



WEST CHESTER AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT

REVISED BELL SCHEDULE & TRANSPORTATION PLAN FOR EAST HIGH SCHOOL & FUGETT MIDDLE SCHOOL



Fall 2011

Dear East High School and Fugett Middle School Community:

As our community is well aware, we will implement a new transportation plan in the 2011-12 school year which combines bus ride and bell schedule times for our East High School and Fugett Middle School students. East and Fugett administrations, along with central office staff, have worked hard to make the implementation of this plan as smooth a transition as possible. To that end, the following will assist our students, parents and staff in knowing how arrival, departure and student parent pick-up routines will flow beginning with the 2011-2012 school year.

Please know that East High School and Fugett Middle School administrators have worked in cooperation with our WCASD transportation department, Krapf's Transportation Company, and the West Goshen Police Department in the preparation of this plan.

Should any parent or community member have questions or concerns regarding this plan, they can feel free to contact either the Fugett Administration at 484-266-2901, or the East High School Administration at 484-266-3801.

Sincerely,

Dr. Marc Bertrando, Assistant Superintendent

Dr. Richard F. Dunlap, Jr., Principal, East High School

Mr. Le Roy Whitehead, Principal, J. R. Fugett Middle School

NEW BELL SCHEDULES & BUSING ROUTES

In order to decrease transportation costs, the West Chester Area School District has made changes to student busing starting with the 2011-12 school year. As shown below, these changes will effect starting and ending times for all schools except Stetson and Pierce. Saving the district nearly \$1 million, the plan includes changes in the following areas: bell schedule changes, out-of-district bus stop consolidation and transfer points, and public and non-public school bus stop consolidation.

HOURS OF INSTRUCTION STARTING SEPTEMBER 2011				
SCHOOL	AM	PM	HALF-DAY DISMISSAL	NOTES
TIER 1: J. R. Fugett Middle Bayard Rustin High B. Reed Henderson High East High	7:30	2:15	10:45	▶ Dismissal on teacher inservice half-days (1/9, 2/8 and 3/6) will occur at 10:55 a.m.
TIER 2: E. N. Peirce Middle G. A. Stetson Middle	8:05	2:50	11:20	
TIER 3: East Bradford Elementary East Goshen Elementary Exton Elementary Glen Acres Elementary	8:40	3:10	11:40	▶ Morning kindergarten is cancelled on days with a two-hour delayed opening. ▶ On teacher inservice half-days (1/9, 2/8 and 3/6, afternoon kindergarten is canceled; morning kindergarten will be dismissed with grades 1-5.
TIER 4: Fern Hill Elementary Hillsdale Elementary Mary C. Howse Elem. Penn Wood Elementary Starkweather Elementary Westtown-Thornbury Elem.	9:10	3:40	12:10	▶ All half-day kindergarten is canceled on parent/teacher conference days (11/21, 11/22, 4/25, 4/26). Full-day kindergarten will be dismissed with grades 1-5. ▶ There are no YMCA programs in the schools on early dismissal days.

This new plan was conceived by the Transportation Committee of the Community Budget Task Force. After analyzing federal and state mandates, district policies, public and non-public bus routes, walking routes, ride times, bus capacity and costs, the decision was made to reconfigure public school bell schedules, consolidate bus stops, increase student walking distances, change routes, and increase the use of transfer points for non-public school students. The implementation of these changes required new start times for some schools.

Additional information on the transportation changes may be found on our website at www.wcasd.net by clicking on the yellow box on the right, entitled "2011-12 Transportation."

EAST HIGH SCHOOL BELL SCHEDULE

Homeroom	7:30 - 7:40 am	(10 minutes)
Period 1	7:44 - 8:29 am	(45 minutes)
Period 2	8:33 - 9:18 am	(45 minutes)
Period 3	9:22 - 10:07 am	(45 minutes)
Period 4	10:11 - 10:56 am	(45 minutes)
Period 5	11:00 - 11:45 am	(45 minutes)
Period 6	11:49 - 12:34 pm	(45 minutes)
Period 7	12:38 - 1:23 pm	(45 minutes)
Period 8	1:27 - 2:15 pm	(48 minutes)

(includes pm announcements)

J. R. FUGETT MIDDLE SCHOOL BELL SCHEDULE

Warning Bell	7:25 am	
Homeroom	7:30 - 7:40 am	(10 minutes)
Period 1	7:44 - 8:31 am	(47 minutes)
Period 2	8:35 - 9:22 am	(47 minutes)
Period 3	9:26 - 10:13 am	(47 minutes)
Period 4	- 6th grade academic 10:16 - 11:04 am	(48 minutes)
	- 7th grade academic 10:16 - 11:04 am	(48 minutes)
	- 8th grade lunch 10:16 - 10:48 am	(32 minutes)
Period 5	- 6th grade lunch 11:08 - 11:40 am	(32 minutes)
	- 7th grade academic 11:08 - 11:56 am	(48 minutes)
	- 8th grade academic 10:52 - 11:40 am	(48 minutes)
Period 6	- 6th grade academic 11:44 - 12:32 pm	(48 minutes)
	- 7th grade lunch 12:00 - 12:32 pm	(32 minutes)
	- 8th grade academic 11:44 - 12:32 pm	(48 minutes)
Period 7	12:36 - 1:23 pm	(47 minutes)
Period 8	1:27 - 2:15 pm	(48 minutes)

(includes pm announcements)

TRANSPORTATION PLAN PROCEDURES FOR EAST/FUGETT CAMPUS AS OF SEPTEMBER 2011

ARRIVAL BY BUS

Buses will arrive and drop off students on the Ellis Lane side of the building (see diagram in middle of booklet). Fugett students will enter in the following manner:

SIXTH GRADE STUDENTS will enter via the ramp to the auditorium and enter the auditorium (door 4-16) where they will remain until the homeroom bell.

SEVENTH AND EIGHTH GRADE STUDENTS will enter via the lower ramp to the gymnasium and enter the gymnasium (door 4-17) where they will remain until the homeroom bell.

EAST HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS will enter via any door on the Ellis Lane side of the building (see diagram in middle of booklet).

In the event of inclement weather, it is permissible for any Fugett student or any East student to enter any entrance that is nearest where they were dropped off regardless of whether they are an East student or Fugett student. This will be the case only in the event of inclement weather.

FUGETT DROP OFF/PICK-UP

Starting at 7:00 a.m., Fugett students may be dropped off and picked up at the front of the Fugett main entrance (which is where bus drop-off was previously); not the Ellis Lane side of the building. These students will enter and leave the building through the front doors. Upon entering the building, 6th grade students will proceed to the auditorium on the second floor; 7th and 8th grade students will proceed to the gymnasium on the first floor.

EAST DROP OFF/PICK-UP

Starting at 7:00 a.m., East students may be dropped off and picked up at the East High School main entrance. These students will enter and leave through the front entrance.

East High School students driving to school will proceed and park in their assigned high school parking spot and enter via the closest front entrance (see diagram in center of booklet).

DEPARTURE

Promptly at 2:00 p.m., the Ellis Lane entrance near Price Fields will be closed to all traffic by school personnel. At 2:27 p.m., the C/D East intersection will be closed by school personnel to all traffic to prepare for bus departure. As illustrated in the map included in this booklet, buses will be color-coded and parked along the Ellis Lane parking lot (A). No cars will be able to leave parking lot "A" once the buses line up (2:00 pm – 2:25 pm).

Fugett students will exit the building via the ramp on the Ellis Lane side of the building (doors 4-16 and 4-17). At the base of the ramp, a large white board will illustrate the locations of the buses. Students will be able to check this board for the location of their bus.

PARENT/SIBLING PICK-UP

For afternoon pick-ups, parents may enter the Fugett/East campus through either the Paoli Pike entrance or the East entrance off Ellis Lane and continue to the front entrance of their student's school. Students will exit their schools through the front entrances for parent pick-ups. Drivers will exit both campuses onto Paoli Pike/Airport Road.

All high school student drivers will be directed to leave the East campus via Paoli Pike/Airport Road.

SUPERVISION

At least six administrators/teachers will oversee the afternoon dismissal each day at the bus line. Radios will be used for communication. An administrator/teacher will release the first bus after all students have loaded. Administrators/teachers will be in constant contact so that no students attempt to load a bus after the first bus is instructed to leave. One administrator/teacher will be assigned to the intersection to stop traffic at the access drive when buses are leaving. One administrator/teacher will be assigned to Fugett to monitor parent traffic flow. One administrator/teacher will be assigned to the East student parking lot for traffic flow. A West Goshen police officer will be assigned to direct traffic at the Ellis Lane exit from East as buses are leaving in the afternoon.

Every attempt will be made to ensure that buses are in the same spot each day. Buses will be assigned a specific row in which to park.

CAMERAS/AUDIO

All district buses are equipped with video and audio monitoring systems that can be accessed by school personnel when necessary.

STUDENT EXPECTATIONS

Class meetings will be held with all students prior to the end of this school year to review the arrival and departure plans, discuss safety issues, and review student expectations as follows.

1. Students are expected to follow the new seating protocols as directed by the drivers. Sixth grade students will be seated in the front; followed by 7th and 8th grade students. High school students will be seated in the rear of the bus.
2. Students will be advised that video cameras with audio capability will be utilized to continuously monitor student behavior on the bus at all times.
3. As always, bullying, teasing or any type of intimidation will not be permitted as per board policy JGDC.
4. High school students need to understand their role on the school bus as a role model and mentor to the younger students.
5. Middle school students are expected to act as mature young adults.
6. While on the bus, all school rules are in effect and will be vigorously enforced as per policy EDCB and page 58 of the Discipline and Records Policy Manual.
7. Any disciplinary infractions will be dealt with swiftly and thoroughly.
8. Students are expected to report any violations of published rules to their grade level administrator.
9. Students should refrain from any inappropriate or foul and abusive language.
10. Students should keep hands and feet to themselves at all times

NOTE: These expectations are not meant to be inclusive and all rules and policies as per the discipline and records policy are in effect while on the bus and walking to and from a students assigned bus stop.

DRIVER STAFF DEVELOPMENT

All East/Fugett feeder-pattern drivers will attend five staff development/in-service sessions. Two will take place in May, two in June, and one August, to review student expectations and revised seating protocols for having middle and high school students riding together.

SEATING CHART PROCEDURES

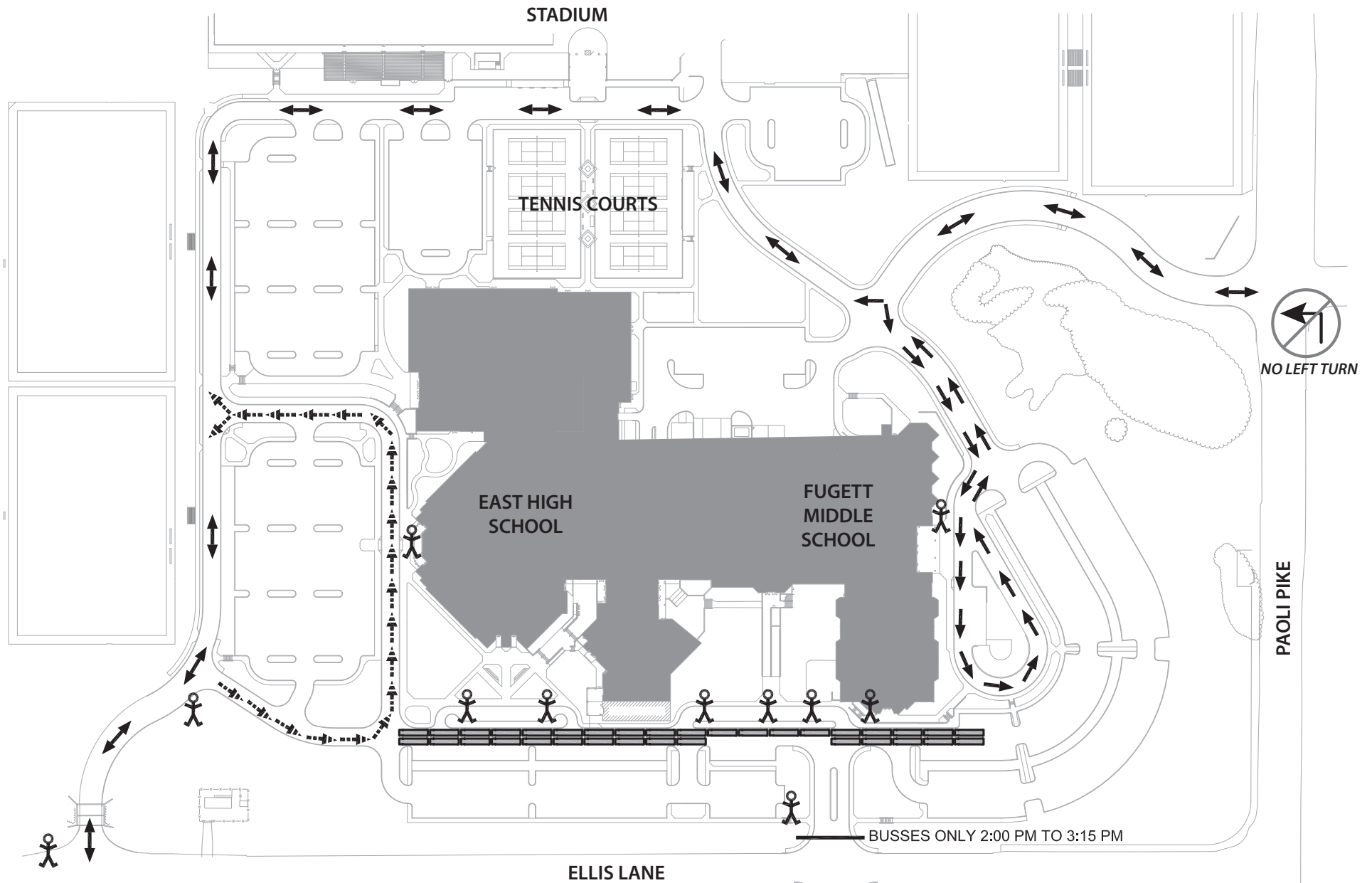
The following format will be strictly enforced to seat students on the buses: All 6th grade students will be assigned to sit in the very front of the bus (no exceptions). They will be followed by 7th and 8th grade students.

All high school students will be assigned to sit in the rear of the bus. East/Fugett buses will be equipped with red magnetic strips. These magnets will be placed above the windows on the inside of the bus to designate the area the Fugett students will be seated (towards the front of the bus), and the high school students (towards the rear behind the red magnetic strip). Again, all 6th grade students will be seated in the front of the bus at all times, then 7th and 8th grades and high school students in the back.

After detailed route sheets have been provided, drivers will be responsible for knowing the capacity counts of middle school students and place the magnetic strips accordingly. Some middle school students may be required to sit three to a seat. Sixth graders must sit in the front seats. Drivers will communicate to their supervisor any problem with seating and capacity counts. These counts must be tracked each day for the first 4 weeks of school. A chart will be provided to each driver which must be filled out and returned to the Krapf's office at the end of each week. High school capacity counts will be high on most routes. Because many students in high school do not ride the bus, begin the seating arrangement according to your middle school capacity count.

SPECIAL EDUCATION STUDENTS

Special education students who require or are currently utilizing specialized transportation will continue to arrive and depart via the front of each building as is the current practice.



KEY	
	MAIN TRAFFIC PATTERN
	EAST STUDENT DROP-OFF/PICK-UP
	FUGETT STUDENT DROP-OFF/PICK-UP
	BUS
	TRAFFIC COORDINATOR

NOTE: The Ellis Lane entrance located between the two schools will be closed from 2:00 to 3:15 pm Monday through Friday due to bus traffic. Please use the other two entrances during that time.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. *Will the public school bell schedule changes and bus stop consolidations affect the ride time for public school students?*

Yes. Consolidating bus stops may actually shorten the ride time within the district for many students since the buses will be making fewer stops. The district policy with regard to ride time in the district has not changed.

2. *If combining buses for Fugett Middle School and East High School is beneficial why isn't the same consolidation taking place at the District's other middle and high schools?*

Consolidation benefits achieved with the Fugett and East proposal are not possible with our other secondary school buildings. Because Fugett and East occupy the same property, the plan to reduce the expense of busing by combining routes is possible. It is not feasible to do the same thing at Peirce Middle School and Henderson High School, for example, because the distance between the facilities requires too much time to service both schools' students with a single route riding the same buses at the same time.

3. *I'm concerned that students may be forced to walk along dangerous roads to get to new bus stops if the consolidation plan goes into effect.*

Student safety is our utmost concern, and no child's safety will be jeopardized by any transportation change. There are state laws, as well as codes from the departments of transportation and education, which carefully regulate the issue of student travel to and from school, and to and from homes and bus stops. This includes specific language regarding the distance and type of road on which a student may be required to walk. In no case will the WCASD violate any established law or code.

4. *Is the District taking into consideration research which shows that students do better when school starts later rather than earlier? Should the District be moving in the direction of later school starts, especially for high school students?*

The emerging research on student performance and start times has gotten the attention of educators everywhere, including in the WCASD. The data is interesting and worth consideration. Implementation of such major changes would be so dramatic, however, and the nature of interacting programs so complex, that such change cannot simply be attached as part of a transportation plan adjustment.

A move to later bell times for high school students would require consideration as its own strategic initiative. Moving schedules would involve many other components of students' academic and extra-curricular activ-

ity schedules which would require cooperation from other school systems in our area.

5. *How is the consolidation of bus stops being accomplished? Our street is not located in a development.*

Stops that are being consolidated are located within developments or at the entrance to developments. Students will not be asked to walk further on main roadways or along hazardous routes.

6. *There are several different buses that enter our development. Will they automatically be combined?*

No, automatic combinations will occur. More than one bus may enter a development for one school, especially at the elementary level, to handle the passenger load based on the number of students attending a single school. Multiple buses may also enter a development for different schools based on attendance boundaries.

7. *Is there a policy regarding new bus stops that are not visible from the homes of the youngest children, and those students with special needs?*

Yes, concerns of this type are covered by existing transportation guidelines and are available for viewing on the district website at www.wcasd.net.

8. *Is the district aware of concerns regarding the combination of high school students riding with middle school students? The list of concerns includes high school students bullying younger students or engaging in discussions about inappropriate subjects or materials.*

Yes, this issue has been raised, however, other school systems in our area have a track record of success in combining students of a wider age range on buses, with complaint levels and disciplinary action reported at no different rates than found on buses with more similarly aged students. Our District's non-public transportation service already merges a wide range of student ages and grades.

Innovative programs have been implemented to further address parental concerns such as seating middle school students in the front of buses and high school students in the back. Parental concerns in this regard are well understood, and, supporting all these safeguards is the fact that every District bus utilizes both video and audio recording systems to help manage student behavior.

9. *Consolidating bus stops and making changes to the public school bell schedule may result in more parents driving their children to school. What accommodations are being considered by the district for the added traffic expected at certain public schools?*

The District does not anticipate that the changes will increase the number of parents driving children to school. The District will continue to encourage families to use school bus transportation which is the safest form of ground transportation available. The District will monitor traffic closely and, if drop-off patterns change, we will devise the necessary steps to resolve any problems.

10. *I'm worried that the elementary schools dismissing later might cause students to miss certain after-school activities, including those not school-related.*

The transportation office did a comparison of current drop off times and the new drop off times, and found that the scheduled drop-off times for each route will not differ dramatically from current schedules. However, individual student experiences may be different in some cases.

11. *Will some elementary school parents likely have to adjust how they handle day care arrangements if the bell schedule changes are made?*

Yes, small adjustments may become necessary. Currently elementary parents drop off their students when teachers arrive at 8:15 a.m. without having to use YMCA day care. For schools that change to an 8:40 a.m. start time, parents will still be allowed to drop off students at 8:00. Also, since buses will be picking up students earlier in the morning, this may be more convenient for parents who previously could not use the bus service due to the bus schedule's conflict with the parents' work schedules. For schools that change to a 9:10 a.m. start time, parents will be able to drop off their students at 8:30 a.m. which is a 15 minute difference from the 8:15 time.

Students who are in schools that have an ending bell time of 3:10 p.m. instead of 3:30 p.m. may have an extra 20 minutes in daycare. For students who are in schools that have an ending bell time of 3:40 p.m. instead of 3:30, they may arrive in day care a maximum of 10 minutes later than in the past. Please understand that pick-up and arrival times for any student could change based on many factors other than the bell schedule change.

We recognize that these changes may impact current day care arrangements. We fully expect that the before and after school day care service offered by the YMCA in our buildings will adjust program times accordingly. This service will remain available in each elementary building for the convenience of parents.

12. *Will changes affect extended day kindergarten programs paired at the schools? How will that be handled?*

No, the Extended Day Kindergarten program will not be affected. The district will ensure public schools that have similar bell times will be paired.

13. *Will the public school bell time changes for the elementary schools impact buses for special education students? Will my child's ride time be impacted?*

No, since no special education bus goes to more than one elementary school, there will be no impact to the length of the ride for special education students. On the other hand, special education students attending classes at a particular elementary school will have bus schedules that will accommodate the new bell schedule at that school.

14. *Some parents have stories about crowded buses. Is the District aware of this, and will bus stop consolidation or the public school bell schedule changes lead to overcrowding?*

Yes, such comments have been shared, but in the District's effort to save taxpayers money by utilizing fewer buses, the continued goal is to have as many buses run at full capacity as possible. We must also ensure that the new transportation plan does not violate School Board policy or state and federal laws and regulations relating to school bus operation. This will require strict adherence to policies such as requiring students to take only their assigned bus home, except in cases of home emergencies, school tutoring, or medical service needs.

All District buses are equipped with digital cameras. In continuous reviews of onboard recordings we have never found a time when a seat was not available to a student. Any report of a student standing on a moving bus would be a safety violation which we would take very seriously. In no case shall a bus be permitted to operate with a load that is above its rated capacity.

15. *Is the District still considering the Transportation Committee Report finding recommending that student drivers who buy a high school parking pass sign a waiver to give up their bus seat or face a parking pass fee of \$250?*

The District has not pursued this specific recommendation involving bus seat waivers for high school student drivers. In order to increase revenue, the annual student parking fees have been raised incrementally the past two school years. The lower implementation cost of adopting the smaller parking fee increase outweighed the benefits of following the entire committee recommendation at this time.

16. *What are the proposed public elementary school bell schedule changes for the 2011-12 school year be if the new transportation plan is approved by the School Board?*

Additional information on the transportation changes may be found on our website at www.wcasd.net by clicking on the yellow box on the right, entitled "2011-12 Transportation."