

TTF Flip Committee Member Preferences

Jan Auerbach
Laurie Baker
Robin Carroll
Lisa Cherubini
Sandy Evans
Jill Hecht
Christina Kim
Laurie Lindberg
Charles Monts
Bruce Stuebner
Carol Vennergrund

Jan Auerbach

My concerns all relate to implementation.

1. If the Task Force ends up recommending a significant change, as I believe they will, the School Board will not only have to adopt it but support it strongly in order to overcome the opposition that is inevitable with so big a change.
2. I worry that the staff will not be given sufficient time and funds to design a new system that implements the Task Force recommendations in the most efficient manner.
3. I worry that the School Board will not appoint a citizen committee to oversee the staff during the design, and possibly pilot, stage so that there is citizen input as implementation decisions are being made.

I believe Scenario 2 best meets students' biological needs and provides greater flexibility to high schools to offer programs before and after school.

Laurie Baker

I prefer Flip 2 (ES starts first, then MS, HS goes last) over Flip 1 (ES starts first, then HS, MS starts last) in the hopes that some HS sports practices could occur in the morning before school and ES facilities could become available earlier in the day – both factors which, hopefully, would relieve some of the pressure on community use of sports facilities in the afternoons, resulting in a win-win situation for MS and HS students and the community. However, if that is not true, then Flip 1 (MS starts last) is preferable to the current bell schedule. I think both Flip bell schedules are better than the current bell schedules overall for student health, safety, supervision, and for families.

TTF Flip Committee Member Preferences

1. Early school start times are damaging (physically, mentally, emotionally, and socially) for adolescents and teens. School start times affect all students in the school and are not voluntary (like other activities are).
 2. The current bus system is at the breaking point, provides unacceptable service to many of our students, and needs to be reengineered.
 3. Our adolescent and teen students, their families, and the community are paying a very high price in early school start times and unacceptable school bus service.
 4. We cannot continue to “afford” to provide transportation “frills” (like the list of items provided by the FCPS Transportation Dept in its Reengineering document) for a few students by cutting corners on transportation and school start times for the vast majority of our adolescent and teen students.
 5. The community needs to be involved in further development, design, costing, and implementation of alternative school bell schedules and transportation plans.
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Robin Carroll

Re-engineering

I feel strongly that we should be supporting re-engineering. The bottom line is we need more buses to meet the current needs - both mandated and non-mandated. Adding more buses means changing routes, adding new central/secure overnight parking (what Transportation is asking for) means changing how routes are put together into runs (tiers) and which buses serve which runs, changing high school start times means changing routes and runs. I believe doing everything at the same time is the most economical way to achieve the changes needed on many fronts. **Each route is reviewed once and changed to accomplish multiple goals and reflect changing circumstances.** Then the routes are re-assembled into runs. The computer systems are available to support this endeavor. Transportation staff has the expertise. It is complex, but it can and should be done - **once**.

Can't get there from here in 45 minutes or less.

I feel that FCPS needs to address the current traffic reality - it is impossible to get from one corner of county to the other in 45 minutes or less. That reality has the potential for changing how we provide centralized services to all students in the county. At a minimum, it means we must set transportation "standards" in a way that we are not asking Transportation to achieve the impossible. A commute to TJHSST is going to take a long time from the western border of the county, period. A commute from west of Great Falls to Langley will take a long time, period. Transporting special needs students to Burke Center cannot be accomplished for all students in the county in less than 45 minutes. The facts cannot be changed. Mapquest wasn't cooperating, but a table of travel times from east to west and north to south can quickly illustrate this point.

A change worth supporting.

I support Flip Scenario 2. I would like us and the computer gurus and the cost accountants to "pull out all the stops" on this option and make sure we have tried

TTF Flip Committee Member Preferences

everything to make it work before giving up on it. As I said in my first re-engineering comment, I think the additional buses that we need to get everyone to school on time may be enough to make Flip Scenario 2 work. The options that this scenario open up for morning practices are very significant. The fact that other systems have made the changes is significant. Following biology is significant. The positive benefits of the changes themselves are significant. Let's do enough to make a real difference for the students.

The sacrifices I would make in order to make this scenario a reality are 1) I would hedge 15 minutes on the biology, i.e. MS could be 15 minutes after HS, ES could be 15 minutes after MS 2) I would focus on a given pyramid for creating tiers that make sense, and 3) I would make the "standard" for afternoon bus rides longer, i.e. 1 hour instead of 45 minutes.

I am not one that worries about "too great a change". At Herndon Elementary, which has had a 9:15AM opening, **the students make a 2 hour shift when they move to middle school** and every 6th grader has made this change every year for as long as the school has had this late opening!!! This is the current situation. Besides, I don't think we will be making that great a change. The early elementary schools can continue to be the early elementary schools, because they will not all fall in one single tier. And, if we ask for a 2 hour change, it will be in the direction that their biology is taking them anyway.

Lisa Cherubini

I prefer Flip Scenario 2

Most want to see following in recommendations:

Student Supervision/Impacts on Families:

School start times should not be dictated by impact on family or student supervision as there's such variance in society that no one start time exists that will serve the needs of all. With that said, some elements must be considered. Flip Scenario 2 reduces the amount of time HS students are unsupervised in the afternoons – which is the time period of greatest risk to any child – so this is a real positive. Clearly more parents will need to place their ES children in SACC. Therefore, the impact on the SACC program must be considered. Also interesting point about reduction of mandated MS after school programs if MS starts later. If mandated MS activities are reduced, this might also free up more resources /funding to meet greater demand for SACC programs.

HS Student Drivers: With Scenario 2, more HS students would take the bus, reducing traffic and increasing safety. Important to include stats on driver safety/accidents in 16-18 age group with later start times. It would be a positive for everyone if reducing the number of HS drivers leads to a decrease in accidents.

After School Activities & Community Sports. These perhaps go hand in hand. I would like these included with the notes that with Flip Scenario 2, schools will have more options, not fewer, by deciding whether to have HS practices in morning or afternoon. Having more options is a plus for students, coaches, and the community. Currently many HS practices start well after end of school day to accommodate coaches who have jobs outside the school and to accommodate multiple sports using same rectangular field. With a choice of before or after school practices, this would reduce the overflow on one facility/field.

Also, presently there is no after HS practice bus service so parents are already transporting

TTF Flip Committee Member Preferences

their children from school practices to home. It may even be easier for some parents to bring their HS age children to a morning practice. In addition, if there is greater use of sports facilities in morning, it might free up more space in gyms and outdoor fields in the afternoons for community sports. **Note:** It's vital to get statistics from Community and Recreation Services, as previously requested but not included in list of information requests in meeting minutes. We need to have stats to prove that more ES facilities will be opened up for community sports if ES start earlier.

Not sure why it was considered physically harder to practice in the morning than in the afternoon as youth are typically more physically tired by the end of the school day. So I think we need some statistics proving it's physically harder to practice in the morning or leave that out. It's important to note that more sports-related injuries occur when a player is tired. So I think that topic warrants greater attention.

Least want to see following:

Availability of buses for field trips: Field trips are not necessarily a mandated part of the FCPS school year. Number of field trips varies greatly by school and grade, class. As the school year is long, there should be enough time to schedule adequate number of field trips to suit needs of all schools.

HS Student's Jobs: This was not noted as negative but I don't have a strong preference to include it. I think we would need data to better understand how many HS students would be affected - but that data may be hard to obtain. Most HS students I know have weekend jobs during the school year as opposed to after school jobs but I'd hardly qualify my personal data as valid enough to make an educated decision.

Bus Run Distances/Duration: GT, Magnet, TJ
These bus runs serve a minority # of students for non-mandated programs and should not carry any weight, when deciding how to re-engineer the system to better serve the needs of the very large majority. If parents wish their children to attend a GT program or magnet school outside their home base, or TJ, then they should simply accept and adjust to whatever time changes might occur to meet the needs of the majority. Or, these parents may drive their children to out-of-boundary GT or magnet schools if time changes don't work for them. I believe the FCPS rule has been that if parents wish their child to attend any out-of-boundary school (*for reasons other than GT*), they must submit an application and drive their child to the out-of-boundary school. Although I'm unsure why the exception was made to provide bus service for non-mandated programs for a minority number of GT students – which by doing so has placed an enormous burden on the entire transportation system - I understand it's outside the scope of the committee to change that or argue that point. However, the impact on the minority number of GT students or their families should not be a valid stake in the overall decision-making to improve life for the majority.

Sandy Evans

Tier Times/Window:

My first concern is something I should have noticed and raised Thursday night with the whole group, namely that the specific times listed on the Matrix don't give us the 45 minutes between our loose tiers that we agreed we needed as part of our Basics.

Starting at 8 am, would make Tier 2 around 8:45 and Tier 3 around 9:30 am. This is a crucial difference, as even with 45 minute tiers we are squeezing the current delivery window significantly and adding costs with every 5 minute increment. In MPS 2, for

TTF Flip Committee Member Preferences

example, going from a 1 hour and 45 minute delivery window to a 1 hour 35 minute delivery window added around \$2.5 million a year in estimated costs in the models (difference between best cases \$3.36M scenario 1 and \$5.88M scenario 2; worst cases \$6.6M scenario 1 and \$9.2M scenario 2). Even with 45 minute tiers, we have a tighter window than MPS2, scenario 2, though we might find savings from having more ES first.

Proposed revision:

We already mentioned that we could push at least a few ES back to 7:50 am, like Olde Creek is now. If we push out a bit on the other end to 9:30 am, that's not terribly different than the 9:25 am we have now at Ft. Hunt ES.

Therefore, I would suggest our Tier 1 be a loose **7:50 am to 8:10 am**, as many ES as can be delivered without violating civil twilight (using those with the shortest runs for earliest delivery). Tier 2 then would be delivery as soon as possible thereafter either of ES/HS (Scenario 1) or ES/MS (Scenario 2), again loosely **8:30-8:45 am** (ES2 would probably be closer to 8:30 and MS or HS on the later end). Tier 3 would be loosely **9:10-9:30** (with an effort to keep as many as possible at the earlier end of that window). All this just for modeling, with tweaking and sliding available as needed to cut costs.

I would also take the one TJ time out of there, both because it might be confusing and because the Tweak Committee is looking at alternative ways to transport if TJ can no longer use the current shuttle-to-base-HS-system.

Cost Analysis:

My second main concern is to make sure that the cost analysis is an iterative process, with the committee involved in ironing out issues that arise, rather than just presenting a scenario, getting a cost estimate and being in a take-it-or-leave-it situation. The community advisory committee for MPS1 came up with a consensus plan it liked but had disbanded when the \$44M price tag came in. Only with MPS 2 did models get brought down to more reasonable figures.

We should be interested in how the scenarios will be costed out and figure out how the committee can stay involved at various decision points in the process (eg, if delivering to a school 5 minutes before the bell rather than 10 minutes before the bell significantly cuts costs, do we think that's a good tradeoff?) If something isn't working, is adding greatly to costs, I'd like to see either the Flip Committee or the full TTF involved in fixes as we go along.

Flip 1 versus Flip 2:

Personally, I could support either. One thing we did not take into account on Thursday in assessing the different aspects was *Political Viability*. Again, I didn't think about this piece until after our meeting, or I would have raised it.

Scenario 2 has a lot going for it, and it would make before-school practices easier to arrange. My fear is that it is such a huge switch all at once that the community might be wary of it. With so very much concern about HS after-school sports and jobs—rightly or

TTF Flip Committee Member Preferences

wrongly, and even with all the wonderful innovative ideas being considered for how to deal with that—it might raise red flags. Also, the feedback we got from high school principals during MPS1 was that they didn't want to see HS going much after 8:30 am. (Would practices before school allay concerns about a 9-something time? I don't know.)

MS-last has the advantage of (I believe) saving the County money on the afterschool programs that are now to be at all MS schools M-F until 5:45 pm (perhaps offset by need/desire to put some before school?)

Perhaps we should offer both to the full committee?

Summary Comment:

Both Flip scenarios fulfill our desire to have school times coincide with both the biology of young children and of adolescents. They both reduce the amount of time adolescents are without supervision in the afternoon. The possibility of the flipped times opening up MORE fields in the afternoon because there are more ES is an intriguing potential benefit I would like to see us pursue.

With the suggested revisions mentioned above, scenarios would look like this:

Flip Scenario 1:

Tier 1: ES1, loosely 7:50-8:10, as many as possible (no civil twilight violations)

Tier 2: ES2/HS, loosely 8:30-8:45 am

Tier 3: MS and any remaining es (loosely 9:10-9:30 am)

Flip Scenario 2:

Tier 1: same as above

Tier 2: ES2/MS, loosely 8:30-8:45

Tier 3: HS and any remaining es (loosely 9:10-9:30 am)

I support Flip 1 (but think Flip 2 is better than our current situation)

Jill Hecht

I most want to see in the recommendations:

Student Sleep Biology Both flip scenarios are better for students than the current schedule.

Student Supervision MS and HS students will be sleeping during the morning and have less unsupervised time in the afternoon. Along with SACC, ES PTA's (or administrators) have many options for after school activities that would fulfill the hour or two before the HS kids are released. Parents already pay for SACC, these activities average \$9 an afternoon session and are run by outside sources. They include art lessons, skating, basketball, chess and running classes.

After school activities and sports This will reduce the cost FCPS has for Middle School after school activity time due to the fewer hours needed. This allows more time for ES afternoon activities. HS would have the option to practice or meet before or after school.

I lease want to see in the recommendations:

TTF Flip Committee Member Preferences

Impact on Staff Working hours is an individual preference. Cafeteria and janitorial staff could switch schools if necessary to accommodate their preference.

Buses needed for Elementary field trips. Most field trip destinations are not open until 10 am so buses are not needed until after the 3rd tier runs. I also agree the number of field trips vary between school and grade and there should be enough time to schedule them with transportation throughout the year.

Magnet GT Programs I also agree that parents choose to send their kids out of boundaries and must live with the inconvenience of a longer commute. Unfortunately, at our GT center elementary school the 10 out of boundary buses pick up in the afternoon before the last 2 of our base school buses can even pull into the bus loading zone. Our base school kids are loaded on the bus 15 AFTER the GT kids depart the school.

Christina Kim

Has anyone considered making the Monday early dismissals like a regular full day? Or would that be a part of the "tweak" committee? I know some elementary schools this year have added 20 minutes to their Monday schedule, and some have added 5 minutes to their Tuesday through Thursday schedules (total 20 minutes).

My vote would be for Flip scenario 2, with the revisions that Sandy Evans has mentioned in her recommendations:

Tier 1: ES1, loosely 7:50-8:10

Tier 2: ES2/MS, loosely 8:30-8:45

Tier 3: HS and any remaining ES, loosely 9:10-9:30

What I would most like to see in recommendations:

1) Student supervision and safety

The school start times in scenario 2 are reasonable and should be well adapted/accepted by the community. We would need to begin Tier 1 ES start time with the shortest routes first, thus would not be too drastic a change from our current ES bell schedule. I think our number one priority should be the safety of the children and to make sure that they are not without supervision for an unacceptable period of time, before or after school.

This will definitely impact SACC programs. This would also have an impact on the increase demand/interest for other school-based after school programs for those students who do not participate in SACC. Then the responsibility relies on the parent/caregiver and not on the County to provide transportation for the student. This would free up resources/funding to help meet other cost demands.

2) Cost Consideration

TTF Flip Committee Member Preferences

Self explanatory

3) Before/After school activities

Although sports play a big part in the MS and HS settings, ES are not as much affected by before and after school sport practices, other than those who participate in Community Sports Organizations and for those ES whose fields are used. ES have before school FLEX programs as well as "extra" practices for musical instruments. These have the flexibility of being either before or after school, but would not be as flexible for those school who fall into the Tier 1 grouping.

Having HS in Tier 3 would not only free up the fields but rooms within the building, and these extra activities would have more scheduling flexibility with the increased availability of space.

What I would least like to see in recommendations:

1) Buses for Magnet schools and non-mandated GT

There are 2 magnet schools in Fairfax County. It is an *option* for the parents to send their child there and should not weigh heavily when making our decision.

This should also be the same for non-mandated and out-of-boundary GT. I am not sure of my opinion on TJ "depot" system already in play (since I have some years before my oldest is in HS). There are a small number who fall into these categories and are definitely in the minority group. I believe all the parents in these groups have put in an application to send their children to these facilities and thus we should not feel obligated to give them great consideration in our decision process.

2) Bus availability for field trips

Why, it seems from my personal experience, that most ES tend to pack in all their field trips at the end of the year, I don't know. There should be enough time to schedule field trips evenly spaced throughout the year.

3) ???

but if I had to state one, then it would be after-school job for HS students.

Laurie Lindberg, Middle and Elementary School Parent and member of FLIP committee.

My vote is FLIP Committee **Scenario One** with the following comments/tweaks:

Tier One: Elementary School start times 7:50 – 8:10 a.m. with rolling start times thereafter.

TTF Flip Committee Member Preferences

ES with longest bus routes could go in Tier Two to meet civil twilight constraints OR: use Robin's idea of using two buses for the morning run and convert that run to one bus in the afternoon (e.g., bus routes 10A and 10B in the a.m. convert to bus 10 in the p.m.)

It would be beneficial if as many buses as possible could be deployed first thing to pick up as many ES students as possible. There are approximately 1,350 buses, and 1343 ES bus runs.

(Q: How long is the average ES bus run?)

The afternoon, following the 6 hr 35 min. day length, would end up being 2:25 – 2:45 p.m., well ahead of the Tier Two and Tier Three end times.

Tier Two: High Schools start times 8:30 – 8:50 a.m. This is only 40 minutes after the first tier. This will work if some of the buses are used to go directly to HS pick ups; for example, some buses will be picking up ES kids at 7:30 while other buses are picking up HS kids at 7:30. The longest HS runs would have to start first, clearly.

The afternoon bell, following the 6 hr 50 min day length, would end up being 3:20 – 3:50 p.m., about one hour after the ES day ends (not including Mondays). This would enable the school buses to drop off ES kids and then proceed to the HS.

Tier Three: Middle school start times 9:15 a.m, with some ES going as late at 9:25 which is currently the Fort Belvoir ES start time. This would be the least flexible tier because it is getting so late in the morning to be starting school.

The afternoon bell would be around 4:05 p.m. for MS and 3:40 p.m. for the ES starting at 9:25 a.m. This is very close to the HS afternoon bell.

Three most important issues:

1. We must keep in mind that the **health** and well-being of the students is the priority. Sleep, like proper nutrition and exercise, is a fundamental requirement to achieve success and happiness in school, sports, and family and community life. Changing the school start times goes a long way to providing all of our students with this fundamental need. Ultimately, it will have a positive effect on health, mood, energy level, driving safety, academic interest, and family life.
2. **Community- and School-based Sports:** This system is already strained to the max, much like the school bus transportation system. Participation in sports is an extremely important facet of many families' lives in Fairfax County and we definitely want it to succeed and continue. Changing the school start times will not change the fact that the system

TTF Flip Committee Member Preferences

is already complex and difficult to organize. There will be some benefits and some negatives involved with the school schedule change. The challenges are neither avoidable nor insurmountable. I am confident that the many intelligent, resourceful, and open-minded people who currently run the sports systems in Fairfax County can resolve the sports issue successfully.

3. **Political viability** is an important piece of this puzzle. We should point to school start times that are already in place and operating successfully: Olde Creek ES 7:50 a.m., Fort Belvoir ES at 9:25 a.m., Thomas Jefferson HS at 8:30 a.m. By the same token, having high schools on the third tier will be seen as way too big of a change for the majority of the citizenry (unfortunately).

Charles Monts

Top Three Positives:

HS Student Drivers Flip Scenario 2 offers the student driver the benefit of additional sleep and driving during the end of morning rush hour. From a safety perspective, both of these factors are very positive. (Last night there was a quote of a study that offered some statistics. The quote & statistics need to be included.) Conversely, Scenario 2 would place the HS drivers in the peak of rush hour.

Student Supervision At the High School level, supervision in the morning hours is probably not a significant factor. However, in Scenario 2 High School students would be spending two hours less time at unsupervised locations.

Coaches Both scenarios move back the High School starting time, possibly making it easier for volunteers to assist with practices that would start later in the day. Scenario 2 would basically push back the starting time by 2 hours.

Top Three Concerns:

Student Supervision For the Middle School parent, Scenario 2 (with an 8:30 AM start time) would possibly be of concern for those parents that currently have their child in a school with a 7:20 AM start. The 9:15 AM start time proposed in Scenario 1 would have an impact on Middle School parents that need to get to work.

Traffic Impact on school bus runs Moving High School bus runs to the Scenario 1 schedule places the longest runs, involving major roadways, at the

TTF Flip Committee Member Preferences

peak of rush hour. Scenario 2 places the Middle School runs at the peak period, but I think the impact would be less than on the High School runs.

Cafeteria Workers As with any change, there will be disruption. Many of the cafeteria staff are part-time and have more than one job. If the flip creates an impossible situation, hopefully the employee can transfer to another school. (As a side bar – often the HS staff prepare the food for other schools, so the staff still needs to arrive at the HS at the same time. I think we'll have to assume lunch will be served basically at the same time so staff will be leaving at the same time, e.g. no additional cafeteria staff hours.)

And some footnotes:

I really think that the Task Force needs to address school boundaries as part of the Transportation issue. It is obvious to me that if students attended the school in their neighborhood instead of being bussed across the county it would provide some relief to the transportation problem.

Change the “start one hour later one day a week” in the high schools to “out an hour earlier one day a week” because traffic patterns are more spread out in the evenings.

The other item I brought up was a possibility of extending the school day by a half hour during daylight savings and shortening the day by a half hour during standard time.

Bruce Stuebner

I would support Flip 2 as I find it better addresses the needs of students, teachers, and coaches better than Flip 1

Carol Vennergrund

Either Flip 1 or Flip 2 would provide our adolescents with the relief they need.

Personally, I believe we will have less opposition from a number of stakeholders with Flip 1, because it represents a less drastic change. We know how hard change can be to embrace and implement. I agree with Sandy -- we should offer both Flip scenarios to the Task Force.

Has the Task Force determined whether more than one option will be provided to the general public for discussion? I think that having two viable scenarios presented for consideration in town meetings would provide a frame of reference for a change of this magnitude. A difficult change might be better embraced by stakeholders if they are informed about even more

October 24, 2007

**TTF Flip Committee
Member Preferences**

complicated or "drastic" options under consideration...

I vote for Flip 1 but would wholeheartedly support either Flip scenario.
