SLEEP Candidate Questionnaire

Candidate name: John Jennison
(Please mark an X in the appropriate space and fill in the gray shaded areas " "as necessary.)

1) The charter for the Transportation Task Force approved by the School Board in 2007 asked that group to look at alternatives for achieving later high school start times. It states: "In this regard, the School Board believes that later start times would be beneficial and seeks the best alternatives for achieving them; the 'how' and 'at what cost' are, however, the chief constraints."

   Do you agree with the School Board statement that later high school start times would be beneficial?
   ☒ Yes
   ☐ No

2) I believe later high school start times would benefit adolescent: (check all that apply)
   ☐ Health (physical well-being)
   ☐ Safety (injury and drowsy driving reduction)
   ☐ Emotional/mental health
   ☐ Academic achievement
   ☒ All of the above

3) Do you believe that the Iteration 3 proposal offered by FCPS staff in January 2009 was "the best alternative" available?
   ☐ Yes
   ☒ No

4) Cost Estimates for later high school start times: While some options for achieving later high school start times would add to transportation costs, others **cost nothing to implement** and some (see SLEEP's Pilot Plans at www.sleepinfairfax.org) are estimated to **provide cost savings**. Superintendent Dale has said he will not have staff analyze SLEEP's cost-saving pilot options unless directed to do so by the school board. Some School Board members say they will not consider these options until the staff verifies the work. Board member Tina Hone described this as a Catch-22.

   If elected, would you advocate for staff examination of pilot options outlined by SLEEP or other members of the community that could save FCPS money?
   ☒ Yes
   ☐ No

5) Last March, the School Board rejected a no-cost staff plan known as Iteration 3, which was generally agreed to be too disruptive. At town hall meetings and in an FCPS survey, Iteration 3 was presented as the only later high school start time alternative to the current schedule; parents, teachers and students were asked to choose between it and their current schedules. No attempt was made to use public input to improve Iteration 3 into a more politically viable model or to offer other alternatives. Two School Board members, Phil Niedzielski-Eichner and Brad Center, suggested methods to continue searching for the best solutions but were narrowly voted down at the March 2009 School Board meeting. If you were on the School Board, would you support:
   ☐ **Phil Niedzielski-Eichner's proposal** (to create a new Operational Expectation that would have required "reasonable" bus pickup and dropoff times and "sensible" ride times. See full text below*)
   ☐ **Brad Center's proposal** (directing the Superintendent to look at ways *other than bell schedule changes* to help high school students with sleep issues. It also called for an analysis of the most important impacts of changing high school start times and solution/mitigation strategies for dealing with them. See full text below**)
   ☒ **Both**
   ☐ **Neither**

6) This fall staff implemented Iteration 5, a plan staff created in March (as the School Board was struggling with its decision on Iteration 3) without seeking input from the public. Iteration 5 was included in the Superintendent's final recommended budget, approved by the School Board in May. It did nothing to help high school students, but did change schedules at 122 elementary and middle schools (47 by 20 minutes or more).

Do you believe that significant changes such as Iteration 5 bell schedules should involve public input before being implemented?

☒ Yes
☐ No

7) Which non-transportation alternatives would you support to help students get healthy amounts of sleep? (*check all you support*)

☒ Including more information about child and teen sleep needs in the FCPS health curriculum, including the negative impact of inadequate sleep on physical, mental and academic health.
☒ Providing parents with a sample schedule to show how students can achieve adequate sleep (8 ½ to 9 ¼ hours a night) within the constraints of the current bell schedule.
☐ An opt-out of first period for students presenting a plan for earning enough credits for graduation, with no transportation provided.
☐ Pilot test an alternative schedule to allow students to opt into a later schedule replacing first period with a late class, an "eighth-period," with no transportation provided.
☒ A new policy allowing high school students to take online courses in place of one or more first-period classes.
If so, would you allocate funding to increase the online course offerings?
☐ Yes
☒ No

☐ Other alternatives?

8) In your opinion, if transportation were not a constraint, considering what is best for student health and learning, what is the ideal start and end time for:

Elementary school students: start 8:15 end: 3:15
Middle school students: start 8:15 end 3:15
High school students: start 8:15end 3:15

10) Are you in favor of later start times for high school students?

☒ Yes
☐ No

Please respond with more detail below:
(The electronic form will allow you to write as much as you want.)

11) What else would you like to tell us about your position or thoughts on the issue of later high school start times or any of the questions above?
I applaud the work that the SLEEP advocates have done to bring the problem of adolescent sleep deprivation up for discussion within the educational community. Just as "one size does not fit all" in the educational services provided by our world-class Fairfax County Public Schools, there is recognition that one schedule does not fit the needs of everyone. While reviewing the constraints of the bus transportation system, it is important to note the SLEEP initiated studies identified savings that, once incorporated, resulted in saving the taxpayers money and improving efficiencies in the FCPS transportation system.

While the present budget shortfall limits easy solutions, such as more busses and bus drivers, I think the school board should work with all of the stakeholders to work for positive changes that

allow high school students to come to class at later times without adverse impacts on other student populations, FCPS employees, families and stakeholders. Aside from the alternatives on the table for discussion, we may find that a marginal, but not insignificant change of twenty to thirty minutes in later start times might be within the FCPS's abilities to accomplish. Most importantly, FCPS must perform such reviews in an open and transparent manner that ensures the integrity of the process and improves public confidence in a public education system that is here to serve the community.

As a school board member, I would advocate for an open, public review of the previous process and see what went well and what could be improved. I would advocate for the utilization of econometric modeling, such as those used for user-time analysis of fast food service lines and drive-up bank windows, and other tools to see if FCPS can do even better. Friends from across the spectrum of school involvement, including the SLEEP advocates, teachers and instructional aides, participants in the fine arts and sports communities, parents with working children, parents with certain religious commitments, "bus stop Moms and Dads" and many other stakeholders have approached me and shared their particular concerns and asked for my assurance, if I am elected as a school board member, to fairly represent everyone's views. I intend to to do that with civil discourse, and without pitting constituencies against each other; that has been my distinct record as a community leader of many organizations in the county that I have been asked to lead. I believe everyone wants assurances of such open reviews so that everyone is legitimately represented during the process. FCPS should always strive for excellence, and facing challenges such as sleep deprivation problems for students is another matter that needs to be properly addressed.

*__**Operational Expectations Approach**: The motion by Phillip Niedzielski-Eichner__:

Amendment in the form of a substitute motion:

A. That the draft bell schedule known as "Iteration 3" is rejected.

B. That the School Board's Transportation Operational Expectation is revised as follows:

The Superintendent will provide safe and cost-effective student transportation services to instructional programs for which they are eligible or that meet their needs and are a "best fit" solution to the following requirements: (1) maintains reasonable student pick-up and drop-off times and sensible ride times; (2) enables age-appropriate school start times to the extent practicable, while ensuring that quality supplementary academic programming and extracurricular student activities are not diminished; and (3) implements any changes, as may be needed, to avoid abrupt disruptions to family, employee, and community daily schedules and patterns.

C. That the Superintendent present to the School Board his reasonable interpretation of this revised operational expectation for School Board review no later than June 30, 2009.

D. That the Superintendent prepare, if needed, a proposed resource plan, for inclusion in the final FY 2010 Approved Budget, which (1) identifies the staffing, consultant support, hardware and software acquisition he believes is required to design transportation routing to meet the School Board's amended operational expectation; and (2) is funded through efficiencies gained through transportation system reengineering and optimization.

E. That future transportation implementation costs will not grow beyond FY 2009 levels, which represents the base year against which costs will be evaluated, while accounting for inflation and fluctuations in the cost of equipment, fuels, and personnel, and student growth. **(Niedzielski-Eichner)**

__Further analysis approach**: The motion by Brad Center__:

Amend the main motion to direct the Superintendent to report to the School Board no later than January 31, 2010, with an analysis of the issues related to the sleep needs of our high school students and the potential impacts related for high school families, students, and staff if a future change to the bell schedule were made. The Superintendent's analysis would: 1) examine alternate strategies (those not related to changing bell schedules) to help students affected by sleep issues; 2) identify the most important issues for families, students, and staff related to a change in a bell schedule (to move high schools later) based upon the feedback received from the Study Circles, Survey, Community Dialogues, and e-mails to FCPS; these include such issues as sports and other after-school programs, availability of community use facilities, issues related to traffic and others; a) determine the impacts to families, students, and staff; b) identify possible solutions or mitigation strategies; c) identify costs of solutions and mitigations (if applicable); and d) provide an assessment of the viability of the solutions or mitigation strategies. **(Center)**