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### **SLEEP Cites Multiple Flaws in FCPS Survey**

An FCPS survey released Friday failed to ask the most important questions in the later start time debate. Instead, it pointed to problems with the specifics of a staff draft of a bell schedule and drew on gross misinformation being spread throughout the school community as the survey was being conducted. In addition, the survey tool itself had multiple glaring flaws in design and administration, with no controls over who was taking it or how many times.

“This survey tells us nothing. It appears to condemn the Iteration 3 staff draft, though with all the many problems with the survey design it’s hard to trust even that conclusion,” said Phyllis Payne, Co-Founder of SLEEP (Start Later for Excellence in Education Proposal).

Opponents no doubt will try to use this to say there is not community support for later start times for high school students, but this is false. Previous better-designed surveys show that parents, teachers and students overwhelmingly object to the current high school start times.

One obvious question the survey should have asked but didn’t was whether 7:20 am is an acceptable start time for high school students, as well as how parents and students feel about 6 am bus pickup times for teen students. Parents were not asked how much sleep their children get each night, whether the current high school schedule affects their child’s health and performance or how their teens respond to 5-6 am wakeup times.

This survey instead asked respondents their opinion of the specific bell times in Iteration 3. It made no attempt to determine *which* specific bell times within Iteration 3 were acceptable and which were not. Considering the flaws in the survey itself and the problems with Iteration 3, it’s only surprising there were as many responses supporting Iteration 3.

While the survey was online, students and parents were being told a bell schedule change would “kill” various sports and extracurriculars, that it would “kill” middle-school afterschool programs, that this schedule was the **ONLY** alternative possible to the current schedule. These inaccurate reports were coming from within FCPS and were going around through email distribution lists collected for official FCPS activities. Highly disruptive impacts were predicted in reports released by the County Executive and the FCPS Office of Student Activities and Athletics, with no true attempt at realistic and workable rescheduling. It will take time to counter the many extremes and worst-case scenarios outlined in the reports with more realistic and reasonable options.

Attached is [a more detailed report](#) on the multiple flaws in the FCPS survey design and administration.