



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 Louise Epstein in Dranesville District School Board Race

The leadership of Fairfax Zero Tolerance Reform (FZTR) today endorsed the candidacy of Louise Epstein in Dranesville District in her campaign for election to the Fairfax County School Board. The endorsement follows a Q & A session with Mrs. Epstein and her opponent, incumbent Jane Strauss.

In their interviews with the two Dranesville candidates, FZTR sought views on a number of the organization’s priorities—addressing the disproportionate numbers of students with disabilities involved in the discipline process; requiring school personnel to contact parents prior to questioning; disparities among high school suspension rates; due process issues related to hearings; and the role of the School Board in supporting a culture of respect and restorative justice while maintaining school safety.

The FZTR executive committee reported having a lengthy discussion about the Dranesville decision. The group was strongly influenced by Epstein recognizing the pivotal role played by the School Board in setting policy and ensuring that regulations implementing policy, which are written by staff, do so effectively and with the approval of board members. Mrs. Epstein said she supports an independent evaluation of the Hearings Office and discipline outcomes to determine if the process is effectively using limited resources, offered specific plans for engaging parents in the discipline policy process at the school level, and believes reform efforts are needed beyond those recently adopted by the School Board.

“In the end, Louise’s positions on these matters moved her up on our score sheet for the endorsement,” said Michele Menapace, FZTR Communications Director. “Janie’s recent vote against parental notification was hard to dismiss, as was her record on these issues through 18 years on the school board.”

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.

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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