MANHASSET
TRANSPORTATION

RECOMMENDATION

The Transportation Department recommends dedicating the Secondary School bus loop to school buses during bus operations. This recommendation is based on three priorities:

1. Student safety
2. Alignment with state guidance
3. Risk mitigation

Using the existing bus loop to provide greater separation between students, buses, and parent vehicles could improve both safety and traffic flow while better aligning our operations with state guidance.

Separating bus operations from parent and other vehicle traffic is widely recognized in school safety and site-design guidance from:

- New York State Education Department (NYSED)
- National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA/DOT)
- Pupil Transportation Safety Institute (PTSI)
- New York Schools Insurance Reciprocal (NYSIR)

TRAFFIC CONCERNS

The community has raised concerns about current traffic conditions at the Secondary School. The shared space between school buses and other vehicles may be contributing to congestion. Under NYS law, drivers must stop when a bus loads or unloads passengers with its red lights flashing. These required stops interrupt traffic flow and contribute to vehicles backing up through the parking lot.

Transportation research suggests that separating buses and parent vehicles can reduce on-site congestion and conflicts, supporting safer and improved traffic flow.

SAFETY CONCERNS

When traffic stops for a bus, some parents have been observed letting their children out in undesignated areas of the parking lot. Those students must then walk through areas used by buses and other moving vehicles, while the parent vehicle maneuvers through the lot to avoid stopped traffic. This increases the potential for conflict among students, buses, and other vehicles.

According to the DMV, a common factor in fatal crashes involving students struck by passing motorists is drivers claiming they did not have time to wait for the school bus.

Separating buses from parent traffic reduces the opportunity for that type of conflict.

SCHEDULING

Under the proposed plan, most buses would be leaving or already gone by the time parent drop-off begins to peak. Parents using the rear lot, dropping off by The Arches, would no longer need to stop each time a bus unloads, allowing traffic to cycle through more steadily.

Additionally, to accommodate separate drop-off zones and still help maximize use of our limited space, the loop could be opened for parent drop-offs once all buses have departed.

MORNING BUSES

Buses would be scheduled to arrive and unload by approximately 7:30 AM. Beginning around 7:45, after buses are cleared from the area, the bus loop could open to parent vehicles. This short buffer would account for weather or traffic delays.

A procedure would be established for occasional late buses to ensure that unloading remains controlled and supervised if parent vehicles have already entered the loop. Even in that circumstance, the loop would provide greater separation from general parking-lot traffic.

AFTERNOON BUSES

Afternoon departure times would remain unchanged for now, with most buses leaving between approximately 3:15 and 3:35 PM.

The loop would be reserved exclusively for regular dismissal buses until approximately 3:35 PM. Parent vehicles would not enter the loop until approximately 3:45 PM, after the buses have departed and the area has been cleared.

Another suggestion to reduce congestion in the rear parking lot is to restrict parent pickup vehicles from entering the rear lot until 3:15 PM.

PAST PRACTICE

The District currently uses the bus loop exclusively for buses on Board election days, with parent drop-off and pick-up by the Arches. This demonstrates that the arrangement is feasible under controlled conditions. Implementation would include appropriate staffing, training, signage, parent communication, monitoring, and adjustments as needed.

IMPLEMENTATION

We recommend monitoring the new traffic pattern during an initial pilot period. Transportation, Security, Facilities, Building Administration, and Central Administration would evaluate traffic flow, arrival and dismissal times, pedestrian conflicts, and compliance with the designated loading areas, making adjustments as needed.

CONCLUSION

Separating bus operations from parent and other vehicle traffic would:

- Align operations with State guidance
- Allow traffic to move more steadily
- Reduce the incentive for parents to drop students off outside designated areas
- Reduce conflicts between pedestrians and moving vehicles
- Reduce school bus delays to subsequent elementary school pickups
- Help mitigate insurance-related risk

SUPPORTING NOTES

- NYSED: Safe Schools by Design Act
  The guide recommends segregating drives and parking for visitors, students, bus loading and unloading, and deliveries where site constraints allow. It further recommends separating bus loading and unloading areas from other vehicular routes where possible.

- NYSED: Manual of Planning Standards for School Buildings
  The manual states that school-site design must consider the separation of pedestrian and vehicle traffic for student health and safety.

- NHTSA: Highway Safety Program Guideline No. 17
  Recommends restricted school-bus loading and unloading areas at or near schools. It also recommends establishing passenger-vehicle loading and unloading points that are separate from school-bus loading zones.

- NYSED: Safe Routes, Safe Stops Manual
  Examines whether schools have separate loading zones for buses and parent vehicles, whether parent vehicles enter bus zones, whether signs restrict vehicles from those zones, and whether adult supervision is provided during loading and unloading. Similar criteria are included in PTSI's School Transportation Safety Assessment.

- NYSIR
  Supports separating buses, parking-lot traffic, and parent drop-off traffic to mitigate risk and reduce the District's exposure.