Name _____ Date _____

Ethos, Pathos and Logos in an Op-Ed: A Later School Start

Directions: Read the op-ed, then answer each question about how its writer tries to persuade the school board.

Let Route 14 Run in Daylight

For nine years I have driven Route 14 for the Harlow Ridge School District, and from late October until early March, every student on my route boards the bus in darkness. My first stop comes at 6:10 a.m., long before most households in town have switched on a kitchen light. I recognize my riders by their backpacks, their coughs and the music leaking from their earbuds, and I understand what our early bell does to them, because I watch the consequences unfold every morning in my mirror.

By the third stop, the bus has gone quiet, with heads resting against frosted windows and hoods pulled up like curtains drawn against the morning. Last winter a junior named Tomas slept through our arrival at the high school, and when I finally woke him in the empty parking lot, long after the other riders had filed inside, he apologized as if he had committed some offense. He hadn't. He had done exactly what a human body does when we demand alertness two hours before it is biologically ready.

Sleep researchers have reported for years that the body's internal clock shifts later during adolescence, so a teenager who lies awake until eleven is not being lazy; that teenager is keeping time with a biological clock that no one chose. Harlow Ridge High begins classes at 7:20, which means my earliest riders are awake by 5:30. That is a schedule built for buses, not for the people riding them.

The numbers from our own building tell the same story. When the Harlow Ridge student council surveyed 412 students about their sleep habits last spring, seventy-one percent reported sleeping fewer than seven hours on a typical school night, and more than half admitted dozing off in a morning class at least once during the previous month. Those are not figures from a distant laboratory. They come from the kids on my bus.

I will not pretend that a later start is free. If the first bell moves to 8:30, athletic practices will end later, some families will have to rearrange childcare, and the district will have to redesign every bus route. I understand exactly how much work that last task requires, because I would be one of the people doing it. But districts redraw their routes whenever a school opens or a neighborhood grows, and the job demands a summer of careful planning, not a miracle.

Consider, for a moment, what we would never tolerate on an athletic field. No coach would schedule a championship game for 5 a.m. and then blame the players for their missed shots, yet every school day we schedule chemistry and calculus for an hour when many teenage brains are barely awake, and then we wonder why first period is so quiet.

The school board will vote on the proposed 8:30 start at its March meeting. Before then, I invite every board member to ride Route 14 with me for a single morning. Bring coffee. Watch the windows. Count the sleepers. Then decide whether our schedule should serve the bus or the students it carries.

1. Considering the op-ed as a whole, what is the bus driver's primary purpose in writing it?

A. To encourage families to rearrange childcare before the schedule changes

B. To persuade the school board to approve the proposed 8:30 starting time

C. To explain how the district designs and periodically redraws its bus routes

D. To warn students that staying up late will damage their academic performance

2. The op-ed opens with the writer's nine years on Route 14 and the daily view in the bus mirror. How does this opening prepare readers to accept the argument that follows?

A. It admits that the writer doubts whether a later start would solve the problem.

B. It presents survey results showing how many students at the school lose sleep on school nights.

C. It shows that the writer has studied the science of teenage sleep, so readers will trust the research that follows.

D. It shows that the writer has watched the problem firsthand, so readers will trust the observations that follow.

3. After Tomas apologizes, the writer adds, "He hadn't. He had done exactly what a human body does when we demand alertness two hours before it is biologically ready." What effect do these two sentences, coming right after the apology, most likely have on readers?

A. They suggest that Tomas should have gone to bed earlier the night before.

B. They show that the writer is strict with riders who fall asleep on the way to school.

C. They prove that most students at the school sleep through the arrival.

D. They shift the blame from the student to the schedule and invite sympathy.

4. The writer sums up the 7:20 start as "a schedule built for buses, not for the people riding them." What does this contrast suggest about the priorities behind the district's current schedule?

A. It works well for students but creates problems for the district's buses.

B. It was designed by the bus drivers to give themselves shorter workdays.

C. It puts the convenience of transportation ahead of the needs of students.

D. It was chosen because most families in the district prefer an early dismissal.

5. Right after the survey results, the writer adds, "Those are not figures from a distant laboratory. They come from the kids on my bus." What do these two sentences contribute to the writer's use of the survey as evidence?

A. They explain how the student council decided which students would take the survey.

B. They admit that the survey was too small for the school board to trust its results.

C. They tie the statistics to the writer's own riders, so the numbers feel close to home.

D. They suggest that research from sleep laboratories contradicts the survey's findings.

6. In the paragraph that begins "I will not pretend that a later start is free," the writer lists the costs of the change, including work the writer would have to do. How does this paragraph affect the writer's credibility?

A. It weakens it, because the costs the writer lists show that the plan cannot work.

B. It strengthens it, because the writer shows that the change will cost the district nothing at all.

C. It weakens it, because the writer admits to doubting the student council's survey results.

D. It strengthens it, because admitting real costs shows the writer has weighed the plan honestly.

7. How does the writer's comparison to a championship game scheduled for 5 a.m. strengthen the argument for a later start?

A. It shows that the school's own games are already scheduled too early in the morning.

B. It argues that sports should matter more to the school than classes like chemistry and calculus.

C. It suggests that coaches, not teachers, are to blame for students who arrive at school tired.

D. It applies a standard readers accept in sports to school, making the early start look unreasonable.

8. The writer supports the claim that students arrive short on sleep with evidence from more than one source. Which two details come from the writer's own observation rather than from the survey or from sleep research?

☐ A. "seventy-one percent reported sleeping fewer than seven hours on a typical school night"

☐ B. "Last winter a junior named Tomas slept through our arrival at the high school"

☐ C. "more than half admitted dozing off in a morning class at least once during the previous month"

☐ D. "Sleep researchers have reported for years that the body's internal clock shifts later during adolescence"

☐ E. "heads resting against frosted windows and hoods pulled up like curtains drawn against the morning"

9. In the final paragraph, the writer tells board members, "Bring coffee. Watch the windows. Count the sleepers." What is the most likely effect of these brief, direct instructions to the school board?

A. The brisk commands urge board members to see the problem for themselves.

B. The commands admit that the board has already made up its mind.

C. The commands suggest that coffee is the real answer to students' tiredness in the morning.

D. The commands restate the student council's survey in simpler and shorter terms.

10. A skeptical board member says that the student council's survey numbers, on their own, would not convince her to change the schedule. Based on the passage, which limitation of the survey could she most reasonably point out?

A. The survey asked students at other schools instead of the students at Harlow Ridge High.

B. The figures rest on what students reported about their own sleep, which may not be accurate.

C. The survey is several years old, so its results may no longer describe current students.

D. The survey asked about students' grades rather than about how much they sleep.