

**Minutes – Student Impact Committee**  
**Monday, Nov. 19, 2007, 6:00-7:00 p.m. (rev. 11/26/07)**

**Present:** Mark Emery, Judy Harbeck, Shirley Kang, Lory Monaco-Stevenson, Phyllis Payne, John Vdovjak, Patricia Velkoff, Carol Vennergrund, Doug Wright

**Guest Attendees:** Leonard Bumbaca (Fairfax Education Association), Mike Clancy (Co-chair, TTF), Rhonda Dumont (TTF member & Student Activity and Athletic Programs Specialist)

**Absent:** Mahri Aste, Mary Ann Bosley, Jay Brigleb, Robin Carroll\*, Stephanie Cox, Roger Cryan, Carlos Galicia, Jill Hecht\*, Jill Jakulski, Christina Kim, Beanca Nicholson\*, Peter Steinberg\*, Gayle Wood\*

\* = unable to attend but contributed by phone or email

**Action Item: We must identify a secretary for our subcommittee.**

Members signed in and handouts were distributed, including:

- Agenda
- Recommendations from prior groups (“Keep these in mind as we progress”)
- 5 bell schedules
- Civil Twilight table
- Transportation Re-Engineering (from TTF Website, prepared by FTS)
- Start time Research Summary

The meeting began at 6:03 p.m.

Phyllis volunteered to be secretary for the evening.

**Costs and cost neutrality:** Mark noted that we cannot be 100% cost neutral, despite School Board budget cuts. Judy supported a general guideline of reducing and/or minimizing costs, in part to facilitate bell schedule changes.

**Non-bell schedule recommendations:** Judy recommended that we keep the Consortia idea active, from earlier TTF work, and requests that MPS provide cost information on depots. Robin (via email) recommended not calling it Consortia, which the School Board is already working to implement, but rather that we request that all specialized programs be offered in at least two locations. Carol and Phyllis agreed that they do not support non-bell schedule recommendations if these are not implemented in support of later high school start times. Judy and Mark pointed out that we are tasked with transportation re-engineering with or without bell schedule changes. Patricia noted that differences will exist among Committee members about whether bell schedule changes are essential or not, and that a natural tension is likely to continue throughout our work. She encouraged Phyllis and Carol to not allow bell schedules to be dropped from consideration.

**Areas of impact (see Agenda):** Mark noted that the committee would need time to reflect on and add to the Areas of Impact listed in the Agenda before the list is considered complete. Phyllis & SLEEP (via email) contributed a draft elementary school parent survey to get their input about bell schedule changes, and Peter & Mark explained the approval process. The survey reminds us of the impacts on before and after school childcare.

- **Academics:** Mark requested that late buses for students attending after-school SOL Remediation be included. These buses run from February through May at all grade levels, two to three times weekly per school.
- **Health:** Phyllis requested that breakfast be added to this category, including both breakfast at home and breakfast served at school. Mark pointed out that meals are prepared at several school cafeterias and then distributed county-wide, complicating the school start time issue. Lory noted that provision of breakfast is mandatory for some low-income students. Carol asked that mental health issues be added. She will provide specific research data to Patricia for confirmation and distribution. Judy said that health issues support of later high school start times, which are already endorsed by the School Board. Phyllis contributed (via email)

that both pediatricians and the School Health Advisory Committee wanted to encourage students walking and biking to school, as has been done in Arlington.

- **School Based Sports:** Mark and others agreed that this impact is a major consideration. (Carol & Robin both contributed by email a belief that extracurricular activities, including sports, should not be the driving force for TTF.) Rhonda Dumont joined the meeting briefly specifically to answer questions that had been posed by Robin via email. (For completeness, all of Robin's questions are included below.) Rhonda's answers were as follow:

Q: Do any of your practices start within 20 minutes of school dismissal? Why or why not?

A: It is not practical to get practice schedules from all schools. As a guideline, we can assume that each team practices approximately two hours daily. Reasons practices do not start shortly after dismissal are:

- Students need time to visit teachers for assistance or make up work prior to start of practice
- coaches who are teachers are required to be available after school to assist those students they teach
- teachers have professional obligations to meet daily/weekly/monthly after school
- coaches who do not teach within the building need travel time to arrive for practice
- coaches who hold non-teaching jobs need travel time to arrive from their work location outside the building

Q: How many students need help with transportation to/from sports practices? Do you help them find carpools or rides?

A: Late buses are never a consideration in determine sport practice schedules. No help is provided to parents in arranging carpools or rides, to keep FCPS from liability for the safety of these arrangements. The exceptions are off-site practices (e.g., if a driver and bus are available to drive Swim & Dive). Only one activity bus is provided per school, transporting students to elementary and middle school fields and to other facilities. The Newington Connector provides a single bus to help with one school – flexibility constraints make this a very limited partnership.

Q: What sports facilities are available at each school? Which fields are lit? Who pays for the lights?

A: All high schools have a weight room, gym (a few have more than one), lighted stadium, and lighted softball and baseball fields (exception: Stuart does not have a softball field). Lighting is paid by FCPS.

Q: How many fields are in use at the same time?

A: (not discussed)

Q: What are the biggest hurdles in scheduling practices and games for each sport each season?

A: For all sports, it is space on campus. For football, an athletic trainer must supervise students; if Freshman, Junior Varsity, and Varsity are at different locations, extra trainers are needed. Winter sports are not too challenging, except for snow cancellations. Additional sites are needed for Freshman/JV basketball practice and facility conflicts are more common now that the MS after school programs are growing and they use their buildings. Spring is very difficult. Tryouts and practices are disrupted by snow and ice at the start of the season, resulting in renting turf or indoor facilities. Not all outdoor sports can move indoors.

Q: Does FCPS use community facilities for practices and/or games? Which sports and seasons are included and why? Who coordinates these schedules?

A: Community facilities are used for practices, not games (except Swim & Dive and Golf). Basketball teams take turns using both in-school and community facilities. Other middle school activities have priority in scheduling middle school gyms, often making this space unavailable or limited for high school practices.

Q: How much do the schedules of practices and games change from year to year?

A: The Virginia High School League sets limitations on tryouts, length of season, and the like; therefore, the schedule does not change. Practices, not games, use community fields, and this is arranged through the Park Authority. FCPS has some, but not infinite, priority of usage. Should a community field or neighboring school facility be closed for repair or renovation, this results in loss of practice space or need for transportation to get to a different facility.

Q: What transportation does FCPS provide for sports at your school? Who pays for the buses - FCPS or the Athletic Boosters?

A: FCPS provides transportation for all levels of competitions (e.g., local, regional, state). FCPS provides transportation to all regular season athletic events within 50 miles of Fairfax County borders. Any regular season event more than 50 miles from Fairfax County borders requires payment by the local school. When competing in State culminating events, if the trip takes less than 90 minutes, a school bus is provided. If a team traveling less than 90 minutes wants a charter bus, FCPS allocates the cost of a school bus and the school (Boosters, PTA) can pay the difference for a charter bus. If the trip takes more than 90 minutes, FCPS pays for a charter bus.

Q: Are you familiar with late-starting districts, and do you now how they handle sports practices?

A: (not addressed)

Q: If school started one hour later (8:20-3:10), what are the biggest issues affecting sports practices and games? Which some sports be impacted more than others? (Same question for a 2-hour delay)

A: (not addressed)

Q: Which sports could practice before school?

A: Softball and baseball pitchers and catchers currently practice before school at the beginning of the spring season in some FCPS schools. Outdoor sports cannot all be moved indoors, and weather and temperature make it impossible to have all spring practices before school.

Q: If FCPS moves to later start times, how much advance notice would be needed to adjust sports scheduling?

A: (not addressed)

- **Non-Athletic Extracurricular Activities:** Mark and others pointed out that this category is at least as major a consideration as school based sports. SACC was added to this category. Peter contributed (via email) that SACC is full at every location, with no physical space for expansion.

It was agreed that we would not divide into sub-committees at this time, both to facilitate further sharing of information by all members and to wait until we have more information from MPS. No date was set for the next SIC meeting, pending TTF developments.

The meeting adjourned at 7:05 p.m.

**NOTE:** Because we will be conducting some business by email, I (or our secretary-to-be) will attempt to include email input in our minutes. Welcome to the 21<sup>st</sup> century!