



County of Fairfax, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: FEB - 9 2009

TO: Board of Supervisors

FROM: Anthony H. Griffin *AHG*
County Executive

SUBJECT: Board Matters, Part A, 14a., Effects of Start Later for Excellence in Education Proposal (SLEEP)

As you are aware, the Fairfax County School Board is considering a proposal to alter the bell schedule in the public schools. The proposal calls for earlier start and dismissal times for elementary schools and later times for high and middle schools. The proposed changes will affect the delivery of county services in several ways. In accordance with the Board's request, staff from multiple county agencies reviewed the recommendations from the Transportation Task Force, specifically the proposed bell schedule changes, to determine what impact, if any, those changes will have on the provision of county services in schools and the resulting potential impact on the community at large.

My direction to staff in the review of the recommendations was to focus on the impacts of the proposed bell changes and not on whether the proposed changes would result in better academic performance for our youth. It should be noted, however, that the support which the county services provide in academics, out-of-school activities, child development, public safety, public health and wellness, community engagement, and other elements of community well-being are of vital importance in the overall growth and development of our youth. Indeed the development of our youth is the shared responsibility of schools, the county government, and many other partners. They provide a comprehensive approach to education and other important outcomes that help schools fulfill their mission of being a school system that "inspires, enables, and empowers students to meet high academic standards, lead ethical lives, and demonstrate responsible citizenship." The proposed change in bell schedules currently under consideration has the potential to significantly impact many of these other "pieces of the puzzle." County programs and services, especially those subject to the greatest impact, have demonstrated positive school-related outcomes, such as improved academic performance, attendance, and behavior.

Some impacts can be generalized across agencies and services. For example, many county, non-profit, and private entities rely on high school teens as a part of their workforce in the afternoons and evenings. High school students serve as mentors and volunteers for a large number of after-school programs. Later dismissal times may result in a diminished ability for students to continue in these roles, which may—along with effects such as increased dependence on child care—impact families financially.

Office of the County Executive
12000 Government Center Parkway, Suite 552
Fairfax, VA 22035-0066
703-324-2531, TTY 703-222-5494, FAX 703-324-3956
www.fairfaxcounty.gov/rec

Over the past several years, the county has effectively employed systems approaches to issues such as gang prevention and community engagement. These approaches recognize the importance and values of a comprehensive methodology among diverse agencies and sectors. I understand the difficulties in making a decision of this magnitude and can appreciate the School Board's need to be cautious and deliberative in evaluating how a major change in one element of the system affects other elements, especially when each element is working toward similar outcomes (e.g., youth development and academic success).

To ensure that the impacts on county services are made known to the Fairfax County School Board, I will provide this document to Dr. Jack Dale and ask that he share it with the School Board as it deliberates on the proposed bell schedule changes.

Attached is a summary of specific impacts from various county agencies. Also listed are the staff contacts who can provide more detailed information about the specific impacts.

AHG/MMM

Attachment

cc: Verdia L. Haywood, Deputy County Executive
Robert A. Stalzer, Deputy County Executive
Patricia D. Franckewitz, Director, Department of Community and Recreation Services
Gloria Addo-Ayensu, Director, Health Department
Nannette Bowler, Director, Department of Family Services
George Braunstein, Executive Director, Fairfax-Falls Church Community Services Board
John Dargle, Director, Fairfax County Park Authority
David Rohrer, Chief, Police Department

Agency/Function	Description of Change	Impact on Citizens and County Service Delivery	Additional Information	Staff Contact
Community & Recreation Services/Athletic Facility Scheduling	<p>CRS currently schedules community use of gyms beginning at 5 or 6 pm.</p> <p>Later dismissal times would require a change in high school sports practice and game schedules:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> High schools will practice in middle school and some elementary school gyms (which high schools will need to start using for practice) until 7:30 p.m. during the week during the winter (the busiest gym use season). The lack of lighted practice fields will require high schools to use more off-campus fields, reducing community use availability on those fields. The on-campus fields (baseball and softball) and off-campus fields (rectangular) used for practices will be in use by high schools until 8 p.m. or later. In addition, high schools plan to utilize more facility space on Saturdays for practices, further impacting space available to the community. 	<p>The availability of facilities for community use will be significantly reduced:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> During the winter (primary season for basketball), full-sized gyms will not be available to youth, unless they practice from 8 pm to 10:30 p.m. Such a shift in schedules would eliminate the availability of these gyms to adult leagues and groups and keep youth ages 7 through 18 up later at night in order to complete practices. Off-campus fields and high school softball fields, which are used by community groups after high school practices end, will not be available for community use, unless they are lighted and can be available after sundown. Community groups and the county likely would not be willing to provide funding to develop synthetic turf fields at high schools, because community use availability would be severely limited. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Over 70 off-campus fields and gyms can be used each season by high school teams for practice. Morning or early afternoon practices are not a possibility for community use groups, due to issues regarding the availability of coaches and the transportation of athletes. CRS schedules over 185,000 youth participants each year in gyms and on fields. 	<p>Jesse Ellis, 703-324-5704, jesse.ellis@fairfaxcounty.gov</p>

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<p>Community & Recreation Services/Middle School After School Program</p>	<p>Middle schools would start between 9:20 and 9:40 a.m. and end between 4:10 and 4:30 p.m. (All but two currently start between 7:20 and 8 a.m. and end between 2:10 and 2:50 p.m.)</p>	<p>Attendance in the programs likely will drop significantly, due to the fact that students who leave school after regular dismissal and ride the bus will be able to get home between 5:30 or 6, increasing the likelihood that parental supervision will be available. At South County Secondary School, whose 4 p.m. dismissal time is currently the latest of any middle school, the average participation is almost 60% lower than the countywide average; South County's is the least attended program in the county. Last year, the program drew an average of 170 students per school per day countywide.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is important to note that this program was not developed to serve as a day care program. The careful design and implementation of this program has resulted in improved grades, school attendance, and behavior among the participants. Last school year, 71 percent of all middle school students participated in the program; 15 schools had participation rates higher than 85 percent. Attendance is directly correlated to the availability of transportation and is much higher on days when a late bus is provided; the availability of transportation would be a major determinant to the potential success of services offered before school. 	<p>Patti McGrath, 703-324-5719, patricia.mcgrath@fairfaxcounty.gov</p>

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<p>Community Services Board/Prevention Services</p>	<p>Later end times for middle and high schools would limit the available time for the delivery of alcohol, drug, and mental health prevention and intervention services.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community Services Board programs are evidence-based, meaning they are highly evaluated and show consistently strong positive outcomes. Maintaining fidelity to the program design is vital to maintaining solid outcomes. A change in schedule and access to youth in after-school hours will impact participation and ability to deliver programs as designed. Several programs, such as Girl Power and Too Good for Drugs, rely on times provided in after-school programs to operate. Reductions in after-school programming will drastically reduce CSB's ability to deliver this critical programming. CSB capacity building would also be impacted. Partners we train to facilitate GP or other prevention programs would be equally limited greatly reducing the number of children receiving services. CSB's Leadership and Resiliency Program, which was created in Fairfax County and has been replicated internationally, is implemented in 15 high schools. Two of the program's three components, including service learning, take place in the after-school hours. If those available hours are decreased, it is unlikely that this program can continue to operate with fidelity to the original program design. 	<p>Because of educational requirements, many important programs that are not directly linked to academics—such as drug, gang, and violence prevention programming—must be delivered after school.</p>	<p>Laura Yager, 703-934-8774, laura.yager@fairfaxcounty.gov</p>

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Family Services/School Age Child Care (SACC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Earlier start and end times for elementary schools will affect families' needs for child care services. • Later start and end times for high schools may limit availability of older siblings/neighbors to provide after-school child care. 	<p>The proposed changes may affect the number of services some families use (i.e., before, after school) which could impact their fee for child care. In addition, there would likely be an increase in demand for after-school services.</p>	<p>SACC will continue to provide before- and after-school services aligned with the bell schedule at each elementary school.</p>	<p>Anne-Marie Twohie, 703-324-8103, anne-marie.twohie@fairfaxcounty.gov</p>
Health/Public Health Nurses and Clinic Room Aides in Schools	<p>A change in school hours would necessitate changing the service hours for Public Health Nurses and Clinic Room Aides (CRA) in all schools and may alter times for Health Department-provided training and service provision in the schools.</p>	<p>Work responsibilities and services to students remain fairly consistent; however, an adjusted bell schedule could affect service provision:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health Department staff provides training for school health procedures (glucose testing, epi-pen injections, etc.) at the end of the school day. A bell schedule change may require training to be conducted prior to the students' arrival in the morning and may be logistically difficult to arrange. • Health Department staff may not be aware of medications and procedures routinely done now in the home prior to or after school hours. In the event that elementary school students start the day earlier, there may be a significant increase in the volume of medications and procedures performed, as these students have a greater number of daily medications/procedures and need greater assistance in managing these tasks. 	<p>Many CRAs choose work assignments that allow them to oversee their children going to school in the morning and/or returning home in the afternoon. For the 137 elementary sites, this could mean leaving older children at home unattended and unsure of whether they left to go to school. This may be untenable to some staff and could lead to increased costs associated with recruitment, hiring, and training new CRAs to fill vacancies due to this schedule change.</p>	<p>Rosalyn Foroobar, 703-246-8467, rosalyn.foroobar@fairfaxcounty.gov</p>

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<p>Park Authority/Facilities for High School Athletics</p>	<p>Later end times for high schools will push sports practices later. In most cases, buses for team transportation to off-campus facilities would not be available until after 5 p.m.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If swim and dive practices, which rely heavily on RECENTER pools (currently 3 to 5:30 p.m.) are moved to later in the evening, they will run into the peak time for Park Authority swim classes and other aquatic customers. Over 300 Park Authority classes and an estimated 2,500 participants could be displaced, resulting in a loss of revenue in excess of \$350,000. Moving high school swim practices to morning or evening, would also displace current Park Authority customers, including dozens of long-term rental partners. The Park Authority rents available swim lanes to U.S. swim teams, masters swim groups and other aquatic renters at RECENTERs in the mornings and evenings. Possible loss of rental revenue up to \$323,000. Use of Park Authority facilities for outdoor sports, such as tennis, cross country and golf would be limited or eliminated due to lack of daylight or would require early dismissal from school. Increased congestion during peak times may increase parking problems at already crowded Park Authority facilities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> RECENTERs must recover all operational expenses from fees charged through memberships, classes and other fee-based activities. Further reducing prime time pool availability in the mornings or the evenings would likely result in increased customer complaints and would reduce retention of RECENTER passholders. The Park Authority regularly receives complaints throughout the winter, since the beginning of the program, from patrons about the loss of available pool time to high school teams. Early morning high school practices would require an additional expense for recruiting and retaining life guards not currently provided in difficult early morning shifts. 	<p>John Berlin, 703-324-5576, john.berlin@fairfaxcounty.gov</p>

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Park Authority/Park Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Later end times for high schools will limit the hours students are available for after-school jobs and volunteer work. Earlier start times for elementary schools may affect scheduling of staff to cover FCPS field trips to Park Authority sites. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Many Park Authority facilities rely on high school students for afternoon staff and volunteer work. Loss of staff could lead to increased costs associated with recruitment, hiring, and training new staff and volunteers. There may be a staffing budget impact requiring an additional hour in the mornings if elementary school field trips (to nature centers, historical sites) needed to start earlier in the day. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> High school students are the primary source of staff for RECenter front desks, maintenance and other positions, especially after school and many evenings. Due to changed schedules, part-time class instructors may not be available. 	John Berlin, 703-324-5576, john.berlin@fairfaxcounty.gov
Police/Crossing Guards	Changes in the bell schedules will affect the shift schedules and staffing patterns of the Police Department's 156 crossing guards.	The proposed bell schedule would change crossing guard shifts to be anywhere from 20 minutes later to 2 hours and 10 minutes later or as much as 55 minutes earlier. It is expected that at least some of the guards may not be able to continue in their current position with the new shift. There may also be an impact to the guards that cover two crossings. Loss of staff could lead to an increased burden on daytime patrol staffing, who are responsible for covering vacant crossings. The actual impact cannot be determined until an assessment can be accomplished by surveying the existing crossing guards.	Other school-based Police Department positions, such as School Resource Officers, may be affected by schedule changes. These impacts are expected to be negligible.	Maggie DeBoard, 703-246-2604, maggie.deboard@fairfaxcounty.gov