-and-answer sessions with all candidates in contested races. Candidates were assessed on public statements and actions, answers to the questions, and votes (where applicable to incumbents).

Candidate Steve Stuban's public condemnation of the FCPS discipline practices are well known. On needed reforms, Stuban would bring to the school board a first-hand knowledge of what he describes as a system that lacks empathy and understanding of impacts on children. Stuban would strengthen school board oversight of the superintendent through strategic governance processes that he believes require "competence and good will" on the part of staff. His support for parent notification prior to student questioning, his promotion of an overhaul of the hearings process, his desire for review and evaluation of wildly-varying suspension rates among high schools, and his commitment to creating discipline efforts founded in restorative justice make Steve Stuban FZTR's first choice for school board member at-large.

Ms. Brown-Kaplan has a long history of volunteer work on issues impacting students with special needs. While this has been her particular expertise, she has consistently fought to uphold parental involvement and decisionmaking authority. Brown-Kaplan authored a county-level PTA resolution that urges FCPS leaders to remedy the growing percentage of students with disabilities disproportionately suspended or expelled from FCPS. Her knowledge of needed discipline reforms would make her a welcome addition to the school board.

Lolita Mancheno-Smoak has first-hand knowledge of the negative impacts on zero-tolerance discipline programs through her work with Crisis Link. She is outspoken on the stresses faced by young people and has many years of experience in counseling such children and their families. Smoak has made honest and frank assessments of the current school board, believing decisions should be based on data and science presented in full context. Smoak’s advocacy for a “humane, educated, informed approach” to discipline and her knowledge of school oversight and management will serve Fairfax County well in the coming years.

FZTR leadership recognizes that incumbent Ilryong Moon is on record for supporting parent notification prior to questioning a student for infractions that may result in any suspension. We remain concerned, however, by his linking of high suspension rates at some schools to low academic achievement by the disciplined students and a lack of evidence that Moon supports the entire community and all demographic/ethnic groups.

Fairfax Zero Tolerance Reform was formed in 2005 by parents concerned over mandatory, inflexible student discipline practices in Fairfax County Public Schools. Its mission is to transform the FCPS discipline system from a criminal and punitive approach to a restorative, educational, and therapeutic process by working with families, FCPS, county staff, civil rights and child development specialists, and legal representatives. More information about FZTR’s candidate endorsements and discipline reform efforts is available at [www.FairfaxZeroToleranceReform.org](http://www.FairfaxZeroToleranceReform.org).

Fairfax County residents will elect 12 members of the School Board, one in each magisterial district and three at-large, on Tuesday, November 8.

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