

MPS Study Follow-up

I. Cost to Meet MPS Guidelines

Transportation was asked to provide information regarding the MPS study; in particular as it pertained to enhancing transportation resources to reach an acceptable level of service. The parameters used to guide the supervisors in their assessment were:

- No bell schedule changes would be made.
- Pickups within a school boundary should not be earlier than 6:15 a.m. unless there were unusual circumstances.
- Runs, AM or PM, should not be more than 60 minutes in length except for GT and administrative placements, ALC and Summit programs; or for distances from which travel with one student would be over 60 minutes.
- No buses would drop off at school more than 10 minutes early unless it is a short run into a school with insufficient unloading or loading space for all buses at one time. For example, a school with 40 buses that has space to unload only 20 at a time would have the closer runs coming in perhaps 15 or 20 minutes early so the distant buses could wait as long as possible prior to beginning their longer runs, and then arrive 10 minutes prior to the bell.
- Assess bus loads to eliminate overcrowding (i.e. half of some students' posteriors hanging in the aisle):
 - For elementary students, maximum load would be no more 2.5 students per seat rather than 3 students.
 - For secondary level students, maximum load would be 80% of capacity to allow space for large students or occasional riders.
- Do not consider late runs. Taking stress off earlier bells will make buses available at earlier times for late runs.
- Remember that, by law, guidelines apply to special education as well as regular education students.

Supervisors took the following approach to determine the number of additional runs necessary into each school:

- If one or more runs were too long, or began prior to 6:15 a.m., the supervisors added the necessary numbers of runs to reduce the run lengths to acceptable times. This was not a one to one correlation. Buses were used as efficiently as possible by cutting and reassembling stops. **One additional run into a school did not necessarily translate into an additional bus for the pyramid.**
- If runs were too heavily loaded, similar adjustments were made to maintain efficiency.
- If runs were late to schools in the AM, runs were added for that school to shorten the longest runs, even if they were not at the 60+ minute level.
- If runs were late to schools in the PM, runs were added to earlier schools to shorten the longest to a time that made it possible to meet the buses' time requirements for the school in question.

Baseline Results	Area 1*		Area 2		Area 3		Special Education		Total		Total Cost
	Cur	Add	Cur	Add	Cur	Add	Cur	Add	Cur	Add	
Drivers	258	71	286	79	308	37	286	**64	1138	251	\$7,635,861
Total		329		365		345		350		1389	
Attendants								64		64	\$1,375,727
Bus Driver Supv	16	2	16	2	16	1	18	3	66	8	\$390,176
Trans Supervisor	8	2	8	2	8	1	9	3	33	8	\$567,392
Asst Coordinator	2	1	2	1	2	1	3	0	9	3	\$263,628
Mileage Cost Based on Average Cost; Includes 8 BDS Buses, 7 Cars										259	\$3,343,415
										7	\$21,132
Capital Cost 5 Year Bus Lease Purchases / Year & Car Purchase										298	\$6,654,690
										7	\$113,826
Total First Year Cost											\$20,365,847

* Does not include 5 additional buses needed for SCSS grandfathering

** This includes continuing coverage for county wide programs. Some savings in additional SE buses would occur if two sites were provided for each program.

County wide programs are:

- Hearing – the HS and MS incorporate each of three different hearing programs. The ESs has one kind of program in each. All are, therefore, single county wide sites.
 - Woodson HS
 - Frost MS
 - Camelot ES
 - Mantua ES
 - Canterbury Woods ES
- Vision – Robinson SS
- MS ED – Burke Center
- HS PD – Falls Church HS
- MS PD – Holmes MS
- Magnet – each is county wide
 - Hunters Woods ES
 - Baileys ES
 - Jefferson HSST
- Falls Church medical programs

II. School Board Policy Change Options

Transportation was also asked to estimate the savings of possible resource demand reductions as addressed in the January Board meeting.

- No longer provide transportation to GT centers for those elementary students whose base school includes a GT program.
 - The Board excluded this from consideration.
- Shorten the time that we provide transportation for students who are grandfathered when school or program boundary changes are made.
 - This could not be calculated as the costs of grandfathering depend on the school, the boundary impacted, and the grades included for consideration.
- Reconsider the current program of providing transportation for administratively-placed students. Two choices include not providing transportation or only placing students in schools very proximate to their base schools. Currently we have students going great distances, often by taxi, as there is no bus available to transport them.
 - *Attachment A*
 - Savings \$914,707.
- Eliminate the Exception to Ride Program. Transportation receives over 1,200 requests a year. Each request requires that transportation evaluate each for space on the bus, availability of an existing bus stop, and the safety of the walking route from an existing bus stop to the requesting student's home. This time-consuming process is overwhelming transportation supervisors and transportation staff at a time of the year when they already face great challenges.
 - This is a labor issue. With 1,200 requests, the total management/supervisory time required is extremely high, particularly at a time when they are burdened with many hundreds of calls and critical stop, route, and bus changes. Eliminating exceptions would provide overtime savings but would be difficult to calculate.
- Provide academy shuttles only if there are a minimum of five students who ride the bus on a regular basis.
 - *Attachment B*
 - Savings \$346,108.
- Eliminate magnet transportation to Bailey's and Hunters Woods elementary schools.
 - *Attachment C*
 - Savings \$104,007.
- Modify the middle school GT program either by redrawing current boundaries or by expanding the number of schools with their own GT programs. Both options could reduce transportation demands.
 - The savings could only be determined after program site additions and boundary changes are established.

III. Remaining Issues

While two of four transportation offices are housed in an appropriate facility at Stonecroft, a second facility similar to Stonecroft, with space for the other half of operations management, supervision, and clerical staff, and with sufficient parking and meeting space for the large organization (like the Lorton multi-purpose), is necessary.

We must continue to explore possibilities for additional secure parking, particularly in parts of the county where centralized parking is limited in the north and mid to northeast county areas.

We must address the demands of the large number of students requiring individually tailored special education transportation. The one office now working with the most severely needy students is too large to be manageable, while providing the high level of service required. Two options are being considered:

- Integrate SE supervisors and coordinators with areas and restructure pyramid responsibilities, with a result of four area offices, all of which have a SE component of supervisors and a SE assistant coordinator.
- Divide one SE office into two, and three area offices into four, and house one SE office with each two area offices. Each SE office to have one coordinator and two assistant coordinators.

There is a critical need to add a second dispatch position to each transportation office to address 12+ hour per day requirements and the volume of radio and phone calls.

- The annual cost of four dispatchers is \$195,544.

Add a second T&A clerk to SE office to handle half of the 600+ weekly time sheets.

- The annual cost of one T&A clerk is \$48,886.