

## Notes on: Proposed Amendment by Phillip Niedzielski-Eichner

The draft proposal put forward by Phil Niedzielski-Eichner (with support from pro-SLEEP Board members) does not answer the concerns of the community.

- It proposes system-wide “no-earlier-than” student pick-up times and “no later than” drop-off times. Problems:
  - What will these times be?
  - Who will decide, and how?
  - This will increase transportation costs. Is that wise?
- It proposes a five-year implementation window. Problems:
  - What are the budget implications?
  - What are the family implications?
  - Will bell schedules shift without community approval?
- It affirms SB goal of later high school start times. Problems:
  - Whatever its flaws, the online survey found that most people are *satisfied with*, or *indifferent to changing*, the current bell schedule: 80% of students, 75% of parents, 85% of staff, and 83% of the community.
  - Asked if the current schedule works well or very well, they said yes: 68% of students, 67% of parents, 75% of staff, and 73% of the community.
  - A full 80% of FCPS teachers oppose a bell schedule change. At a time when SB must increase class size, freeze salaries, and reduce other school-based supports, teachers need SB support.
  - Discussion of amendment states, “Most parties appear, for the most part, to be in agreement with the SB’s position that “later start times would be beneficial” . . . “
  - The board should be careful not to confuse the opinion of a strong, politically-active single-issue advocacy group with the opinion of the majority of voters.
- It sets specific “performance criteria” for a wide array of transportation parameters. Problems:
  - A 30-minute change in start times has not been vetted by the community and is likely to have serious implications for families and employees.
  - Fees that are levied on some students but not on others may be illegal because they prevent equal access to a Free and Appropriate Public Education.
  - Mr. Gibson pointed out that this level of specificity redefines the relationship between the Superintendent and the School Board.

While Mr. Niedzielski-Eichner is motivated to improve transportation efficiencies, he is also allowing for schedule changes that have just been rejected wholesale by the Fairfax community. FCPS families do not want a bell schedule change. Any proposal that leaves the door open to changing either the order in which schools open and close or the times at which they start is a proposal that is not acceptable to students, parents, teachers, staff, or the larger community.