

**Student Impact Committee
January 3, 2008, 7:00-9:00 p.m.
Gatehouse Room #1610**

Attendees: Mahri Aste, Robin Carroll, Roger Cryan, Mark Emery, Judy Harbeck, Jill Hecht, Jill Jakulski, Phyllis Payne, Peter Steinberg, Patricia Velkoff, and Carol Vennergrund

Guest Attendee: Dick Reed, Chair, TTF

Absent: Mary Ann Bosley, Jay Brigleb, Stephanie Cox, Carlos Galicia, Shirley Kang, Christina Kim, Lory Monaco-Stevenson*, Beanca Nicholson, John Vdovjak, Gayle Wood, Doug Wright

* = unable to attend but contributed by phone or email

Jill Hecht volunteered again to be secretary for the evening.

Members signed in and subcommittees distributed written summaries of their presentations. Patricia reported that she will distribute by email a memo from Brenda Duffy to the Staff at Fort Belvoir Elementary School. It summarizes budget cuts being considered by the School Board, including several items regarding transportation.

A handout titled *Before and After Start Times in Jurisdictions Making Change* was distributed by Phyllis Payne. It showed that school systems that have succeeded in switching from an early to a later high school start time have generally put high school on the middle of three tiers, usually around 8:30. Many have implemented this change at no increase in transportation costs; one jurisdiction saved 15 minutes in delivery time.

Each SIC sub-committee reported on their findings from analysis and information gathering.

Area 1 – Academic Achievement/Performance

The academic, health and safety committee (co-chairs: Phyllis and Robin) provided handouts and reported on the academic benefits of later high school start times, including: , students more alert and ready to learn, improved academic performance, improvements in attendance and less tardiness, and improved enrollment. The committee noted better student preparation for and participation in classes. They also reported on the documented benefits of increased sleep for memory and learning, and mental processing speed. The sub-committee felt that placing ES in the first tier should not have a negative effect on academic performance. The ES's biological clocks have not yet shifted and they are better able to go to sleep early. Jurisdictions that changed to later start times did not note a change in access to remediation and reported the same or more students requesting help after school. One member noted that Option E may disadvantage elementary school students by placing more of them in Tier 3. E also does not have the positive impact for middle school students, who remain in Tier 1. The following chart was provided:

Academic Impact Summary			
	High School	Middle School	Elementary School
Best Options	2nd/3rd tier; A,B,C,D,E	2nd/3rd tier; A, B,C, D	
Neutral			A and C similar to current
Worst Options	1st tier; <i>current</i>	1 st tier, E; <i>current</i>	Late 3 rd tier E <i>current</i> Early 1 st tier B and D

(Note: this was the version of the chart at that time) Based on discussion, the subcommittee will be revising the chart to include options A, B,C, and D as best for elementary students.

The subcommittee's recommendation was accepted by the committee. Based on academic impact, bell schedule A or C provide advantages for middle and high school students without disadvantaging elementary school students.

Area 2a – Health

Research was distributed showing that deep sleep triggers the release of hormones that fuel growth in children, help build muscle mass, and repair cells and tissues as well as fight infections. Studies were also distributed documenting the negative effects of insufficient sleep mood, behavior, and family conflict.

Documentation also noted that breakfasts are served at many schools and centers. FCPS website statistics were cited: out of 236 schools and centers, FCPS offers breakfast daily at 161 sites and to 140,000 students daily. The

2004 JEB Stuart High School survey found that 61.1% of these students did not eat breakfast before school. (Previous SIC discussions raised concern that, since breakfasts are prepared at only a few sites and then distributed, the logistics of this would need to be evaluated. Students receiving Free and Reduced-Price meals could be affected.) Subcommittee will gather additional data.

All options have a beneficial health impact for high school students. A, B, C, and D have a beneficial health impact for middle school students. While elementary students are able to go to sleep and wake up earlier, some members of the committee are concerned that 7:30 start time may curtail elementary student sleep. The following chart was provided:

Health Impact Summary			
	High School	Middle School	Elementary School
Best Options	3rd tiers; A,B	3rd tiers C,D	A, C (1st & 2nd Tiers)
Worst Options	1st tier; current	1 st tier E; current	Early 1 st tier B, D, (late tier 3) E

Recommends bell schedule A or C: These are the best options for health because they balance the elementary students’ needs while matching the teen sleep needs.

Area 2b – Safety

Later high school start times would reduce opportunities for both youth crime victimization and juvenile crime (including gang related crime), since these both peak during the hours immediately after school ends. Later high school start times would also be expected to reduce drowsy driving and auto accidents involving teens. Phyllis and Robin said they would distribute additional information about teen driving.

Civil twilight is an important aspect of student safety at all age levels, but is a particularly important consideration for elementary students. Concerning safety, then, A and C are better for elementary students. Options B, D, and E may create morning civil twilight violations since TTF ride time limits are 45 minutes and the 7:30 start time only provides 30 minutes between our civil twilight restrictions and school start time. C and D do the most to reduce unsupervised time for middle students in the afternoon. All options improve driving safety for high school students by reducing drowsy driving and increasing their driving during daylight hours. The following chart was provided:

Safety Impact Summary			
	High School	Middle School	Elementary School
Best Options	2 nd /3 rd tiers; A,B,C,D,E	3rd tier C,D	Late 1 st tier A,C or 2 nd / 3 rd
Worst Options	1 st tier; current	1 st tier; E; current	Early 1 st tier; B, D, E

The subcommittee's recommendation was accepted by the committee. Option C balances issues of civil twilight for elementary students and unsupervised time in the afternoon for middle school students. It also improves on the current bell schedule by decreasing drowsy driving & having teens drive during daylight hours, even if driving in more traffic.

FTS will be consulted about whether Options A-D avoid civil twilight violations for ES students.

Areas 3 – Sports; School -Based and Outside school
& Area 4 - Non-Athletic Extracurricular Activities; school -Based and Outside school

Mark reported that coaches and athletic directors to whom he has spoken believe that later dismissal times for high school would result in problems scheduling practices and games. He distributed and cited research demonstrating the benefits of athletic, music, and other extracurricular involvement on both short term measures (increased grades, school attendance, and test scores; reduced alcohol/drug use, gang involvement, and risk-taking behaviors) and long-term measures (college aspirations & enrollment, civic participation, and mental health).

He expressed concern about the cascading effect of later high school sports practices, with a negative influence on club sports and adult sports. Roger, Judy, and others questioned whether the effect would be as problematic as Mark believed. Roger pointed out that his own high school football practices started within 15 minutes of the end

of school. Mark countered that the 45 minutes between the end of school and the start of sports practices exists because it is used for peripheral academic support (e.g., meeting with teachers), reorganizing gyms from their day use, and getting players to alternate facilities.

Of the five bell schedules, Mark recommended that D and E would be best for high school athletes and coaches, and that A, B, and E would be optimal for middle school students involved in extracurricular activities. He believed that Options A, B, and C would have the greatest negative impact for high school in terms of sports and non-athletic extracurricular activities.

He also discussed the benefits of the current FCPS middle school activities program. If their dismissal time was late, those children would miss out on those opportunities. Mark argued that the *research evidence* for the impact of athletic and extracurricular participation on students' lives *outweighs* the research evidence for the benefits of additional sleep for academics.

Mark recommends bell schedule: D or E for high school; A, B or E for middle school. Jill reported that from talking with parents, they felt that they and their children would adjust to a later start time. Parents and teachers surveyed were willing to make changes to their schedule for the trade off of more sleep. Competing schools in Arlington and Loudoun manage their sports and activity programs with later release time for high school students, although, they are smaller school systems. Dance studios, music teachers and tutors would adjust their schedule accordingly if elementary age students were available earlier than high school students to participate in programs.

Recommends bell schedule: C or D

Area 5 - Day Care/SACC

Roger reported that with earlier start times for elementary school, daycare would be easier for families as they would only need it in the afternoon, possibly simplifying household arrangements. He mentioned the adjustment for younger children going to early daycare before school and the again for an hour or so in the afternoon can be difficult. Older siblings would also not be available for after-school care of younger siblings. Peter also cited the JEB Stuart survey about high school students provide sibling daycare as a neutral issue. Discussion of the JEB Stuart survey, however, noted that a high school survey about daycare needs was unlikely to provide an optimal guide for purposes of discussing child care for elementary school students. Peter asked about the county providing after school activities to elementary schools similar to the current program at middle schools. There was general consensus that community for-profit programs (e.g., ballet school, karate programs, and the like) would adjust their schedules around student availability. Some felt that we could not generalize positive or negative valence about daycare impacts, since different families would be affected in different ways.

Area 6 – Family and Quality of Life

Peter commented on a study from Wilton CT, where parents reported a positive change in their high school/middle school children's' attitudes with additional morning sleep. Regarding elementary school children, they will have more free time for outdoor play if in the first tier, and schedules are likely to be more leisurely both before and after school. Regarding high school and middle school students, an advantage would be that students schedules would more closely parallel those of working parents.

Recommends bell schedule: C

Summary

Following group discussion of the various options, a vote was taken. Nine of eleven members indicated that Option C was their preference, with D as the second-best *choice*. A few people were concerned that ending high school any time after 3:30 p.m. would make re-arranging sports practice schedules extremely difficult. A compromise between C and D was discussed, keeping the TTF parameters on civil twilight and bus ride times in place. The compromise was described as a 6th option, "Option F," moving all times to be half-way between C & D. Mark noted that this would still have some high schools ending after 3:30 and not be a positive choice for after-school activities because of the impact on all those who use sports fields and facilities.

Next SIC meeting is with the entire TTF: Tuesday, January 8, 7:00 pm Gatehouse Center.

Submitted by: Jill Hecht