



MAKING PRACTICES PUBLIC

Healthy Start Times and District Transportation

Starting with the 2024-2025 school year, there will be adjustments to our school start times. Middle schools will start at 8:00 AM, high schools at 8:30 AM, and elementary schools at 9:10 AM. During the planning of transportation schedules, it was observed that many buses would arrive at Lower Merion and Harriton high schools as late as 8:29 AM. This would cause tardiness among high school students and disrupt elementary bus runs. To ensure timely transportation for high school students, the district considered altering drop-off times for middle schoolers before 8:00 AM, which would negate the intended benefits of the later start time.

To circumvent the situation of middle school students arriving well before the 8:00 AM start time, disrupting the high school schedule, and delaying elementary bus runs, several transportation options were assessed:

1. Expanding walking zones for all schools was dismissed due to safety concerns, especially for schools like Black Rock lacking safe walking routes.
2. Extending the walking distance from 1.0 to 2.0 miles for high school students was dismissed because of the considerable increase in walking distance.
3. Extending the walking distance from 1.0 to 1.5 miles for high school students was accepted. This decision will allow us to optimize our transportation workforce efficiently for our middle schools bus runs, preserving the benefits of the later start time. It will also ensure timely transportation for high school students, avoiding tardiness. Furthermore, it will prevent delays in elementary bus runs.

Our Transportation Department is currently assessing the impact on current ridership due to the change in walking areas for high school students. Families should anticipate receiving official communication about transportation changes in January.

Please note that the transportation changes do not apply to students receiving specialized transportation per their IEP. Further, if student would need to walk on a route that has been deemed hazardous by PennDOT, transportation will be provided.