

Date: March 10, 2015
To: Emmanuel Caulk, Superintendent
From: Craig Worth, Deputy Chief Operations Officer
Subject: Four Tier Transportation Schedule

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The four tier bell schedule is a re-distribution of the regular Portland Public Schools (PPS) drop off and pick up schedule. The intent is to address operational needs that currently inhibit the district's ability to provide quality, equitable service to students across the district.

The transportation department has been operating on a three tier bell schedule. Over the last fifteen years, resources have decreased while operational demands have increased, causing a large gap in providing adequate service to students in need.

Additional Challenges

In 1987, the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act was passed and signed into law. This law has provisions for transportation¹. In 2000, PPS transported no homeless students to or from other districts. Currently, PPS transports students to four other districts.

The severity of the needs of the students has increased significantly, including the number of students in wheelchairs, students need for other adaptive equipment and students with life threatening medical issues that requires medical personnel with them during transportation.

Regular Transportation Currently

1. Riverton does not have enough buses in the PM, creating an extra run and loading extra students on SPED runs.
2. East End does not have enough buses in the PM, so they do double runs on one bus and triple runs on another.
3. Reiche does not have enough buses in the PM creating double runs. The last students on the second run get home at 4:45, an hour and forty five minutes after they get out of school.
4. OAES needs another run where we transport 84 students from the Oxford Street area on one bus, loading 49 students at one stop.

¹ 42 U.S.C. § 11432(g)(3) (A) [42 U.S.C. § 11432(g)(6)(A)(vii)]; [42 U.S.C. § 11432(g)(1)(J)(iii)]; y [42 U.S.C. § 11432(g)(1)(J)(iii)(II)]; [42 U.S.C. § 11432(g)(4)(A)]

5. Bayside does not have any buses. Grades 6-12 share buses with King and Deering, arriving late and departing early, transferring buses and creating long rides. Grades K-5 are transported after the other elementary runs, arriving 15-30 minutes late and departing 15-30 minutes late.
6. Longfellow does not have a bus in the PM, they ride on a SPED bus from Hall contributing to students having to ride close to 90 minutes.
7. There are not defined drop off and pick up windows, which creates inequity between the schools, and an administrative nightmare for transportation
8. Riverton and East End currently start earlier than all of the other elementary schools, which allows for 4 AM tiers on 7 buses. That extra tier in the morning provides transportation for Longfellow, Hall, Reiche and OAES. If we return to a total 3 tier schedule there will be significant issues at these schools in the AM.

Special Transportation Currently

1. In town bus rides that exceed an hour and a half
2. Students arriving to school late
3. Transferring students with special needs from one bus to another
4. Students with special needs riding different buses in the AM and PM
5. 3rd party contractors and taxis transporting students to four out of district schools, including homeless students.
6. PPS vans transporting students who could be on buses

There is a request for additional resources next year to address some of the special transportation needs. This along with the four tier schedule will provide a bus for special transportation at all elementary schools. East End, Longfellow, Lyseth, Presumpscot and, Reiche currently do not have buses for special transportation and, therefore, need to share very limited van seats.

A four tier transportation schedule will allow the organization of all regular runs in such a way that the need for double and excessive runs at all schools can be eliminate.

Explanatory Notes

Tier 1: The King bell times deviate from the other middle schools by twenty minutes due to the Casco Bay Lines schedule.

Elementary School Grouping: The elementary schools were divided based on proximity to middle schools and special education programing. The four elementary schools in tier 3 pair up well with buses that are completing their middle school runs. Three of the four elementary schools in tier 4 (Hall, Riverton & Ocean Ave) have runs doing special transportation across the city, which will require more time than is available in tier 3.