

West Chester Area School District
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West Chester, PA 19380
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TASK FORCE COMMITTEE

Report

on

2011-12

Transportation Changes

November 15, 2010

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Introduction and General Information

Introduction to the School Board Transportation Report

New fiscal realities have not only impacted families but also have had an adverse effect on city, municipal, county, state, and federal budgets. Driving much of the economic volatility on a local level has been the depressed real estate market, high unemployment, and poor investment returns. All of this has a direct impact on the annual school district budget and the decisions we must make in order to maintain balanced finances. This has required our District to carefully analyze spending priorities amid limited alternatives. That same process takes place every day within the households that make up our student and parent base, as well as among all other taxpayers and residents living in our District.

When an option exists to cut District spending in a way that involves creating efficiencies rather than eliminating programs, it makes sense to thoroughly explore that choice. Such an option emerged from the transportation subcommittee of the Community Budget Task Force.

The transportation subcommittee's proposal will make major strides in increasing the efficiency of the student transportation system. A transformation of this magnitude must include four main elements, with the first being Board direction to move to the planning stage. The second requires transportation department planning to map out how the new routes, bus stops, and bell schedule changes would work together. The third includes a comprehensive communication program to inform parents of the proposed changes while collecting parental feedback. The final step involves School Board members review of feedback while considering the benefits of the proposal compared to complications it may cause, culminating in the vote on a motion to adopt the plan for 2011-12.

The primary purpose of this report was to document the process the committee conducted over the last five months and to provide Board members with the data necessary for them to make an informed decision regarding the 2011-12 transportation changes. An important part of the process was gathering community feedback and supplying appropriate responses to it. A complete list of community outreach initiatives is included in this report detailing the methods and timing of parent and District staff communications. In cases where parents requested changes to their specific bus stop locations, they have been advised that an individual review process will be established and communicated following a Board vote to adopt the 2011-12 plan.

The Board must now consider the overall impact of the proposal on District finances as well as its impact on students and families. The components of stop locations and bell schedule changes all work together to allow for a reduction in the number of buses contracted for use. Distinct components of this plan must be considered as a whole, as each element is contingent on another's implementation. No one aspect of the proposal can be excluded if the total \$1 million budget savings are to be realized.

Through this process the District partnered with our community to create a plan that protects classroom instruction, lessens the burden on District taxpayers, reduces the budget gap, and fosters a focus on our mission of education.

FACTS ABOUT WEST CHESTER AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT STUDENT TRANSPORTATION

1. Is the West Chester Area School District required to provide transportation?

No, regular education student transportation is not mandated by the Pennsylvania Department of Education. Bus service, funded in part by state subsidies, is extended as a courtesy by the district to all public and non-public school students residing in the West Chester Area School District. The state does mandate that once bus service is provided for any segment of the district's student population, service must also be provided for students in all programs, whether public or private/parochial.

2. How many students does the District transport?

The district transports approximately 11,746 public school students, 4,312 non-public students and 383 charter school students for a total of approximately 16,441 students. The WCASD transportation operation is the fifth-largest in the State of Pennsylvania.

3. How many schools does the District transport students to and from?

The District provides transportation to 16 public schools, 128 non-public schools, 6 charter schools and 38 special-education programs.

4. How many Out of District schools does the District transport students to and from?

The District transports students to 86 non-public schools and 29 special-education programs outside of the WCASD boundaries.

5. Over how many miles does the District transport annually?

The district transports public school students over an area covering 75 square miles. For non-public students, the District transports students over a 750 square mile area each school day. For the 2008-09 school year, district busses traveled 3,678,000 miles.

6. How does the District determine who is eligible for transportation service?

The West Chester Area School District will provide any resident student transportation to and from kindergarten, elementary school, or secondary school located within the district boundaries or outside the district boundaries at a distance not exceeding ten miles by the nearest public highway. According to PA School Code the District may ask a child, regardless of age, to walk up to a mile and a half to a school provided the route is not deemed hazardous. The District has established Board policy based on this parameter. For more information please see the WCASD student transportation policy ED.

7. Is the West Chester Area School District required to provide transportation to students with special needs?

Yes, the District is required to provide transportation to students identified with special needs. This requirement is not governed by the 10 mile radius limitation. The District is required to transport the student to the educational program regardless of distance from District boundaries.

8. Is the West Chester Area School District required to provide transportation to students enrolled in charter schools?

Yes, the District is required to provide transportation to any resident student enrolled in a charter school within a 10 mile radius of the district boundaries. For more information please see attached link* to the PA Public School Code

9. Is the West Chester Area School District required to provide mid-day kindergarten transportation?

No, mid-day kindergarten transportation is not mandated by the Pennsylvania Department of Education, but rather a courtesy extended by the district to all Public and Non-public school students residing in the West Chester Area School District.

10. Is the West Chester Area School District required to provide transportation to and from day care providers?

No, the District offers this service as a courtesy to all public and non-public students residing in the West Chester Area School District. In addition, the District offers the flexibility to allow for students to be dropped off/picked up at multiple locations.

11. Does a school district have to provide transportation to a nonpublic school?

When a school district provides transportation for its public students, it must provide transportation services to nonpublic student of the same grade level that it is providing for its own pupils. The nonpublic school must be nonprofit and located within ten miles of the district's boundary.

12. Does the District own the bus fleet or is this a contracted service?

The District contracts this service from two different providers. The District utilizes Krapp's for the majority of the public and non-public transportation and On The Go Kids for the majority of the special education transportation needs.

13. How many buses did the WCASD utilize in the 2009-10 school year?

The district utilized 69 buses to transport our public school students, 82 buses to transport our non-public students, 59 buses to transport our special education students, and 19 for mixed public and non-public students for a total of 229 buses.

14. Does the District use routing software to establish transportation routes?

Yes, the District's Transportation Department relies on both internal and external personal experience, a detailed knowledge of the geographic area as well as routing software to create transportation routes that are weighted heavily on student safety.

15. Does the state dictate how long a child may be required to ride on a bus?

PA School Code does not dictate how long a child may be required to ride on a bus. The District has established a Board Policy which states that a student's ride time will be limited as much as possible to no more than 1 hour within District boundaries. For more information please see the WCASD student transportation policy ED on the District's Website.

16. Does the state have any regulations regarding the combining of public and non-public students on one bus?

No, the state does not have any regulations regarding the combining both public and non-public students on one bus.

17. Does the state have any regulations regarding the combining of students of various grade levels on one bus?

No, the state does not have any regulations regarding combining students of various grade levels on one bus.

18. What was the cost associated with student transportation for 2009-10?

In 2009-10, the district spent \$12,870,072, which included \$4,670,437 to transport our public school students, \$4,953,487 for our non-public students, and \$3,097,300 for our special education students.

19. What is the projected cost of student transportation for 2010-11?

The projected cost of student transportation for 2010-11, which will not involve changing bell schedules or bus stop locations for all schools, is \$13,154,554.

20. What is the annual cost of a bus?

The average annual cost of a bus is \$54,533. The actual cost varies depending upon many factors which include the miles drives, fuel consumption, capacity utilization and specialized equipment needs. On average the cost of a bus used to transport public school students is \$43,970, non-public students \$70,210 and special education students is \$55,735.

21. May a fee be charged to pupils who ride a school bus?

No fees may be charged of students riding busses to public or private schools. Section 1361 of the School Code states that when a district provides transportation to its students, it is to be free and paid for out of district funds.

22. Has the District considered additional means in the area of transportation in order to save money?

Yes, even though the District is not required to do so by state code, a national competitive Request For Proposal (RFP) process was just completed in order to determine the most responsible vendors to provide the lowest cost transportation services. Other typical means to control costs include participating in a consortium to purchase bus fuel and reviewing the status of RFP contracts on a regular basis.

23. Does the District receive state reimbursement for student transportation?

Yes, the District does receive reimbursement for transportation services based on a very complex state formula. The formula takes into consideration many factors such as:

- Actual Costs
- Miles drives
- Capacity Utilization
- Bus size and age
- Hazardous Routes
- Charter School transportation costs
- District wealth

For the 2008-09 school year the District received reimbursement from the State of Pennsylvania in the amount of \$4,828,866, which equates to a reimbursement rate of 38.5%. The State defines the capacity of a regular size bus as 72 students. The subsidy formula provides the most subsidies to districts that have a ridership of 72 students on every regular size bus. This is also referred to as

100% capacity utilization. School districts are therefore financially penalized for not filling buses to their 72 student capacity, or less than 100% capacity utilization.

24. What is the District's current capacity utilization of the buses?

The average capacity utilization for the public elementary schools is 69%. Because of the size of middle and high school students, the transportation office defines 100% capacity utilization for secondary buses as 48 students instead of the higher number used by the State. Even with this lower number, the average capacity utilization of the middle school buses is only 82% and for the high schools it is even less at 69%. For the nonpublic schools the average capacity utilization is the lowest at 47%.

25. Why aren't we loading our buses to capacity?

The following factors impact our ability to fill our buses to their capacity: the number of square miles we must travel to a school; road congestion and increased traffic signals; number of stops we are making for student pick-ups and drop-offs; nonpublic students whose homes are scattered throughout the district and who are attending public schools within a ten mile radius of any district boundary; and, limits we have imposed on our maximum student ride times.

FACTS ABOUT THE PROPOSED 2011-12 TRANSPORTATION PLAN

26. When would proposed consolidation of bus stops and change in public school bell schedules take effect?

New public bell schedules, non-public route consolidation, and consolidated bus stops for public and non-public students would go into effect at the start of the 2011-12 school year.

27. Why is the school district consolidating bus stops and changing public school bell schedules?

In the current economic environment budget cuts have become an annual necessity, and it is challenging to identify cuts that do not directly affect the classroom and our students' education. Adjustments to bus and bell activity will save \$1 million per year, and impact children in a way that does not affect the educational program. For example, public school elementary bell schedules will only change by ten minutes for six schools and by just twenty minutes from the current system for the four others. In addition, Fugett Middle School will experience a bell schedule change to mirror that of East High School, again not affecting the educational program. Bus stop consolidation will require a number of students to walk a bit further to and from their bus stops following all state regulations regarding student safety while walking.

28. What if the District didn't change the transportation plan?

If the District does not take the transportation savings, including those gained from bell schedule changes, the 2011-12 budget gap would require cuts in things that would affect the education program. The District would have to find \$800,000 in cost reductions to replace transportation, keeping in mind that transportation does not have as direct an impact as other cost reduction initiatives on how our educational program is delivered.

Last year the District found \$7.7 million in budget reductions without affecting the integrity of the classroom. The only cuts left to consider for 2011-12 other than transportation will result in a reduction of programs and services. A few examples of potential program cuts include: the

reduction of five elementary library aides to save \$165,000; reducing five elementary school psychologists to cut \$425,000; reducing two high school counselors to save \$134,000; reducing five elementary school gifted teachers allowing for a cut of approximately \$335,000. All of these examples would affect a large number of children in a very direct way, whereas transportation changes represent only a schedule modification.

29. If these changes are helpful, why weren't they implemented for the 2010-11 School Year? Why is the District waiting until 2011-12?

The School Board seriously considered implementing the proposed changes and gaining the budget reductions for 2010-11. It was determined that the scope of the changes, the time required to gather feedback from public and non-public parents, and the importance of communicating the changes multiple times in a wide variety of ways made rushing these plans into place undesirable, creating too much disruption and inconvenience for families to be justified.

30. Is it possible to change public school bell schedules to get savings without consolidating many of the bus stops?

No, the financial benefits of changing the public school bell schedules come directly from consolidating bus stops in order to move students to and from school in a way that allows for the use of fewer busses. In order to achieve the desired savings, one element of the plan cannot be enacted without the other.

31. Where did the idea come from to consolidate bus stops and change public school bell schedule plans?

The proposal was developed by the Transportation Committee of the Community Budget Task Force. Its members reviewed a great deal of data and proposed the plan in their final report to the Superintendent and School Board. The Transportation Committee was a group of 24 volunteers which included 13 public school parents, and two non-public parents, as well as contractors and other taxpayers and residents.

32. What other resources did the Transportation Committee of the Community Budget Task Force rely on in creating the recommendation to consolidate bus stops and change public school bell schedules?

A national transportation consulting group, Transportation Advisory Services (TAS), reviewed the data and process used by the Community Task Force's Transportation Committee as well as the recommendations in the final report. The data included the history of services in the District, district maps, state subsidy data, department information, School Board policies, state laws and regulations, federal safety mandates, the District's transportation contract, school locations and bell times; current bus capacity information, hazardous route information, and other general route data. Such authoritative oversight helped insure that all appropriate cost savings measures were considered and the recommendations, if accepted, could be implemented in a safe and manageable way.

33. Would the proposed changes to public school bell schedules and the bus stop consolidation plans be permanent, or will things revert to our current system once the district's budget crisis eases?

Because significant savings of more than \$1 million can be achieved without directly affecting educational programming, and with a minimal impact on student schedules, this more efficient transportation plan will remain in place into the future to the benefit of district taxpayers as a recurring, sustainable, cost-cutting measure.

34. Is the Board aware of the emails sent or comment cards filled out by parents with information about their concerns?

The committee provided copies of all emails and comment cards sent by parents to the Board members via their secure website so that parents' personal information was not visible to general public.

35. When will the final decision be made regarding the implementation of a new transportation plan?

The WCASD School Board is expected to take a vote at its monthly public meeting to be held on Monday, November 22nd, 2010, at 7:30PM.

Members on the Committee for
Communicating the
2011-12 Transportation Changes
and Documentation of
Meeting Activities

Communications Task Force Members for 2011-12 Transportation Changes
2010-11 TRANSPORTATION TASK FORCE SUB-COMMITTEES

<u>Group 1</u> <u>NON-PUBLIC BUS CONSOLIDATION</u>	
Jim McAssey John Scully	Laurie Micken Michele Porco Dennis Reiter
<u>Group 2</u> <u>FUGETT FEED PATTERN BELL SCHEDULE</u>	
Patricia Barr Le Roy Whitehead	Marc Bertrando Joanne Yarnall Tom Swift
<u>Group 3</u> <u>ELEMENTARY BELL SCHEDULE</u>	
Ann Helion Sara Missett Jim Scanlon Tyra Quail	Christa Heyward Matt Washlick Debbie Fell Nancy O'Banion
<u>Group 4</u> <u>BUS STOP CONSOLIDATION</u>	
Chris Gray Suzanne Moore	Barb Martz Barb Shea

Communications Task Force for 2011-12 Transportation Savings
Meeting August 25, 2010

Attendees: Patricia Barr, Marc Bertrando, Chris Gray, Ann Helion, Christa Heyward, Barb Martz, Jim McAssey, Laurie Micken, Sara Missett, Suzanne Moore, Michele Porco, Dennis Reiter, Jim Scanlon, John Scully, Barb Shea, Matt Washlick, Le Roy Whitehead, Joanne Yarnall

- Dr. Moore handed out an agenda for the meeting and a folder containing information on the District’s website about the implementation of the 2011-12 changes. She asked that the committee members review the Q&A document and at the next meeting the committee members should recommend additional questions that could be added. She also reported on the parent communications that the district completed during the summer and the system created for the nonpublic parents. Joanne Yarnall handed out the communication printed on the back of every public and nonpublic bus schedule sent out in August.
- The committee discussed the parent input meeting dates scheduled for September 15th, 21st and 22nd. Everyone agreed that the September 15th date had too many conflicts with other meetings in the District and would need to be rescheduled, and the meeting locations should be moved to District school buildings and not be held at Spellman Administration Center. At least one meeting should be held at Fugett Middle School.
- The Committee discussed the meeting formats and everyone agreed that the first meeting should be a “meet- and-greet”. The Committee would do a brief presentation on the changes to the large audience, and following this there would be separate meeting rooms for each finding. Parents and Staff would go to the respective room to discuss their concerns with a committee person who was responsible for that particular topic. The major topics were identified as (1) nonpublic bus consolidation, (2) Fugett bell schedule change, (3) elementary bell schedule change, (4) and bus top consolidation. (Based on feedback from Marc Bertrando, Joanne Yarnall, and Suzanne Moore, the committee decided to remove the High School Parking Permit Finding from consideration.)
- To maximize efficiency, subcommittees were formed (see table below) so that members could concentrate on a specific topic which minimized the need for each committee member to be an expert on every issue. It was also discussed that other people would be needed to help out the subcommittees during the parent meet-and- greet because there weren’t enough committee members to help all the parents that may attend. For example, Sara Missett stated that she would recruit elementary principals to help with the elementary bell schedule change subcommittee, and Marc Bertrando stated that he would ask principals and assistant principals to help with the Fugett bell schedule change subcommittee.

<u>TRANSPORTATION SUB-COMMITTEES</u>							
<u>Group 1</u> <u>NON-PUBLIC BUS</u> <u>CONSOLIDATION</u>		<u>Group 2</u> <u>FUGETT FEED PATTERN</u> <u>BELL SCHEDULE</u>		<u>Group 3</u> <u>ELEMENTARY</u> <u>BELL SCHEDULE</u>		<u>Group 4</u> <u>BUS STOP</u> <u>CONSOLIDATION</u>	
Jim McAssey	Laurie Micken	Patricia Barr	Marc Bertrando	Ann Helion	Christa Heyward	Chris Gray	Barb Martz
John Scully	Michele Porco	Le Roy Whitehead	Joanne Yarnall	Sara Missett	Matt Washlick	Suzanne Moore	Barb Shea
Dennis Reiter				Jim Scanlon			

- The committee members discussed the need for using a formal collection system to document parent concerns during the meet-and-greet. Asking parents to fill a card at each “topic room” was suggested.
- The committee members debated how to handle communications for the bus stop consolidation finding since it impacted parents across elementary, secondary public schools and the nonpublic schools. Also, it was unlikely that transportation office would have time to get bus top location reports ready for the September parent meetings since its regular work peaked in August/September. Committee members felt that parents would not have enough information to identify a concern unless they had the new location of their bus stop. It was decided that the committee members would continue to explore solutions to this dilemma. AFTER THE MEETING ADJOURNED, IT WAS SUGGESTED TO PRESENT THE BUS STOP CONSOLIDATION TOPIC AT THE LAST PARENT MEETING INSTEAD OF THE FIRST PARENT MEETING. THE TRANSPORTATION OFFICE MAY BE ABLE TO FINISH THE REPORTS ON THE NEW BUS STOP LOCATIONS BY THAT TIME, THE INFORMATION WOULD BE AVAILABLE FOR PARENTS.
- Next meeting is scheduled for 6:00 PM, September 8th at Spellman Building.

Communications Task Force for 2011-12 Transportation Savings
Meeting September 8, 2010

Attendees: Patricia Barr, Marc Bertrando, Chris Gray, Ann Helion, Barb Martz, Sara Missett, Suzanne Moore, Michele Porco, Dennis Reiter, Jim Scanlon, John Scully, Matt Washlick, Le Roy Whitehead, Joanne Yarnall, Maria Pimley
Dr. Moore handed out an agenda for the meeting along with the 8/25/10 meeting minutes and revised Committee action steps.

The committee agreed that there will be two parent meetings held on October 12 at 4:30 PM and October 14 at 7:00 PM.

The Committee agreed that the format should be a “meet- and- greet” for both meetings. The Committee would do a brief presentation on the changes to the large audience, and following this there would be separate meeting rooms for each finding. Parents and Staff would go to the respective room to discuss their concerns with committee members who were responsible for that particular topic as established at the August 25th meeting (see meeting minutes).

Since the meeting dates were changed from September to October, the transportation office would have more time to put together the bus stop location information for the bus stop consolidation recommendation. With the information available to them, parents would be more able to express their concerns. This solved the problem discussed at the August 25th meeting.

The Committee agreed that their future meeting would be held on September 22 and October 6th at 6:00 PM. After the parent meetings, the committee would need to regroup to finish their final recommendations to the Board.

The committee discussed the preparation of the final recommendations to the Board due on November 8th. The report would contain parent concerns and a list of solutions that would address parent concerns. The committee discussed the importance of creating solutions that did not lose the integrity of the original recommendations, since all the changes to the bell schedules and bus stop consolidations were intertwined. If one of the recommended changes was revised, it would disrupt the other parts of the plan and little savings would be achieved. When the Board makes its decision on approving the plan they will need to consider whether the committee’s solutions were effective in addressing the parent concerns. Except for the nonpublic school transportation changes, the plan will need to be considered in its entirety.

Dr. Pimley advised that the perception of parents is that their input will result in major changes to or elimination of the task force committee’s individual recommendations. To deal with this misunderstanding, the committee agreed that all future communications needed to inform the parents of the limitations to the changes.

The committee discussed how they will inform parents of the October meeting dates. The administration will prepare a parent email and phone blast for the public schools and send post cards to the nonpublic schools. The information will include a link to a webpage that will list the “groups” of students who will be impacted by each recommended change. It was also suggested to include a link to the frequently asked questions. Dr. Scanlon stated that he would call all the nonpublic schools that are impacted by the bus and transfer point consolidations.

After the large committee finished its meeting, the subgroups met for the rest of the evening to work on the following:

- identifying specific student who will be impacted by the subgroup’s change
- listing parent and staff issues and list responses to the issues using the Q&A as a starting point
- identifying handouts and other information available for parents/staff at the parent feedback meetings

In addition, each subgroup was asked to name a group leader, note taker and writer of the final recommendation to the Board.

Communications Task Force for 2011-12 Transportation Savings
Meeting September 22, 2010

Attendees: Patricia Barr, Marc Bertrando, Chris Gray, Barb Martz, Barb Shea, Sara Missett, Suzanne Moore, Michele Porco, Dennis Reiter, John Scully, Laurie Micken, Matt Washlick, Le Roy Whitehead, Joanne Yarnall, Maria Pimley, Tyra Quail, Nancy O'Banion

Each sub-committee reported on the progress of their preparation for the parent meetings.

1. **Bus Stop Consolidation:** Dr. Moore provided a handout that listed names of the developments impacted by bus stop consolidation. Additional developments needed to be added as well as other areas in the District that are not in a "named" development. She also handed out a brochure that the subcommittee developed. It listed the criteria used to establish walking routes and bus stop locations.
2. **Nonpublic Route and Transfer Point Consolidation:** Mr. Scully discussed the parent letter his sub-committee developed for the non-public parents. He also stated that Dr. Scanlon called all the nonpublic schools impacted by the nonpublic bus consolidation. The committee is continuing to work on their list of school impacted by the nonpublic recommendation.
3. **Fugett Middle School Bell Time Change:** Dr. Bertrando handed out answers that the sub-committee wrote up for questions parents have about the Fugett bell time change. The questions were based on meetings Mr. Whitehead held with parents to seek input. Dr. Moore will ask Mr. Partridge to use the sub-committee's feedback to update the Q&A on the website. Mr. Whitehead will be meeting with his faculty on October 6th to get their feedback and ask a Fugett teacher to participate on the committee.
4. **Elementary School Bell Time Changes:** Dr. Missett reported that the sub-committee is still working on teacher work day times and will get feedback on this issue. She will be meeting with staff to get feedback on October 6th and she will be available in the buildings after school if there are additional questions. Meanwhile, she stated that answers to some of the Q&A questions should be revised to reflect up to date information including teacher workday, 30 minute difference in bell times for the elementary schools, and the Y program. Elementary teachers Tyra Quail and Nancy O'Banion joined the sub-committee to offer advice based on their knowledge of school operations.

The committee suggested revisions to the Q&A for questions A3 and D3, and they suggested revisions to the information listed on the Parent Feedback Meeting Dates webpage.

The committee discussed the face to face communications with parents and concluded that much of the discussions may tend to be emotional. It was suggested that the committee members should be mindful to use empathy in their responses to parent concerns. It was suggested that the committee develop responses so that members' communications are consistent with each other.

Dr. Moore stated that the Superintendent will give the overview presentation before the Meet & Greet sessions at the parent meeting nights. Mr. Washlick volunteered to participate in the overview presentation, too.

Leroy will inform the committee of the room numbers assigned for the Meet and Greet sessions with the parents.

Communications Task Force for 2011-12 Transportation Savings
Meeting October 6, 2010

Attendees: Patricia Barr, Chris Gray, Ann Helion, Barb Shea, Sara Missett, Suzanne Moore, Michele Porco, Dennis Reiter, Jim Scanlon, John Scully, Laurie Micken, Matt Washlick, Le Roy Whitehead, Joanne Yarnall, Maria Pimley, Tyra Quail, Nancy O'Banion, Tom Swift

Each sub-committee reported on the progress of their preparation for the parent meetings.

1. Bus Stop Consolidation: Dr. Moore stated that based on parent feedback the committee will be printing bus stop location information for every student. This information will be sent to each school so that students can take home the bus stop location information to parents.
2. Nonpublic Route and Transfer Point Consolidation: Mr. Scully discussed reported that the parent letter was sent to the non-public parents and the website was updated to show the schools impacted by the nonpublic recommendation.
3. Fugett Middle School Bell Time Change: Mr. Whitehead met with his faculty on October 6th to get their feedback. He introduced Tom Swift AD at Fugett who will participate on the committee. Mr. Whitehead discussed early dismissals and Fugett siblings who will be riding with older sibling who drive.
4. Elementary School Bell Time Changes: Dr. Missett reported that the sub-committee sent out a survey to employees about the workday time changes. She adjusted the recommended workday schedule based on the feedback from the survey. She stated that answers to some of the Q&A questions should be revised to reflect up to date information including teacher workday.

Dr. Moore handed out the website information page containing the notice about the parent meetings and the latest Q&A information. She also handed out a copy of the superintendent's 10/4/10 email to all the public school parents along with a list of parent feedback messages received as of 10/6/10.

Room assignments are as follows: General Meeting in Cafeteria; Cafeteria –Bus Stop Consolidation; Room #102 – Nonpublic; Room # 103 – Fugett Bell change; Room #104 – Public Elementary Bell Change. Mr. Whitehead will take care of the signs for directions to the rooms for the parent meetings.

Committee discussed proposed outline for the Overview Presentation at the parent feedback meetings. Dr. Scanlon and Mr. Washlick will present the overview. Mr. Washlick will present information on the Transportation Committee's process it went through to decide on its recommendations in the 2009-10 year.

The Committee agreed to hold a third parent meeting on November 3 at 7:00 to review bus stop locations. The meeting will be held at Fugett Middle School.

The deadline for the Committee's final report to the Board will be November 8th which is the Thursday before the Property and Finance Committee.

Community Outreach Efforts for 2011-12 Transportation Changes

Community Outreach Efforts for 2011-12 Transportation Changes

Following the School Board action taken in June, 2010, which directed the administration to gather information regarding the implementation of a proposed 2011-12 transportation plan, the following steps were utilized to notify the public and our internal audience. An explanation of overall communications follows the table.

DATE	INFORMATION PROVIDED	VEHICLE USED
June 14 th , 2010, 6:00 PM	Discussion of Communication Timeline for 2011-12 Transportation Changes with Board	Property and Finance Committee
June 28 th , 2010, 7:30 PM	Board Vote on Communications Timeline	Board Meeting
July 7 th , 2010	General Public Notification	Daily Local News Article
August 15 th , 2010	2011-12 Transportation Plan Website Resource	WCASD Homepage Link
August 20 th , 2010	Public and Nonpublic Parent Notification of 2011-12 Transportation Changes, Website and Instructions to Sign Up for List Serve.	Parent Letter Printed on Back of Bus Route Mailing
August 24 th , 2010	Principal Discussion of Fugett Bell Time Changes with Staff	Staff Meeting with Fugett Principal
August – October 2010	Discussion of Impact of Elementary School Bell Time Changes with Principals	Monthly Elementary Principal Meetings
September 1 st	Principal Discussion of Fugett Bell Time Changes with Staff	First Fugett Faculty Meeting
September 16 th , 2010	Teacher Issue Discussion on Bell Schedule Changes	Meet and Discuss Session
September 20 th , 2010	Notification to Non-Public Administrators of Schools Impacted by Nonpublic Bus Route Changes	Direct Phone Calls to Schools
September, 20 th , 2010, 6:00 PM	Progress Report to Board Members on Transportation Task Force Activities	9/14/10 Memo and Agenda Item at 9/20/10 P&F Committee
September 28 th , 2010	Elementary Staff Feedback	Staff Survey (rec'd 300 responses)

DATE	INFORMATION PROVIDED	VEHICLE USED
October 4 th , 2010	Parent Meetings Notification	ListServe e-mail Dr. Scanlon
October 4 th , 2010	Parent Meetings Notification to Non-Public Families	Mailed Letter to Student Home Address
October 5 th , 2010	Principal Discussion of Fugett Bell Changes with Fugett PTO	Fugett PTO Executive Board Discussion
October 7 th , 2010	Reminder: Parent Meetings	School Messenger Phone Syst.
October 12 th , 2010, 4:30 PM	First Public and Nonpublic Parent Feedback Meeting	Parent Meeting at Fugett MS
October 14 th , 2010, 7:00PM	Second Public and Nonpublic Parent Feedback Meeting	Parent Meeting at Fugett MS
October 18 th , 2010	Bus Stop Location Information & Notification of November 3 rd Parent Feedback Meeting	Student-delivered Letter for all Nonpublic and Public Schools
October 19 th , 2010	Transportation Plan Changes	ListServe e-mail Dr. Scanlon
October 25 th , 2010	Third Parent Feedback Meeting Reminder Notification (Public)	ListServe e-mail Dr. Scanlon
October 26 th , 2010	Principal Discussion of Fugett Bell Schedule Changes with PTO	Public Fugett PTO Meeting
November 3 rd , 2010, 7:00 PM	Third Public and Nonpublic Parent Feedback Meeting for Bus Stop Consolidation	Parent Meeting at East HS
November 15 th , 2010, 9:30 AM	Meeting with Pre-School Directors	Meeting at Spellman Administration Building
November 15 th , 2010, 7:00 PM	P&F Committee Public Meeting	School Board Discussion
November 18 th , 2010, 7:00PM	Transportation Changes for ELL Population	Presentation to ELL Parents at Spellman Building
November 22 nd , 2010, 7:30 PM	School Board Plan Vote	Public Comment / Board Vote

Based on the original recommendation of the Transportation Committee, as part of the 2009 Community Budget Task Force initiative, the June meeting of the School Board included a directive to the administration to move forward with the composition, communication, and gathering of feedback with regard to 2011-12 transportation plan changes. Nearly \$1 million in budget reductions are to be realized through the implementation of the interconnected elements of the proposed transportation plan.

A combination of information and communication vehicles was used to get the word out to public and non-public families utilizing District transportation services. Vehicles used include the following: a kick-off newspaper article; development and launch of a comprehensive website information resource with a parent-feedback comment component; distribution of multiple waves of parent letters which were mailed as well as taken home by students; Superintendent e-mails to public and non-public families via e-news ListServe distribution list and All-User internal notification; and public meetings designed to provide parents with information and gather feedback.

During the course of September and October, meetings were also held with the leadership of the WCAEA with a focus on elementary school teacher support of the bell schedules and a special focus on Fugett Middle School teachers regarding their bell schedule change.

Examples of Community Outreach Written Communications

School Board Approved Action Steps

**School Board Approved June 28, 2010,
Revised September 2, 2010**

Communication Plan Dates	Transportation Task Force Communications Plan Action Items
Completed in February 2010	Labor Leadership discuss employee work day impacted by bell schedule change
Completed in February 2010	Meet with Principals to identify impact of bell schedule changes
July 2010	Form Community Transportation Communications Committee (members from Transportation Budget Task Force Committee)
July 2010	Finalize "draft" solutions to accommodate bell schedule changes with Principals
July 2010	Prepare and post transportation task force finding FAQs on website and update FAQs throughout the parent/staff input process
July 2010	Send out message to parents, staff, community, nonpublic administration about task force findings and FAQ website information
July 2010	Set up transportation community task force hotline and email address to receive feedback from stakeholders
July 2010	Contact and send out communications information to administrators at nonpublic schools
August 2010	Send out transportation communication in bus route schedule for public and nonpublic parents
August – November 2010	Hold meetings of Transportation Task Force volunteers
October 2010 <i>(Changed from September)</i>	Hold feedback meetings with internal staff – teachers, support staff and custodians.
October 2010 <i>(Changed from September)</i>	Hold feedback meeting with public and nonpublic parents <i>(see meeting dates)</i>
November 2010 <i>(Changed from September)</i>	Community Transportations Communications Committee finalize transportation recommendations to board
November 2010 <i>(Changed from October)</i>	Community Transportation Communications Committee present final plan to School Board
November 2010 <i>(Changed from October)</i>	Special meeting for stakeholder feedback to School Board
Nov. 22, 2010 School Board Meeting	School Board approve final transportation recommendation
Spring 2011 <i>(Changed from December 2010)</i>	Mail out preliminary bus schedules to parents
Fall 2011	Communicate results of implementation to parents and staff

Moore, Suzanne K

Subject: FW: bell schedule change for 2011

-----Original Message-----

From: James Scanlon <jscanlon@wcasd.net>

To

Sent: Wed, Jul 7, 2010 2:20 pm

Subject: bell schedule change for 2011

This is a message from the West Chester Area School District.

The West Chester Area School District is considering changing starting times and bus schedules for the 2011-12 school year in an effort to save money. Consolidating bus stops and schedules can save the school district money, and as you know, every school district in our country is facing tough economic times and working hard to better manage its finances in order to save taxpayer dollars. The proposed changes can be found at: http://www.wcasd.net/pdfs/Bus_Stop_Consolidation_Finding.pdf.

At its June 28th meeting, The West Chester Area School District Board of Directors approved a tentative time line to gather feedback from our community regarding those proposed changes in starting times and bus schedules for the 2011-12 school year. The proposal to make these changes came from the Community Budget Task Force report of 2010 which was first presented to the school board in December, 2009.

The school district will conduct meetings in September, 2010 to gather feedback from parents and community members about these proposed changes. Please visit our website for more information. http://www.wcasd.net/pdfs/bell_schedule_timeline.pdf

If you have questions or comments, please feel free to contact my office.
Thanks for your support of our schools.

Dr. Jim Scanlon
Superintendent
West Chester Area School District
484-266-1001: office
484-883-0648: cell
484-266-1175: fax

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Serving Chester County

District Preparing to Roll Out Schedule Changes

Published: Tuesday, July 07, 2010

By DAN KRISTIE, Staff Writer

WEST GOSHEN — The West Chester Area School District is gearing up to inform parents and students about bus and bell schedule changes that could save more than \$1 million next year.

The district plans to reduce the number of bus stops district wide from 4,716 to 3,696. This will involve changing the time the school days at some schools start and end and consolidating some of the routes taken by non-public school buses, district officials said.

The school board voted Monday on a timetable the district will follow when informing parents about the plan.

This month, the district will form a Community Transportation Communication Committee, which will make final adjustments to the cuts. The committee, which will be composed of some of the same community members who sat on the district's Community Budget Task Force last year, will then begin to communicate information about the cuts to the public and to district stakeholders.

In September, the district will hold feedback meetings with parents, staff, and teachers about the cuts. Some school district parents have criticized the timing of these meetings; they said that because school starts in September, parents have a lot on their hands and are less likely to attend.

The district plans to send the cuts to the school board for approval in October. This means the cuts would not be implemented until the 2011-12 school year.

During the 2010-11 budget negotiations, which wrapped up in May, some school board members pushed for these transportation cuts to be implemented this year. But other board members said the school district should take its time and properly warn parents of the impending transportation changes.

The version of the transportation cuts the school board discussed earlier this year called for:

Switching Fugett Middle School from an 8:05 a.m. to 2:50 p.m. school day to a 7:30 a.m. to 2:15 p.m. school day.

This would allow East High School and Fugett Middle School, which are on the same property, to have the same bell schedule, which would in turn allow students from both schools to ride the same buses, officials said. The district's other two middle schools would still follow their normal schedules.

Staggering elementary school bus schedules.

All 10 elementary schools now run from 9 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. The new proposal calls for East Bradford, East Goshen, Glen Acres and Exton to run from 8:40 a.m. to 3:10 p.m. and for the other elementary schools to run from 9:10 a.m. to 3:40 p.m. This would allow elementary school buses to run two routes instead of one, officials said.

Having more non-public students transfer from one bus to another during their way to school.

This would reduce the number of non-public buses, officials said.

August 20, 2010 Notification Sent to All Students' Home Addresses in Bus Route Mailer

Attention Parents!

The West Chester Area School District is considering proposed changes to student transportation for the **2011-12 school year**. The District will use the next twelve months to prepare for these changes. Parent and staff feedback meetings will be held in September and the School Board will make its final decision on the changes at its November 22, 2010 School Board Meeting.

To access information on the 2011-12 transportation changes, please go to www.wcasd.net and click on the yellow box titled "*2011-12 Proposed Transportation Changes*". Please visit this website to check on updates including meeting dates, meeting agendas and frequently asked questions.

The District will use its automated parent notification system to provide 2011-12 transportation updates to our public school parents. If you are a nonpublic parent, you can add your email address and telephone number to our automated notification system for 2011-12 transportation updates. Simply go to the "*2011-12 Proposed Transportation Changes*" webpage, click on the box titled, "*Non-Public Parents*," and submit the form with your information. If you do not have access to a computer, you can request hard copies of the information by calling Rob Partridge, WCASD Communications Program Director, at 484-266-1170.

Please enjoy the rest of your summer!

Dr. Suzanne Moore
Director of Business Affairs

Property and Finance Committee Executive Session

September 20, 2010

Update on 2011-12 Transportation Task Force Communications Plan

Attached are minutes and revised action steps for the 2011-12 transportation changes. I will give a brief update of the task force committee's progress at the Property and Finance Committee.

Dr. Suzanne Moore
September 14, 2010

School Board Approved Action Steps

School Board Approved June 28, 2010,

Revised September 2, 2010

Communication Plan Dates	Transportation Task Force Communications Plan Action Items
Completed in February 2010	Labor Leadership discuss employee work day impacted by bell schedule change
Completed in February 2010	Meet with Principals to identify impact of bell schedule changes
July 2010	Form Community Transportation Communications Committee (members from Transportation Budget Task Force Committee)
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July 2010	Prepare and post transportation task force finding FAQs on website and update FAQs throughout the parent/staff input process
July 2010	Send out message to parents, staff, community, nonpublic administration about task force findings and FAQ website information
July 2010	Set up transportation community task force hotline and email address to receive feedback from stakeholders
July 2010	Contact and send out communications information to administrators at nonpublic schools
August 2010	Send out transportation communication in bus route schedule for public and nonpublic parents
August – November 2010	Hold meetings of Transportation Task Force volunteers
September 2010 October 2010	Hold feedback meetings with internal staff – teachers, support staff and custodians.
September 2010 October 2010	Hold feedback meeting with public and nonpublic parents
September 2010 November 2010	Community Transportations Communications Committee finalize transportation recommendations to board
October 2010 November 2010	Community Transportation Communications Committee present final plan to School Board
October 2010 November 2010	Special meeting for stakeholder feedback to School Board
Nov. 22, 2010 School Board Meeting	School Board approve final transportation recommendation
December 2010 Spring 2011	Mail out preliminary bus schedules to parents
Fall 2011	Communicate results of implementation to parents and staff

Communications Task Force for 2011-12 Transportation Savings
Meeting August 25, 2010

Attendees: Patricia Barr, Marc Bertrando, Chris Gray, Ann Helion, Christa Heyward, Barb Martz, Jim McAssey, Laurie Micken, Sara Missett, Suzanne Moore, Michele Porco, Dennis Reiter, Jim Scanlon, John Scully, Barb Shea, Matt Washlick, Le Roy Whitehead, Joanne Yarnall

- Dr. Moore handed out an agenda for the meeting and a folder containing information on the District’s website about the implementation of the 2011-12 changes. She asked that the committee members review the Q&A document and at the next meeting the committee members should recommend additional questions that could be added. She also reported on the parent communications that the district completed during the summer and the system created for the nonpublic parents. Joanne Yarnall handed out the communication printed on the back of every public and nonpublic bus schedule sent out in August.
- The committee discussed the parent input meeting dates scheduled for September 15th, 21st and 22nd. Everyone agreed that the September 15th date had too many conflicts with other meetings in the District and would need to be rescheduled, and the meeting locations should be moved to District school buildings and not be held at Spellman Administration Center. At least one meeting should be held at Fugett Middle School.
- The Committee discussed the meeting formats and everyone agreed that the first meeting should be a “meet- and-greet”. The Committee would do a brief presentation on the changes to the large audience, and following this there would be separate meeting rooms for each finding. Parents and Staff would go to the respective room to discuss their concerns with a committee person who was responsible for that particular topic. The major topics were identified as (1) nonpublic bus consolidation, (2) Fugett bell schedule change, (3) elementary bell schedule change, (4) and bus top consolidation. (Based on feedback from Marc Bertrando, Joanne Yarnall, and Suzanne Moore, the committee decided to remove the High School Parking Permit Finding from consideration.)
- To maximize efficiency, subcommittees were formed (see table below) so that members could concentrate on a specific topic which minimized the need for each committee member to be an expert on every issue. It was also discussed that other people would be needed to help out the subcommittees during the parent meet-and- greet because there weren’t enough committee members to help all the parents that may attend. For example, Sara Missett stated that she would recruit elementary principals to help with the elementary bell schedule change subcommittee, and Marc Bertrando stated that he would ask principals and assistant principals to help with the Fugett bell schedule change subcommittee.

TRANSPORTATION SUB-COMMITTEES							
Group 1 NON-PUBLIC BUS CONSOLIDATION		Group 2 FUGETT FEED PATTERN BELL SCHEDULE		Group 3 ELEMENTARY BELL SCHEDULE		Group 4 BUS STOP CONSOLIDATION	
Jim McAssey	Laurie Micken	Patricia Barr	Marc Bertrando	Ann Helion	Christa Heyward	Chris Gray	Barb Martz
John Scully	Michele Porco	Le Roy Whitehead	Joanne Yarnall	Sara Missett	Matt Washlick	Suzanne Moore	Barb Shea
Dennis Reiter				Jim Scanlon			

- The committee members discussed the need for using a formal collection system to document parent concerns during the meet-and-greet. Asking parents to fill a card at each “topic room” was suggested.
- The committee members debated how to handle communications for the bus stop consolidation finding since it impacted parents across elementary, secondary public schools and the nonpublic schools. Also, it was unlikely that transportation office would have time to get bus top location reports ready for the September parent meetings since its regular work peaked in August/September. Committee members felt that parents would not have enough information to identify a concern unless they had the new location of their bus stop. It was decided that the committee members would continue to explore solutions to this dilemma. AFTER THE MEETING ADJOURNED, IT WAS SUGGESTED TO PRESENT THE BUS STOP CONSOLIDATION TOPIC AT THE LAST PARENT MEETING INSTEAD OF THE FIRST PARENT MEETING. THE TRANSPORTATION OFFICE MAY BE ABLE TO FINISH THE REPORTS ON THE NEW BUS STOP LOCATIONS BY THAT TIME, THE INFORMATION WOULD BE AVAILABLE FOR PARENTS.
- Next meeting is scheduled for 6:00 PM, September 8th at Spellman Building.

Communications Task Force for 2011-12 Transportation Savings
Meeting September 8, 2010

Attendees: Patricia Barr, Marc Bertrando, Chris Gray, Ann Helion, Barb Martz, Sara Missett, Suzanne Moore, Michele Porco, Dennis Reiter, Jim Scanlon, John Scully, Matt Washlick, Le Roy Whitehead, Joanne Yarnall, Maria Pimley
Dr. Moore handed out an agenda for the meeting along with the 8/25/10 meeting minutes and revised Committee action steps.

The committee agreed that there will be two parent meetings held on October 12 at 4:30 PM and October 14 at 7:00 PM.

The Committee agreed that the format should be a "meet- and- greet" for both meetings. The Committee would do a brief presentation on the changes to the large audience, and following this there would be separate meeting rooms for each finding. Parents and Staff would go to the respective room to discuss their concerns with committee members who were responsible for that particular topic as established at the August 25th meeting (see meeting minutes).

Since the meeting dates were changed from September to October, the transportation office would have more time to put together the bus stop location information for the bus stop consolidation recommendation. With the information available to them, parents would be more able to express their concerns. This solved the problem discussed at the August 25th meeting.

The Committee agreed that their future meeting would be held on September 22 and October 6th at 6:00 PM. After the parent meetings, the committee would need to regroup to finish their final recommendations to the Board.

The committee discussed the preparation of the final recommendations to the Board due on November 8th. The report would contain parent concerns and a list of solutions that would address parent concerns. The committee discussed the importance of creating solutions that did not lose the integrity of the original recommendations, since all the changes to the bell schedules and bus stop consolidations were intertwined. If one of the recommended changes was revised, it would disrupt the other parts of the plan and little savings would be achieved. When the Board makes its decision on approving the plan they will need to consider whether the committee's solutions were effective in addressing the parent concerns. Except for the nonpublic school transportation changes, the plan will need to be considered in its entirety.

Dr. Pimley advised that the perception of parents is that their input will result in major changes to or elimination of the task force committee's individual recommendations. To deal with this misunderstanding, the committee agreed that all future communications needed to inform the parents of the limitations to the changes.

The committee discussed how they will inform parents of the October meeting dates. The administration will prepare a parent email and phone blast for the public schools and send post cards to the nonpublic schools. The information will include a link to a webpage that will list the "groups" of students who will be impacted by each recommended change. It was also suggested to include a link to the frequently asked questions. Dr. Scanlon stated that he would call all the nonpublic schools that are impacted by the bus and transfer point consolidations.

After the large committee finished its meeting, the subgroups met for the rest of the evening to work on the following:

- identifying specific student who will be impacted by the subgroup's change
- listing parent and staff issues and list responses to the issues using the Q&A as a starting point
- identifying handouts and other information available for parents/staff at the parent feedback meetings

In addition, each subgroup was asked to name a group leader, note taker and writer of the final recommendation to the Board.

To Parents of Non-public School Students Utilizing WCASD-Provided Transportation

The West Chester Area School District is experiencing the same financial challenges other organizations and families have faced due to the severe downturn in the economy. In an effort to help balance the district budget a Community Task Force of citizen volunteers was formed last year to identify District-wide cost reductions. Volunteers were drawn from public and non-public households, as well as from our business community and other residents within the District.

Several proposed initiatives impact transportation services with implementation planned for the 2011-12 school year. These proposals will impact both public and non-public students who use transportation services provided by the WCASD. The most notable proposed changes for our non-public students will entail bus stop consolidations, route consolidations and transfer point changes.

Parents are strongly encouraged to attend one of the informational meetings being offered by the District to better inform the public, and to allow for parent questions and comments. Two meetings will be conducted. These informational sessions take place prior to the plan's scheduled submission to the School Board for its consideration and approval vote. Registration is *not* required to attend a meeting.

*Parent Meeting #1: Tuesday, October 12th, 2010 at 4:30 PM**

*Parent Meeting #2: Thursday, October 14th, 2010 at 7:00 PM**

***Both meetings will be held at Fugett Middle School, located at 500 Ellis Lane, just off Paoli Pike.** The different start times were selected only to offer parents with scheduling issues or preferences a choice.

Transportation budget savings are based upon enacting *all* elements of the 2011-12 proposals. Each component is contingent on another's implementation, and it is not possible to leave out one part of the proposal while moving forward with another. To do so would result in a failure to achieve the desired budget reductions.

A comprehensive resource page, including a Frequently Asked Questions section, can be found on the District website www.wcasd.net by clicking the yellow box on the right side of the homepage, entitled *2011-12 Proposed Transportation Changes*. Click on the *Transportation Committee Report* link to find sections entitled ***Bus Stop Consolidation Finding*** and ***Non-Public Bus Findings***. These sections provide a complete report including a listing of neighborhoods as well as individual schools affected by the proposed changes. Parents are encouraged to carefully review this information to learn how changes may affect your child.

If you'd like to submit a question prior to the feedback meetings please direct your inquiry to the following e-mail address: 2011-12transp@wcasd.net

Superintendent Email to All Public School Parents

From: James Scanlon
Sent: Monday, October 04, 2010 2:03 PM
To: Public School Parents
Subject: Transportation Plan Meetings

This is a message from the West Chester Area School District.

The West Chester Area School District will be conducting two meetings this month to discuss the proposed changes to our transportation schedule, bus stop consolidation and school starting times for the 2011-12 school year. Meetings will be held at Fugett Middle School, 500 Ellis Lane, West Chester at the following times:

Tuesday October 12, 2010 – 4:30 pm
Thursday October 14, 2010 – 7 pm

The start times were chosen to try to accommodate different schedules. Each meeting will feature breakout rooms staffed with knowledgeable District personnel to address individual questions and comments.

In the current economic environment, budget cuts have become an annual necessity. Our 2011-12 transportation plan is a cost saving measure taken from our Community Budget Task Force Findings and includes adjustments in bus services for public school and non-public school students.

It also includes some modifications to bell schedules for the public schools in the West Chester Area School District. Under the proposal, every elementary school in the district will start either 10 minutes earlier or 20 minutes later, and Fugett Middle School will start 40 minutes earlier. While the plan is not ideal, it will save our taxpayers \$1million per year while leaving the delivery of educational programs unaffected.

A comprehensive website resource has been established and includes frequently asked questions and transportation plan details. For more details about the schedule, as well as a complete review of the Transportation Committee report, click here. <http://www.wcasd.net/news/news071310.asp>

To find out if your bus stop is NOT AFFECTED, click here.
http://www.wcasd.net/pdfs/Bus_Stop_Consolidation_Finding.pdf

If you cannot attend one of these meetings, or would like to submit a question prior to the feedback meetings, you can leave comments on this website at 2011-12transp@wcasd.net

Any question submitted will be shared with the school board. We urge every parent to voice an opinion on this critical issue.

Thank you for your continued support of our schools,

Sincerely,
Dr. Jim Scanlon
Superintendent

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WEST CHESTER AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT

Inspiring students to achieve their personal best

October 20, 2010

2010-11 Grade: «GRADE1»

Dear Parent or Guardian of «FIRST_NAME» «LAST_NAME»,

The West Chester Area School District is making a number of changes to our student transportation system starting with the 2011-12 year. During the summer and fall, we sent out a number of communications to parents, created a website dedicated to the issues, and held parent meetings on October 12th and the 14th to discuss the proposed changes and gather feedback. One of the proposed changes involves the consolidation of bus stop locations for both public and nonpublic students. In an attempt to keep parents informed, we want to provide the specific location of bus stops for next year. Because of legal and security issues, we cannot post the bus stop lists for access by the community at large. For this reason, we are sending the information in this letter for students to bring home to parents. A third parent meeting has been scheduled to take place on Wednesday, November 3rd at 7PM at East High School.

The information for your child is as follows:

Home Address: «RESIDENCE_ADDRESS», «CITY», «STATE», «ZIP»

School in 2011-12: «M_201112_school»

Grade in 2011-12: «GRADE»

Bus stop location in 2011-12: «STOP_NAME»

Since we must wait until the summer of 2011 to create the actual 2011-12 routes based on information on road systems, actual enrollments, nonpublic bell schedules and student ridership, we are not able to provide pick up and drop off times for students to parents at this time. These same factors may also impact the actual location of bus stops once routes are completed in the summer. *Please note that students who have special transportation services based on an IEP or 504 Plan are excluded from the bus stop consolidation changes.*

If you have questions regarding this information, please contact us through our email address at 2011-12TransP@wcasd.k12.pa.us or call Mr. Robert Partridge, Program Director of Communications @ 484-266-1170.

Thank you for your support of West Chester Area School District.

Dr. James Scanlon
Superintendent



WEST CHESTER AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT

Inspiring students to achieve their personal best

October 20, 2010

Dear Parent or Guardian of «FIRST_NAME» «LAST_NAME»,

The West Chester Area School District is making a number of changes to our student transportation system starting with the 2011-12 year. During the summer and fall, we sent out a number of communications to parents, created a website dedicated to the issues, and held parent meetings on October 12th and the 14th to discuss the proposed changes and gather feedback. One of the proposed changes involves the consolidation of bus stop locations for both public and nonpublic students. In an attempt to keep parents informed, we want to provide the specific location of bus stops for next year. Because of legal and security issues, we cannot post the bus stop lists for access by the community at large. For this reason, we are sending the information in this letter for students to bring home to parents. A third parent meeting has been scheduled to take place on Wednesday, November 3rd at 7PM at Fugett Middle School.

The information for your child is as follows:

Home Address: «RESIDENCE_ADDRESS», «CITY», «STATE», «ZIP»

School in 2010-11:

Grade in 2010-11: «GRADE»

Bus stop location in 2011-12: «STOP_NAME»

Since we must wait until the summer of 2011 to create the actual 2011-12 routes based on information on road systems, actual enrollments, nonpublic bell schedules and student ridership, we are not able to provide pick up and drop off times for students to parents at this time. These same factors may also impact the actual location of bus stops once routes are completed in the summer. In addition, 2011-12 bus stop locations may change for charter and nonpublic school students based on a change in the student's school next year. Due to the lack of this information, bus stop locations are based on current information. *Please note that students who have special transportation services based on an IEP or 504 Plan are excluded from the bus stop consolidation changes.*

If you have questions regarding this information, please contact us through our email address at 2011-12TransP@wcasd.k12.pa.us or call Mr. Robert Partridge, Program Director of Communications @ 484-266-1170.

Thank you for your support of West Chester Area School District.

Dr. James Scanlon
Superintendent

This is a message from the West Chester Area School District

The West Chester Area School district will be conducting a meeting on Wednesday November 3, 2010, 7:00 PM at the East High School cafeteria to gather parent input about proposed bus stop locations for implementation in the fall of 2011. This information was sent home with students during the week of October 18th. Guidelines for determining walking routes and bus stop locations will be available at the meeting and are available on our website at <http://www.wcasd.net/news/news071310.asp>.

The WCASD board of school districts will be reviewing a final report on the proposed transportation changes at its Property and Finance Committee meeting to be held Monday November 15, 2010 at the Rustin High School Auditorium. If the Property and Finance Committee votes to place the item on a school board agenda, it will be on the November 22nd agenda. This meeting is also scheduled to be held at Rustin High School.

Individual bus stop questions will be entertained by the transportation group following School Board action on the transportation proposal. Parents will have the remainder of this school year as well as the course of next summer to present concerns and have them reviewed by the District. The transportation group will review parental concerns by location area and perform sight visits and other evaluations to determine if a change is needed. Parental concerns can be emailed to 2011-12Transp@wcasd.net.

Moore, Suzanne K

Subject: FW: Proposed Transportation Changes for 2011

----- Forwarded Message -----

From: "James Scanlon" <jscanlon@wcasd.net>
To:
Sent: Wednesday, October 27, 2010 4:15:45 PM
Subject: Proposed Transportation Changes for 2011

This is a message from the West Chester Area School District

The West Chester Area School district will be conducting a meeting on Wednesday November 3, 2010, 7:00 PM at the East High School cafeteria to gather parent input about proposed bus stop locations for implementation in the fall of 2011. This information was sent home with students during the week of October 18th.

Guidelines for determining walking routes and bus stop locations will be available at the meeting and are available on our website at http://www.wcasd.net/pdfs/guide_bus_stops.pdf.

The WCASD board of school directors will be reviewing a final report on the proposed transportation changes at its Property and Finance Committee meeting to be held Monday November 15, 2010, 6pm at the Rustin High School Auditorium. If the Property and Finance Committee votes to place the item on a school board agenda, it will be on the November 22nd agenda. This meeting is also scheduled to be held at Rustin High School, 7:30 pm.

Individual bus stop questions will be addressed by the transportation committee following School Board action on the proposed changes. The transportation committee will review parent concerns about bus stops by location area and make sight visits to determine if a change is needed.

If approved, parents will have the remainder of this school year as well as the summer of 2011 to have questions and concerns addressed by the school district.

For people not able to attend the meeting on November 3rd, comments can be emailed to 2011-12Transp@wcasd.net.

Thank you for everyone's input during this process.

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WEST CHESTER AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT

Spellman Administration Building, 829 Paoli Pike, West Chester, PA 19380
Phone: 484-266-1000 - Web: www.wcasd.net

FALL 2010 NEWSLETTER

INSIGHT ... keeping you informed

A NEWSLETTER FROM THE WEST CHESTER AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT ~ FALL 2010

Dear Community Members:
Public education is in the national media spotlight on a daily basis. Much of the coverage has to do with the cost of education; some refers to reports about how our students compare internationally; and some focuses on education reform. There are two documentaries about public education in theaters this fall that have received considerable attention. They take a look at two aspects: (1) how underprivileged children gain access to charter schools, and (2) the demands being placed on high school students and the stress that may cause.

Waiting for Superman is a documentary that follows five students living in poverty, trying to get an education in schools located in East Los Angeles, Harlem, the Bronx, Washington, D.C., and the Silicon Valley. Their parents are counting on charter schools to provide a better education than the local, urban public schools, but the students have to fight a lottery system in order to gain entrance. Their fate relies on the drop of a numbered ball in a machine. The second documentary, *Race to Nowhere*, follows several high school students and examines the pressures they experience because of the somewhat extreme expectations and demands placed on teenagers in some schools. The film questions why we are creating a world of high-strung students.

Although both these films recognize shortcomings with our public education system in the United States, I believe they also point out the expectation that public schools meet the needs of all children regardless of their background and where they live. Students should have access to good schools and, most importantly, they should be exposed to good, quality instruction by teachers. In West Chester, we believe in that very philosophy. It is summarized in our mission statement: *Educating and Inspiring our students to achieve their personal best.*

The West Chester Area School District focuses its instruction on each child as an individual learner. Our teachers work hard to identify exactly where each student is in his or her learning, and differentiate instruction to move each child to a higher level of learning. Whether a student is in need of more time to learn a concept, or is in need of a more challenging concept, our teachers tailor their instruction to meet those needs. It is often said that public schools do a good job educating students who require

special education and those who require gifted education, but the students in the "middle" get lost and aren't challenged or well-served. Our school district strives to ensure that *all* students get that same level of high quality education and that each child is challenged to do his or her very best work - every day.

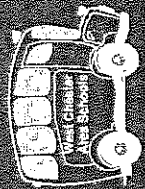
We also meet the needs of more advanced learners through a gifted education program and 19 different advanced placement courses offered at our high schools. Our middle schools are organized in a way that allows teachers to meet regularly to discuss student needs for instruction. Our elementary schools have developed a model for helping teachers with instruction in the classroom through peer coaches and team meetings called *Response to Intervention*. These meetings are set up to evaluate how the instructional practices are working to help students learn. We also individualize instruction for students interested in the arts through a comprehensive music program which includes band, choral, and orchestra instruction beginning in elementary school and continuing through high school. WCASD relies on the public's help to meet the challenges of educating all students as we continue to evaluate how we are doing. Our parents and senior citizens are active volunteers in our schools. Last year, we asked parents to complete a comprehensive survey, which provided us with valuable feedback on how to make a successful school district even better. Our businesses support our students by providing mentoring, service learning, and internship opportunities, as well as nearly \$800,000 in scholarship money to graduating seniors each spring. WCASD offers many enriching, dynamic, successful programs to help students achieve, but with diminishing resources and greater expectations for student achievement, we must rely on community support if we are to continue to remain competitive in the global workforce. We know our children can't wait for Superman, and we want their "race" to end as a productive and contributing citizen in our community.

Thanks for your support of WCASD,

James R. Scarb
Superintendent of Schools.

PARENT SATISFACTION SURVEY RESULTS

At the conclusion of the 2009-10 school year, parents were requested to complete an on-line survey. The survey was completed by approximately 27% of our families. The results of the survey are posted on our website at http://www.wcasd.net/pdfs/parent_survey.pdf. Information generated from the survey is being used to establish communications goals for the school district.



THE TWELFTH ANNUAL "BUS TO THE FUTURE" IS ARRIVING ON NOVEMBER 16!

As part of our celebration of American Education Week, residents and friends of the West Chester Area School District are invited to be our guests on our annual tour of the schools. This event is called "Bus to the Future" because the focus of the tour is children - and children are our future.

This popular program encourages residents of the school district to be our guests as they tour selected schools and observe students actively engaged in learning. Activities will begin with a continental breakfast at East High School at 8:00 a.m. Guided walking tours of East High School, Fugett Middle School and Exton Elementary School will follow, with participants riding "a real school bus" to and from Exton Elementary School. At the conclusion of the elementary tour, participants will return by bus to East High School for a complimentary lunch sponsored by Franklin Mint Federal Credit Union. Reservations will be taken up to the end of day, Tuesday, November 2.

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS - TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 16, 2010

- 8:00 a.m. Breakfast and tour of East High School
- 10:00 a.m. Tour of J. R. Fugett Middle School
- 11:00 a.m. School Bus leaves for tour of Exton Elementary School
- 12:30 p.m. Return to East High School for lunch (compliments of FMFCU)

BUS TO THE FUTURE IS SPONSORED BY FRANKLIN MINT FEDERAL CREDIT UNION WITH TRANSPORTATION PROVIDED BY KRAPE BUS COMPANIES.

SPACE IS LIMITED - RESERVE YOUR SEAT TODAY!
FOR RESERVATIONS, CONTACT:
Virginia Zahin, Communications Coordinator
Phone: 484-266-1171 • Email: vzahin@wcasd.net

PROPOSED TRANSPORTATION & BELL SCHEDULE CHANGES FOR 2011-12 SCHOOL YEAR

In order to decrease transportation costs, the West Chester Area School District is considering changes to student transportation for the 2011-12 school year. The District will be preparing for these changes over the current school year.

Last fall, members of the Transportation Committee of the Community Budget Task Force analyzed federal and state mandates, district policies, public and nonpublic bus routes, walking routes, ride times, bus capacity and costs. Due to the fact that the majority of buses are not filled to capacity, the decision has been made to consolidate and eliminate bus routes where possible. After much deliberation, the findings included reconfiguring public school bell schedules, consolidating bus stops, increasing student walking distances, changing routes and increasing the use of transfer points for nonpublic schools. The implementation of these changes would require new start times for some schools.

General feedback meetings were held in early October, allowing parents and staff to offer comments regarding the proposed transportation plan prior to its submission to the School Board for approval. The School Board will make its final decision on the transportation

changes at the **November 22, 2010** School Board meeting held at the Spellman Administration Building at 7:00 p.m.

Information on the proposed transportation changes, meeting dates and agendas, and bus routes affected, may be found on our website at www.wcasd.net by clicking on the yellow box on the right, entitled

"2011-12 Proposed Transportation Changes." Questions and comments may be submitted by emailing us at 2011-12tr@wcasd.net. An email address and/or phone number should be included in your message to enable us to send a response.

The District will use its automated parent notification system to provide 2011-12 transportation updates to our public school parents. If you are a nonpublic parent, you can add your email address and telephone number to our automated notification system. Simply go to the "2011-12 Proposed Transportation Changes" webpage, click on the box titled, "Non-Public Parents," and submit the form with your information. If you do not have access to a computer, you can request hard copies of the information by calling Rob Partridge, WCASD Communications Director, at 484-266-1170.

NEW BELL TIMES AS OF SEPTEMBER 2011		
TRIP	AM	PM
1	7:30	2:15
		SCHOOLS
		Fugett Middle School East High School Henderson High School Rustin High School
2	8:05	2:50
		Peirce Middle School Stetson Middle School
3	8:40	3:10
		East Bradford Elementary School East Goshen Elementary School Exton Elementary School Glen Acres Elementary School
4	9:10	3:40
		Fern Hill Elementary School Hillsdale Elementary School Mary C. Howse Elementary School Penn Wood Elementary School Starkweather Elementary School Westtown Thornbury Elementary School

EDUCATION FOUNDATION IS FORMED

Many leading school districts reinforce outstanding academic programming by establishing strong education foundations. The West Chester Area Education Foundation is being formed as an independent, non-profit organization with the mission of supporting educational experiences that will connect our district curriculum with real-world experiences. The Foundation will rely heavily on the support of and partnership with local businesses, schools, organizations, and alumni. Through the Foundation, the District hopes to form a speaker's bureau, enhance the use of technology through partnerships, pursue funding from contributors, and provide programs that focus on creative, real-world experiences for students.

Anyone interested in volunteering time, or making a contribution to the Foundation may contact Rob Partridge, Communications Director, at 484-266-1170.

GWCC INTRODUCES HONOR CARD PROGRAM

The Greater West Chester Chamber (GWCC), which represents nearly 750 area businesses, has partnered with the West Chester Area School District to honor district students for outstanding performance.

Beginning with the 2010-11 school year, the Honor Card Program will award students achieving honor roll status with a card entitling them to special incentives and benefits from local participating businesses.

Not only will this program encourage and celebrate student success, but it will also provide additional exposure for local businesses and promote a reciprocal partnership between our district family and its community leaders.

TEN DISTRICT SENIORS NAMED NATIONAL MERIT SEMIFINALISTS



Ten seniors from the West Chester Area School District – four from East, three from Bayard Rustin, and three from Henderson – have been named semifinalists in the 2011 National Merit Scholarship Program.

To be ranked as a semifinalist, students must place among the nation's highest scorers in the Preliminary Scholastic Assessment Test/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test (PSAT/NMSQT). Nationally, approximately 16,000 students – or less than one percent of U.S. high school seniors – advance to the semifinalist stage.

To receive finalist status, students must obtain similarly high scores in the Scholastic Assessment Test (SATs), show exemplary academic performance in high school, and receive the endorsement and recommendation of their high school principals. Finalists, who become eligible for various scholarships, will be announced in the spring.

Top right: East High School semifinalists (l-r) Enzo Kerr, Sara Chelbosh, Kevin Goyer, and William Fin.

Middle left: Bayard Rustin High School semifinalists (l-r) Ryan Kvoyn, Christen Pal Ashita, and Sam Marks.

Bottom right: B. Reed Henderson High School semifinalists (l-r) Joyce Liu, James Elermann, and Ruvan Subasinghe.

DISTRICT STUDENTS ARE HIGH ACHIEVERS

Students in the West Chester Area School District continue to significantly outperform state averages on the Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA). All 16 of our schools made Annual Yearly Progress under the federal law, *No Child Left Behind*. West Chester Area School District was one of only two Chester County School Districts to show improved scores for third grade students in both math and reading, with 94% proficient or advanced in math and nearly 90% proficient or advanced in reading. More detailed information on student assessments may be viewed on our website at <http://www.wcasd.net/about/assess2.asp>.

The annual Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA) testing is administered every spring to measure each student's attainment of academic standards. Reading and math assessments are given to students in grades 3 through 8 and 11; writing assessments are taken by students in grades 5, 8 and 11; and science assessments are completed by those in grades 4, 8 and 11. According to their scores, individual students are rated Advanced, Proficient, Basic or Below Basic. The Advanced level reflects superior academic performance and an in-depth understanding of the standards. Proficient reflects satisfactory academic performance with a solid understanding of the required skills. Basic level reflects marginal academic performance; while Below Basic reflects inadequate academic performance.

GRADE	DIST. MATH	STATE AVE.	DIST. READING	STATE AVE.	DIST. WRITING	STATE AVE.	DIST. SCIENCE	STATE AVE.
3rd	94.1	84.5	89.9	75.2				
4th	97.8	84.9	89.2	72.9			94.0	81.4
5th	92.3	74.4	83.6	64.1	80.7		61.8	
6th	86.4	78.0	86.1	68.8				
7th	89.1	77.9	88.1	73.5				
8th	88.8	75.2	93.5	81.9	89.0		75.2	57.2
11th	71.7	59.6	79.2	67.2	83.7		80.7	39.8

Elementary Public School Bell Schedule Changes

ELEMENTARY BELL SCHEDULE CHANGES

INTRODUCTION

The staggered start time at the elementary level will allow for bus consolidation and increase bus capacity which will ultimately reduce the West Chester Area School District budget. The elementary current and proposed bell schedule is as follows:

Elementary Schools- Kindergarten AM	Student Bell	Teacher Work Day	Student Drop Off
Current AM Bell Schedule	9:00 – 11:35	8:15 – 12:00	8:15 AM
New Bell Schedule for Tier I Schools: EBE, EXE, EGE, GAE	8:40 – 11:15	8:00 – 11:45	8:00 AM
New Bell Schedule for Tier II Schools: MCH, HDE, SWS, WTE, FHE, PWE	9:10 -11:45	8:20 – 12:10	8:30 AM

Elementary Schools – Kindergarten PM	Student Bell	Teacher Work Day	Student Drop Off
Current PM Bell Schedule	12:55 – 3:30	12:00– 3:45	12:40 PM
New Bell Schedule for Tier I Schools: EBE, EXE, EGE, GAE	12:35 – 3:10	1:45 – 3:30	12:25 PM
Tier II Schools New Bell Schedule MCH, HDE, SWS, WTE, FHE, PWE	1:05 – 3:40	12:10 – 3:50	12:50 PM

Elementary Schools - Grades 1-5	Student Bell	Teacher Work Day	Student Drop Off
Current Bell Schedule	9:00 – 3:30	8:15 – 3:45	8:15 AM
New Bell Schedule for TIER I Schools: EBE, EXE, EGE, GAE	8:40 – 3:10	8:00 – 3:30	8:00 AM
New Bell Schedule for Tier II Schools: MCH, HDE, SWS, WTE, FHE, PWE	9:10 – 3:40	8:20 – 3:50	8:30 AM

Rationale:

- Increasing the amount of time between the TIERS will allow the routes to be longer and pick up more students to fill a bus.
- Since the District essential pays for a bus for the day, adding two TIERS at the elementary level will allow a bus to be utilized longer and will save costs by completing more routes with fewer buses.

Savings:

- The 2011 – 2012 budget saving will be \$50,000 x 12 buses = \$600,000.
- The total savings above result from the combination of secondary and elementary school bell changes as well as bus consolidation.

COMMUNITY FEEDBACK

Two parent feedback meetings were held on Tuesday, October 12, 2010 and on Thursday, October 14, 2010. The meetings allowed the administration to address parent concerns regarding the proposed changes in the elementary bell times for the 2011 – 2012 school year. The committee received 13 comment cards and 17 emails from parents and community members. The report also details the proposed bell times and the buildings that will be affected by transportation implementation plan.

Committee Findings:

Listed below are general concerns that have been submitted by parents to the committee.

It is important to note that within the responses, some respondents expressed concerns with multiple issues. After the chart is a Q&A that provides clarifying information and responses for each category of parent concerns.

The following chart shows the frequency of which respondents commented on each of the categories.

Category	Number of Concerns
1. Parents are concerned there will be significant changes in bus pick up and drop off.	26
2. Parents are concerned that working parents will now have to pay before and after care at the school's YMCA due to the change in school start and end times.	13
3. Parents noted that half days are unproductive so eliminate the half days of school.	1
4. Parents stated that for all TIER schools drop off time needs to stay at 8:15.	20
5. Parents are concerned that after school activities will be affected	3

(CCD, sports, instrumental lessons).	
6. Parents are concerned and community members from local preschools that kindergarten start and end times will be affected.	4
7. A parent is willing to pay (increase tax) to help reduce the deficit and eliminate the bus proposal.	1
8. Parents noted that in order for our students to perform to their maximum, we need to start school earlier; not later.	2
9. Parents questioned if the YMCA will increase their rates.	2

The WCASD staff was surveyed in late September 2010. The comments from that survey are in the appendix of this report.

ELEMENTARY BELL CHANGE PROPOSAL QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

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 busses will be making fewer stops. The district policy with regard to ride time in the district has not changed.

2. 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.

3. 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 without having to use YMCA day care. For schools that change to an 8:40 start time, parents will still be allowed to drop off their 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 start time, parents will be able to drop off their students at 8:30 which is a 15 minute difference from the 8:15 time.

For students who are in schools that have an ending bell time of 3:10 instead of 3:30 may have an extra 20 minutes in daycare. For students who are in schools that have an ending bell time of 3:40 instead of 3:30, they may arrive in day care a maximum of 10 minutes later than currently. Please understand that the 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.

4. **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.

5. **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.

6. **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?**

The 2011-12 proposed public elementary school bell schedules are included in the report.

7. **How will the elementary teacher workday changes impact the District-wide after school teacher meeting times?**

There will be a twenty minute difference in the end of the day for teachers at the elementary schools, so there will be a minimal impact to the start times for after school meetings.

8. **I am currently a teacher for an Extended Day Kindergarten class and am concerned about how the different bell schedules will change the program.**

The Extended Day Kindergarten program will continue but the "sister" school partnerships will be changed. The district will ensure public schools that have similar bell times will be paired.

9. **Can staff request a transfer to a different building based on changes made to building bell schedules?**

As part of the staffing process for the 2011-2012 school year, the District will certainly consider any staff member's request to be reassigned to a different building based on building bell schedule

changes which result from the new Transportation plan. In order to receive consideration staff should complete the "Request to Transfer Form" available on the District website at: www.wcasd.net/admin/transfer_requests.asp

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 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.

12. Is the West Chester Area School District required to provide mid-day kindergarten transportation?

No, mid-day kindergarten transportation is not mandated by the Pennsylvania Department of Education, but rather a courtesy extended by the district to all Public and Non-public school students residing in the West Chester Area School District.

13. Is the West Chester Area School District required to provide transportation to and from day care providers?

No, the District offers this service as a courtesy to all public and non-public students residing in the West Chester Area School District. In addition, the District offers the flexibility to allow for students to be dropped off/picked up at multiple locations

Secondary Public School Bell Schedule Changes

SECONDARY BELL SCHEDULE CHANGES

INTRODUCTION

Based on the community task force's transportation committee mandate to find savings, and after analyzing the background information for the transportation operations, the sub-committee established a goal to eliminate a minimum of 12 buses from the District's transportation operations. The crucial factor in the decision to eliminate buses was that the majority of them were not being filled to capacity. One of the findings of the committee was to change the bell times to gain efficiency in daily routes and use of buses. The staggered start times will allow for bus route consolidation, increased bus capacity utilization and will help reduce the WCASD transportation budget. The secondary bell schedules are changed as follows:

Middle Schools	Student Bell	Teacher Work Day
Current Bell Schedule	8:05 – 2:50	7:30 – 3:00
Bell Schedule Change for Fugett (no change for Stetson and Pierce)	7:30 – 2:15	7:20 – 2:50
High Schools	Student Bell	Teacher Work Day
Current Bell Schedule	7:35 – 2:20	7:20 – 2:50
Bell Schedule Change	7:30 – 2:15	7:20 – 2:50

Rationale:

- Buses are currently not filled to their capacity. Current capacity utilization of public school buses is 82% for middle school and 69% for high school.
- The combination of Fugett Middle School and East High School buses increases efficiency and increases capacity utilization because the schools are on the same campus and the students are in the same neighborhoods.

Savings:

- 2011-2012 budget savings will be \$50,000 x 12 buses = \$600,000
- Total savings above result from the combination of secondary school and elementary school bell schedule changes as well as bus stop consolidations.

COMMUNITY FEEDBACK

Introduction:

After the informational sessions concerning the proposed WCASD Transportation Plan conducted at Fugett Middle School on October 12th and 14th, the administration received twenty-nine feedback forms and seventeen emails.

Findings:

When the community responses were synthesized, there were several categories that emerged, and they appear below. It is important to note that within the responses, some respondents expressed concerns with multiple issues. After the chart is a Q&A that provides clarifying information and responses for each category of parent concerns.

The following chart shows the frequency of which respondents commented on each of the categories.

Category	Number of Concerns
1. Parents are concerned that their middle school children will be required to awaken too early, which is counter to current adolescent sleep research.	27
2. Parents are concerned with their middle school children interacting with high school students at the bus stop and on ride to school.	24
3. Parents are concerned that Fugett Middle School is the only middle school impacted by the proposed change.	7
4. Parents are concerned about the safety of the bus stop, which could be too dark or too dangerous.	5
5. Parents are concerned that the proposed change will impact their after school child care.	4
6. Parents are concerned about traffic pattern issues that they believe will occur on the Fugett/East campus due to an increase in the number of parents that will drive their children to and from school.	2
7. A parent was concerned that we do not provide extra-curricular bussing which the parent believed may be needed due to the proposed change.	1

1. Parents are concerned with their middle school children interacting with high school students at the bus stop and on ride to school.

- a. *The drivers serving the East/Fugett complex have experience with both middle school and high school students. Seating arrangements will be structured to allow the younger students seats in the front of the bus and older students in the back. Professional development has already begun and will continue with training seminars in the fall and spring. Monitoring will take place utilizing digital cameras installed on all buses.*

2. Parents are concerned that their middle school children will be required to awaken too early, which is counter to current adolescent sleep research.
 - a. *The transportation committee has considered the school start time changes and how they will affect student achievement. In fact, the committee polled eight local and/or regional school districts that begin their middle school day at 7:35 or earlier. Seven reported that there was no impact on student achievement and one school district reported that their scores actually improved.*
 - b. *The district is aware of the published research that suggests secondary performance improves with later start times. However, a later start time would not allow, at this time, the task force to accomplish the stated goal of fiscal management. The district continues to evaluate current research studies and literature involving various pro-active educational practices.*

3. Parents are concerned about the safety of the bus stop, which could be too dark or too dangerous.
 - a. *Utilizing state guidelines and district policies, the Transportation Department evaluates the safety and appropriateness of all bus stops. Any families who have concerns about their bus stops should contact the Transportation Department.*

4. Parents are concerned that the proposed change will impact their after school child care.
 - a. *Although the district will not provide child care for middle school students, the earlier dismissal time will allow us to potentially expand our existing after school homework assistance program. The Fugett ASAP (After School Academic Program) could be expanded to include various student assistance areas. Opportunities also exist to expand other after school programming.*

5. Parents are concerned about traffic pattern issues that they believe will occur on the Fugett/East campus due to an increase in the number of parents that will drive their children to and from school.
 - a. *Please see the dismissal and arrival information and map contained in question 10. under "Other Questions" section below.*

6. Parents are concerned that Fugett Middle School is the only middle school impacted by the proposed change.
 - a. *Fugett and East sit on the same campus. No other middle school is close enough to a high school to allow the same kind of time savings. The task force committee did examine combining Stetson and Sarah Starkweather, but the timing and number of buses did not work with creating the fourth bell time and doubling up buses at different elementary schools. Combining Fugett and East, using the high school bell times, basically allowed us to create a fourth bell tier for 4 elementary schools in the same time slot we would normally have taken home Fugett students and still be done early enough to get to the other 6 elementary schools with minor changes at that level.*

7. A parent was concerned that we do not provide extra-curricular bussing which the parent believed may be needed due to the proposed change.
 - a. *The proposed plan will not require adding additional buses to ensure that students access their extra-curricular activities. In fact, the student day will end at 2:15 p.m. All students who are in a teacher/coach supervised activity will locker and/or change as required and report to their assigned location as communicated by the athletic director/coach or activity sponsor. Any student who is not in a teacher supervised activity and may wish to be a spectator of that athletic competition or activity should report to that location i.e. Gymnasium, Stadium, Auditorium, etc. Adequate teacher supervision will be organized as follows: Teacher duty assignments will be re-allocated. Teacher duty assignments during the day may include hall duty, cafeteria duty, internal suspension, etc. A rotating teacher duty assignment for afternoon coverage will be created. Teachers will either have a day duty coverage or may be assigned an afternoon duty coverage. This schedule will be developed based on the student sports and activities schedule. The event and the number of students potentially attending that event will be considered.*

Conclusion:

The categories that emerged from the feedback forms and emails matched the concerns that were expressed during our public informational sessions. Additionally, the administration and Transportation Committee elicited other potential issues and concerns that are listed in the Q&A section below.

OTHER QUESTIONS & ANSWERS ON SECONDARY SCHOOL BELL TIME CHANGE

1. **How will Sports/Extra Curricular Activities be impacted/managed at Fugett Middle School?**

Student Supervision

The student day ends at 2:15 p.m. All students who are in a teacher/coach supervised activity will locker and/or change as required and report to their assigned location as communicated by the athletic director/coach or activity sponsor. Any student who is not in a teacher supervised activity and may wish to be a spectator of that athletic competition or activity should report to that location i.e. Gymnasium, Stadium, Auditorium, etc. Adequate teacher supervision will be organized as follows: Teacher duty assignments will be re-allocated. Teacher duty assignments during the day may include hall duty, cafeteria duty, internal suspension, etc. A rotating teacher duty assignment for afternoon coverage will be created. Teachers will either have day duty coverage or may be assigned an afternoon duty coverage. This schedule will be developed based on the student sports and activities schedule. The event and the number of students potentially attending that event will be considered.

After-school Programming

The 2:15 p.m. to 2:50 p.m. time will include expansion of our existing after school homework assistance program. The Fugett ASAP (After School Academic Program) could be expanded to include various student assistance areas. Opportunities exist to expand other after school programming.

Staff Considerations

Current Teacher Day	7:30 to 3:00
Proposed Teacher Day	7:20 to 2:50
Current Student Day	8:05 to 2:50
Proposed Student Day	7:30 to 2:15

All standing committees such as Team Leaders, Dept. Chairs, Data-Analysis teams, etc. will move from 7:30 a.m. times to 2:15 p.m. time slot. The same day cycle of Tues/Wed will be maintained. This time may also be utilized for additional staff development as needed.

2. How will the district manage buses without overcrowding?

Currently 18 buses are used to transport students to and from Fugett. With the new plan, approximately 32 buses will be used to transport Fugett and East together. 30 – 35 middle school students and 20-25 high school students will be assigned to each bus for a total of 55 - 60 assigned students to each bus. Only 60% of the assigned high school students ride on a daily basis on most routes. All buses are equipped with digital cameras which are used to monitor everything from student behavior to ridership levels. Adjustments will be made for cases of actual bus overcrowding

3. Will this impact Fugett early dismissal schedule?

Fugett will follow the same early dismissal schedule as Peirce & Stetson. This will remain consistent with past practice with an added benefit of an additional ½ hr. of instruction. Weather emergency early dismissal will require East & Fugett to dismiss at the same time.

4. Will my high school student be permitted to transport his middle school sibling?

Yes- arrangements can be made by speaking with the Fugett Administration.

5. Can staff request a transfer to a different building based on changes made to building bell schedules?

As part of the staffing process for the 2011-2012 school year, the District will certainly consider any staff member's request to be reassigned to a different building based on

building bell schedule changes which result from the new Transportation plan. In order to receive consideration staff should complete the "Request to Transfer Form" available on the District website at: www.wcasd.net/admin/transfer_requests.asp

Please note the deadline for form submission is April 1st, and any preferences by staff for a specific building(s) may limit the District's ability to find the requested placement.

6. The middle schools currently share a number of teachers. When Fugett changes to the high school bell schedule, how will this impact the workday schedules for these teachers?

When the students and teachers are scheduled for the 2011-12 years, extra care will be taken to minimize the number of teachers that are shared between Fugett Middle School and our other two Middle Schools. There may be some opportunity to share teachers between East High School and Fugett Middle School as well.

7. How will drop off and loading look at the East/Fugett Complex?

Arrival

Upon arrival students will be grouped by grade into the following locations:

6th Grade- Auditorium

7th Grade- Cafeteria

8th Grade-Gymnasium

6th Grade will be supervised by the 6th grade administrator and two teachers

7th Grade will be supervised by the 7th grade administrator and two teachers

8th grade will be supervised by the 8th grade administrator and two teachers.

Students will not be permitted into the grade level floors without a teacher note. Once the warning bell rings at 7:25 a.m., students will then be permitted to move to home room.

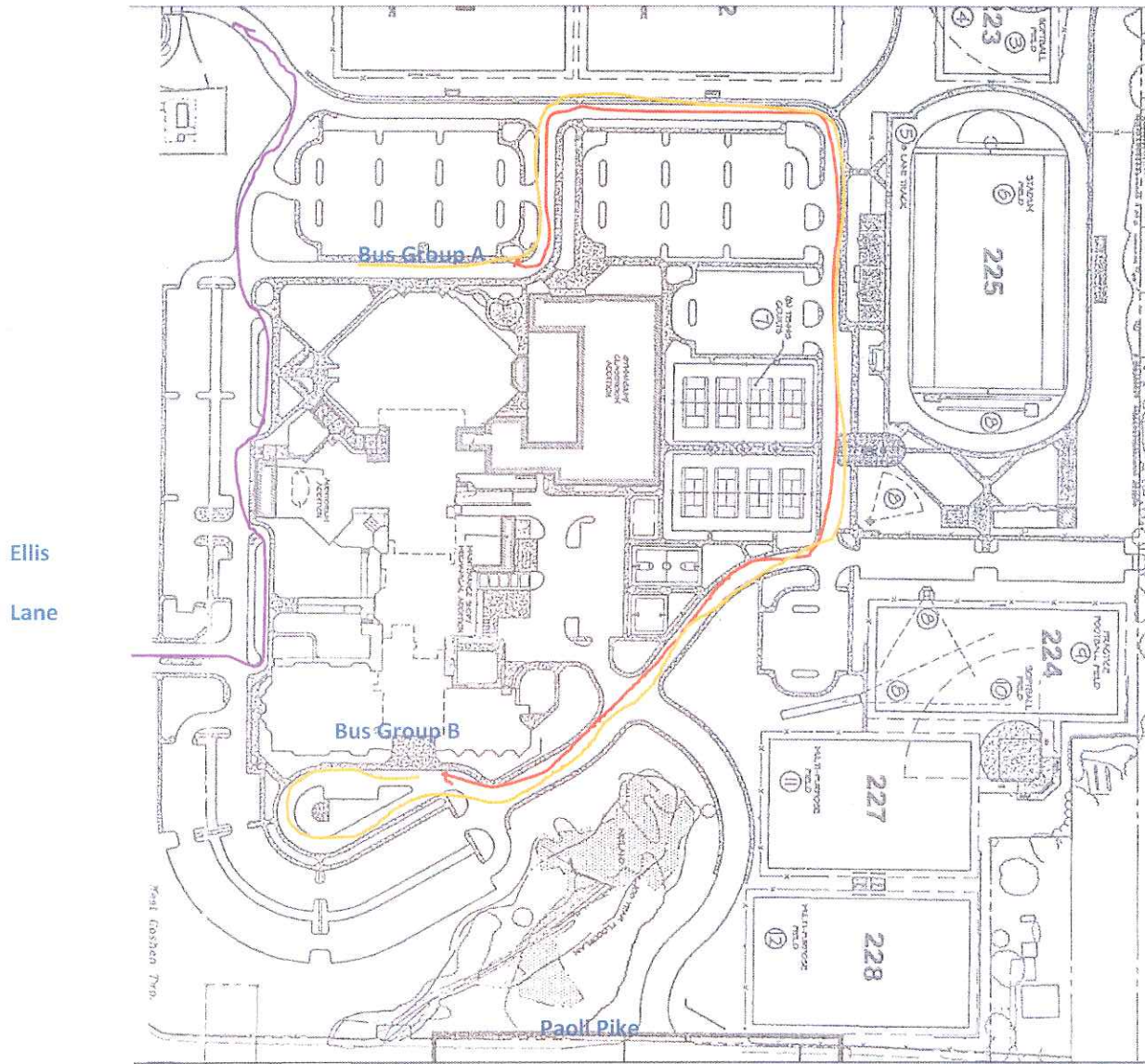
Homeroom will be from 7:30 a.m. to 7:40 a.m. 1st period will begin at 7:43 a.m.

Departure

At the end of the school day, at 2:15 p.m., students will remain in their 8th period class. Two groupings of busses, Group A and Group B will occur. Group A will be loading at East High School and Group B will be loading at Fugett Middle School. Students will be called by group. The bus groups will then rotate and the opposite group will load.

ARRIVAL/DISMISSAL MAP

FUGETT MIDDLE SCHOOL ARRIVAL DEPARTURE LOADING/STAGING



KEY- East Group A ———
Fugett Group B ———
Parent and Sibling Drop-Off ———