



Transportation Strategy Engagement Workshop

Centennial High School

April 7, 2016

39 Participants

Interests	# of Participants
My child takes transportation arranged by the Calgary Board of Education to get to school (yellow school bus, handybus etc.)	14
My child gets to school in another way (walks, private vehicle, public transit etc.)	17
My child attends an alternative program (language, Montessori, science, TLC) or complex needs program	13
I currently have no children in the Calgary Board of Education system	2



Centennial High School Flip Chart Summary

Travel Distance

Preserve

- Younger kids should have shorter distance to the bus stop.
- Congregated stops -> disagreement.
- Reduce unsafe street crossings (especially lower ages).
- Consistency of product.
- Advise parents about route/stops ahead of time.

Flexibility

- Distance for older kids could be longer.
- Would be willing to pay more for short travel distance (home-stop).
- CT for kids above a certain age – question about what is old enough.
- Balance between travel distance and walk time.
- Parents need to be proactive in signing up early to facilitate planning. Consider user fee for those who sign up late.
- Higher fees rather than school impact. What happens in poor weather?
- For alternative programs group the pick-up to one place for multiple communities (i.e. Bridlewood, Sommerset, Evergreen) one stop. (less money shorter bus time)

Observation

- Is Southland held accountable for being late, missing stops, not contacting schools when late ect?
- Alternative schools should be setup in schools that have low enrollment instead of schools with high enrollment.
- Consideration of the time it would take to walk to/from bus stop <-> home during winter conditions should be taken (i.e. skin freeze time at low temperatures, hypothermia->safety)
- Safety during walk over cost... Always!
- Students should be bussed to schools in the surrounding areas not completely out of their area (nearest high school, junior high)



Bus Ride Time

Preserve

- Maximum ride time of sixty minutes ideally for students each way.
- Multi school pick-ups by geography.
- Bus to nearby schools rather than school each area.

Flexibility

- Streamline.
- “Double runs” of school buses that are close together e.g. junior high and elementary schools.
- Increase ridership and decrease ride time and route time.
- User of alternative programs should expect longer bus ride times.

Observation

- Can school buses start using designated Calgary Transit lanes to shorten ride times?
- No student K-6 should be riding the school bus < 1 hour in any direction, regardless of distance to school/no. of stops.
- Proportional ride time to distance travels is important.
- Align bus top drop/pick-up for siblings in feeder schools.



Eligibility for Ridership: *No input was received for this factor.*

Bell Times

Preserve

- Two-tiered system.
- Partnered schools.

Flexibility

- Later start and finish times to avoid 'rush hours'
- Illegible for before and after school care.

Observation

- Let get the kids to school at a decent time so that parents can get to work. Especially with large walk zones, kid's not starting "middle" school till 9am is not respectful of families.
- Concerns regarding morning bell times are directly related to availability of before and after school programs. For community schools, could community buses be eliminated if before and after care programs were offered at every school when they opened. For alternative programs, could bell times be more flexible if parents had access to spots on site for care?



Number and Location of Pick-Up Stops

Preserve

- Congregated stops for efficiency.
- More than one school serviced by each bus.
- At least one stop in each community for all CBE programs offered.

Flexibility

- Spread out the location of the bus stops to control volume and safety (for many buses coming in at the same time).
- Be mindful of distance and age.
- Co-ordinate schools that are near each other (bus sharing).
- Consider pick-up stops (intermediate) on the way if not adding costs to CBE and not increasing student no's. This helps many kids to travel < 1.6kms.
- Possible consideration of bus stops within community main roads rather than main traffic St / uncontrolled intersections (safety issue).
- Allow bus driver to pick-up safe bus location for drop-off/pick-up considering safety.

Observation

- Planning/schedule committee (for Routes) should have an open mind to listen to parents who have better ideas about community routes.
- Get input from yellow bus drivers re: safety/location of bus stops (esp. in Sept/Oct after having driven route, experienced problems).
- Consideration of how many main thorough fares a student has to cross to reach their bus stop for safety. Also do main crossings have painted pedestrian lines and/or signage/flashing lights?
- Do not use 1.6km rule blindly. Sometimes <1.6km also is workable without adding to cost.
- Students from communities lacking any schools (e.g. Silverado-no public or separate options available) should be guaranteed a stop within their community, regardless of program, as they have no option but to bus.



Access to Waivers

Preserve

- Important to keep the waiver system.
- 2 tier system is needed.
- Ability to apply anytime during the year. (i.e. job loss, medical reasons)
- Information readily available of eligibility and what helps parents qualify.
- Waiver in place for parents to access since Alberta is in an economic downturn and a lot of people are laid off.

Flexibility

- Pay what you can?
- Where does the money come from those who don't pay?
- Is there a level of payment people pay if they can afford part of the fees?
- Can we offer more options on payment plans?
- Does it count for how many children are registered per family?
- Should there be a family maximum?
- Should qualifying affect riders that live within walking distance of community schools?



User Fees

Preserve

- Equal fees for alternative programs.
- Like equal opportunities for all kids.
- Preserve class sizes rather than cost of transport.

Flexibility

- Family maximum.
- Calgary Transit users should receive a subsidy.
- Cost of complex needs transport needs to be addressed.
- Tax receipt?
- Users of alternative programs should pay higher fees.
- Pay more for safe ridership and improved service.
- Put more jr. high kids on Calgary Transit and subsidize all transit users with savings.
- Special school transit pass through C-Trans for use only weekdays (cut-off time)

Low Ridership Routes: *No input was received for this factor.*

Two- or Three-Year Implementation Plan for Changes: *No input was received for this factor.*



Other

Flexibility

- Revisit ½ day kindergarten.
- Run full days – Mon/Wed/alt Fridays.
- How bussing is affected?
- Full bus/bus sized – empty
- Alternative programs pay premium for bus.
- Apply rural funding model for alternative programs.
- If all families pay into transport, let all kids use buses.
- Pay more to make up difference.
- Premium or discount for early sign-up.
- Tie cost into income?
- If rates go up, family max?
- Value for service.
- CBE – responsible for issues because they collect the fees – no ‘pass the buck’.
- 1 number for service problems.
- Shorter contact for providers? Keep them on their toes.

Observation

- Negotiate with Calgary transit if you put 7-9, 10-12 students on Calgary Transit for a lower user fee (e.g. HS) (makes city and cuts CBE expenses)
- User fees for complex learning needs is 1/3 total costs, yet provides transportation to only 1.7% of total CBE students! This is a major discrepancy! Without this component gov'n't funding more than covers costs!
- CBE, trustees and School Board members, parents and teachers of students with complex needs (e.g. handibus) need to go to media and gov'n't for increased funding of transportation for said students, not just pass on gap (\$) to other 98% CBE students.
- I think bus fees need a cap – maybe \$600/yr. Much more than that will decrease users and [Illegible] increase costs further.
- Make the bus desirable.
- \$800.00/yr to ride the yellow school bus is too much. I think that ridership would decrease in smaller distances resulting in higher traffic volume and schools.



- I have 3 younger children who I drive to school in my district because I am at the far end of the “walk zone”. (I have to walk to bussed street to take kids to school if I walked)> I pay out of pocket for my van and gas to take them to school. I do not want to pay a transportation fee on top of this, considering I don’t have access to use it.
- I would suggest a tiered system for fees. – E.g. tier 1 – designated school, or no school in community, or designated school over capacity. -> \$1/day = \$180/yr (for example) - Greater fee -> Tier 2 – choice of alternative program or diff. School over designated comm. School -> \$2/day=\$360/yr.
- Some families end up choosing an alternative program outside their community because there is no school (option) inside the community, when they other-wise wouldn’t have chosen it. In these cases, they should not be charged more than a regular program.



Public and Parents Engagement Evaluation – Centennial High School

To what extent do you agree with each of the following statements:

P1) I was encouraged to share my thoughts and/or feedback during this engagement.

31 Agree 3 Somewhat Agree 1 Somewhat Disagree 0 Disagree 0 Not Applicable

P2) I was able to ask questions and learn about the opportunity for input/feedback prior to my participation in this engagement.

25 Agree 8 Somewhat Agree 1 Somewhat Disagree 1 Disagree 0 Not Applicable

P3) I had the information I needed to participate in a meaningful way.

18 Agree 16 Somewhat Agree 1 Somewhat Disagree 0 Disagree 0 Not Applicable

P4) I was able to provide input on the best way for me to share my thoughts and ideas.

22 Agree 8 Somewhat Agree 3 Somewhat Disagree 2 Disagree 1 Not Applicable

P5) I clearly understand all of the factors being considered in the decision making process and which of these factors I can and cannot influence.

13 Agree 17 Somewhat Agree 3 Somewhat Disagree 2 Disagree 0 Not Applicable

P6) My input was documented as part of the engagement process.

26 Agree 8 Somewhat Agree 1 Somewhat Disagree 0 Disagree 0 Not Applicable



P7) What did you like most about this engagement?

- Active discussions.
- Good attendance – wide variety of needs.
- Ability to hear others point of view.
- Different parent perspectives.
- Had some questions answered by CBE Board members.
- All different perspectives.
- Opportunity to ask questions from people who can actually answer them.
- Round table discussion, hearing other perspectives.
- Good format to capture all thoughts.
- Discussion with others.
- Discussion with other parents, hearing other perspectives. I hope these perspectives are truly heard and considered.
- The information provided and the opportunity to meet others and share comments.
- Connecting with other parents was valuable and helpful. Giving input in a thoughtful process and conversation.
- Good session. All topics are well put on the tables.
- Good conversation. Nice to hear others points of view.
- Ability to talk with other parents.
- The discussion with the other parents.
- Ability to share ideas.
- Opportunity to ask questions.
- Quick, great location, well-communicated to parents.
- The ability to share my thoughts freely.
- Ability to hear other parents' experiences in other communities and at other schools.
- The decision and the ability to hear what others had to say.
- I liked that we were able to gather in groups per topic/discussion and compare opinions/input and thoughts.
- Well organized, good group size.
- Availability for questions.
- Very organized.
- Forum to brainstorm and voice thoughts while hearing other ideas.
- The chance to talk and brainstorm with many people. I liked discussing what should be kept and what should go.



P8) What did you like least about this engagement?

- Time went by too fast.
- No enough time to get to all issues.
- I kind of feel this is all smoke and mirrors. I believe the Board has already decided and this is just o that feedback was asked.
- Shortage of time for discussion. E-mail comments would be great.
- Honestly I get the sense that decisions are already mad and this is just a process for CBE to say they asked for public output.
- Looked for survey earlier, not available, sent e-mail and then given the run around.
- Don't feel people really listened; rushed to the budget and get our opinion on the table.
- Safety should not be an option.
- Lack of information on what other school boards are doing in similar circumstances.
- Short time. Descriptive on-line survey might help.
- Nothing!
- Not enough information about those things that can be changed or are outside sphere of influence.
- Cost is not reflected accurately as it doesn't include lunch time supervision fees which are paid by all bus users as well.
- Topics did not always relate to the one at the table so did not get documented.
- So many aspects to cover....hard to do, but it was informative.
- Someone else in charge of wording on paper. Lack of time – couldn't address each table.
- Electronic RSVP system discouraged many parents from attending.
- No matter how many stations, the bulk of all topics were covered rather quickly and as you make your way through stations it becomes a gab session.
- Relied on the note taking of parents. The people at CBE processing this information may not have any idea what certain points/comments mean, so those points may be lost.
- Not able to go to the areas I wanted to.
- Discussion on specific points.
- I was not able to discuss every topic/more topics.
- Location.
- Perhaps more reading material given prior to the meeting. More time to visit other tables.
- Time to contribute to all tables and discussions would be good.
- I would have liked to hit all of the tables for discussion with others.