



**Edmonds
School District**

School Start and End Times

Board Study Session

September 22, 2026

Agenda

- 01** Review the options identified through feedback and board requests
- 02** Review the benefits, trade-offs, and unanswered questions associated with each option
- 03** Confirm what additional analysis is needed before a final decision

What We Heard



Concerns about very early start times



Concerns about later elementary dismissal



Childcare and family scheduling



Student activities, athletics, and employment



Staff schedules and leave needs



Transportation reliability and efficiency



Cost and staffing feasibility



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Current Four-Tier Transportation Model

Tier	Schools / Programs	Start Time	Dismissal
Tier 1	<i>High schools</i>	7:20 am	1:52 pm
Tier 2	<i>Middle schools, early start elementary schools</i>	8:05 am	2:35 pm
Tier 3	<i>Mid-start elementary schools</i>	8:45 am	3:15 pm
Tier 4	<i>Late start elementary schools</i>	9:25 am	3:55 pm

Option 1: Shift All Four Tiers Later



Option Overview

Retain the four-tier structure and move every tier approximately 15 minutes later to show current and proposed times side by side.

Tier	Current Time	Proposed Time	Change
Tier 1	7:20 am - 1:52 pm	7:35 am - 2:07 pm	+15 minutes
Tier 2	8:05 am - 2:35 pm	8:20 am - 2:50 pm	+15 minutes
Tier 3	8:45 am - 3:15 pm	9:00 am - 3:30 pm	+15 minutes
Tier 4	9:25 am - 3:55 pm	9:40 am - 4:10 pm	+15 minutes

Option 1: Some Data



Student Attendance

- Late start elementary schools had an average of 473 early dismissal absences requested by families
- Remaining elementary schools had an average 348 early dismissal absences requested by families



Employee Leave

- Number of Tier 4 elementary employees taking partial-day leave
 - Average of 118 PM absences for Tier 4 schools
- Comparison with employees in earlier tiers
 - Average of 81 PM absences for all other elementary schools



Activities & Impact

Currently Unknown

- Current participation in after-school activities among Tier 4 students
- Programs with start times that could conflict with later dismissal
- Childcare, medical, therapy, and family scheduling impacts
- Survey of Tier 4 families, staff, and community program providers



Option 1: Potential Benefits and Tradeoffs

+ Potential Benefits

- Later morning start for all students
- Maintains the existing four-tier transportation structure
- May require fewer operational changes than moving to three tiers
- Preserves current transportation services including those at preschool, specialized and choice programs

- Potential Tradeoffs

- Tier 4 elementary schools dismiss even later
- Families may have difficulty scheduling appointments
- Students may lose access to after-school programs or activities
- Staff may need to take more leave for appointments
- Later routes may be more affected by traffic, weather, or daylight conditions
- Childcare arrangements may become more complicated for some families

Option 2: Move to Three Tiers

Proposed Consolidation

Replace the current 4 tier transportation system with a 3 tier system

This model uses transportation resources less efficiently

No schools would start before 8 AM and no schools would dismiss after 3:55 PM

Impact & Requirements

Reducing tiers reduces the number of schools a driver can serve. In response, the following are required:

- **Greater transportation capacity** (more buses and drivers)
- **Fewer transportation obligations** (reduced service levels)
- **A combination of both** capacity increases and service adjustments

Option 2: May Require Some Transportation Services to be Affected

Potential service reductions could include transportation for:



Highly Capable

The Highly Capable Programs at Terrace Park Elementary and Brier Terrace Middle School



Choice Schools

Students attending the district's two choice K–8 schools



Early Childhood

Early childhood programs



Scriber Lake

Scriber Lake High School

Option 2: Likely Additional Capacity and Cost



Vehicles & Capital

- Additional buses needed
- Purchase cost per bus
- Maintenance, fuel, insurance, and parking



Staffing & Operations

- Number of additional drivers needed
- Driver wages and benefits
- Additional dispatch, supervisory, and training needs
- Additional Transportation Shop needs



Timeline & Delivery

- Recruiting and training timeline
- Earliest realistic implementation date



Transportation Implications of Moving from 4 to 3 Bell Times



Route Dynamics & Driver Hours

In a multi-tier system, school bus drivers serve schools sequentially across bell times.

- Reducing bell times from 4 to 3 puts more schools in each bell time.
- **Increases overall driver count** needed to cover overlapping routes.
- **Reduces driver hours** available.



Recruitment & Service Reliability

Successful recruiting and retention of bus drivers is essential to maintaining reliable service.

- **Harder Recruiting:** Reduced driver hours make positions less attractive.
- **Retention Impact:** Lower hour guarantees increase driver turnover.
- **Reduced Reliability:** A decrease in overall transportation service reliability is anticipated.

Transportation Implications of Moving from 4 to 3 Bell Times

Three scenarios are suggested for consideration:



Full Service

Three bell times with no reduction in transportation eligibility or levels of service.



High School Transit

Three bell times with some high school students moved to transit/self-transport.



Program Targeted

Three bell times with the elimination of transportation for specific programs.



Bell Time Sequencing Framework

High schools were placed in the first bell time. Middle schools were placed in the second bell time. Elementary schools were placed as needed to balance the system.

Full Service - Transportation Implications

Three bell times with no reduction in transportation eligibility or levels of service



Fleet & Cost Requirements

- **16 Additional Drivers and Buses:** Requires approximately 16 additional drivers and buses.
- **\$4M Capital Expense:** Cost of the 16 buses is about \$4M at current prices.
- **Financial Trade-off:** The cost balance between extra personnel and reduced driver hours can be studied.



Staffing & Feasibility Concerns

Transportation leadership has expressed significant concerns regarding operational feasibility under this option:

- **Staffing Capacity:** Serious doubts about the ability to fully staff this configuration.
- **More Drivers Needed:** Higher total driver count required to cover simultaneous school start times.
- **Reduced Hours:** Drivers work fewer hours, making recruiting and retention even more challenging.

High School Transit - Transportation Implications

Three bell times with some high school students moved to transit/self-transport



Community Transit Use

- **Long-Standing Interest:** There has been ongoing interest in shifting high school transportation to Community Transit.
- **Transit Accessibility:** Some high school students can reasonably utilize public transit routes to access school.
- **Data Assessment Needed:** It is not known how many high school buses can be replaced with public transit.



Fleet & Driver Impact

- **Route Replacement:** This scenario would require about 13 of 44 high school runs to be replaced by public transit.
- **Reduced Resource Need:** About 9 additional buses and drivers may be necessary to support three bell times in this scenario.
- **Cost & Staffing Mitigation:** Capital outlay and driver hiring demands are reduced compared to the full service scenario.

High School Transit - Transportation Implications (Cont.)

Three bell times with some high school students moved to transit/self-transport



Fleet & Cost Requirements

- **9 Additional Buses:** Requires approximately 9 additional general education drivers and buses.
- **\$2M Capital Expense:** Cost of the 9 buses is about \$2M at current prices.
- **Financial Trade-off:** The cost balance between extra personnel and reduced driver hours could be studied.



Staffing & Feasibility Concerns

Transportation leadership has expressed significant concerns regarding operational feasibility under this option:

- **Staffing Capacity:** Serious doubts about the ability to fully staff this configuration.
- **More Drivers Needed:** Higher total driver count required to cover simultaneous school start times.
- **Reduced Hours:** Drivers work fewer hours, making recruiting and retention even more challenging.

High School Transit - Actionable Next Steps

Three bell times with some high school students moved to transit/self-transport



Education Logistics Study

- **High school yellow bus reductions:** Study which District high school routes can be replaced by existing transit routes without reducing service below a level set by the District.
- **Consulting:** Education Logistics, our routing software provider, can do this work.
- **Estimated Cost:** This work will cost about **\$15,000**.



Community Transit Contact

- **Inter-Agency Outreach:** Request that discussions be conducted with Community Transit leadership.



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Transportation Implications: Specific Program Elimination

Three bell times with the elimination of transportation for specific programs



Zero Fleet Expansion

- **Program Scope:** Applies to Scriber Lake High School, Challenge, Highly Capable, Madrona, Maplewood, and ECEAP.
- **Resource Neutral:** May achieve 3 bell times with no additional drivers or buses required. Requires elementary schools be placed in bell times for efficiency.



Workforce Impact

- **Reduced Hours:** Driver work hours would be reduced across the system.
- **Retention Risk:** Compounds ongoing driver recruiting and retention difficulties.



Further Evaluation

- **Partial Cuts:** Eliminating some programs requires study (ranges from neutral to +16 buses/drivers).
- **Transit Options:** Public transit alternatives to offset impact could also be studied.



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Transportation Implications: Middle School Transit Options

Evaluating Community Transit opportunities when moving from 4 to 3 bell times



Initial Scope

- **Not Included:** Community Transit for middle school students was not part of the initial bell time study.
- **Baseline Assessment:** Current models only evaluated traditional district bus routes.



Potential Benefits

- **Expanded Options:** Public transit utilization for middle school could open additional school bus routing and schedule flexibility.
- **Efficiency Gains:** May reduce the required number of district buses and drivers.



Board Action

- **Request Study:** The Board can choose to direct a feasibility study for middle school transit.
- **Further Analysis:** Would provide detailed impact and cost analysis prior to final decision.



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Transportation Implications: Bell Time Study

Requirements and estimated costs for moving from 4 bell times to 3 bell times



Study Requirements

- **Formal Study:** All 3-bell-time options require formal study with detailed modeling for service, driver, bus, and cost implications. A process is needed to consider other non-transportation implications.
- **Direction Required:** We need to know what scenarios should be studied and how those scenarios will be chosen. We also need to know what the limits are for walk distances, ride times, and other decisions around levels of service.



Education Logistics Consulting

- **Specialized Consultant:** Education Logistics can perform bell-time studies with detailed transportation program modeling.
- **Estimated Cost:** Approximately **\$17,000** for each scenario evaluated.



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Option 3: Maintain Current Times

Retain the current four-tier schedule and existing start and dismissal times.

Potential Benefits

- No immediate disruption for families, students, or staff
- Preserves existing transportation services
- Does not create a new schedule that would be very difficult to undo later
- Avoids new bus purchases and new driver recruiting
- Lowest implementation risk
- Allows more time to study long-term alternatives

Potential Trade Offs

- Does not address concerns about current early starts
- Maintains the current late dismissal for Tier 4 schools
- Preserves existing inequities or scheduling challenges
- May be viewed as postponing rather than resolving the issue



Questions & Discussion

Edmonds School District Board Study Session