

# DRAFT

7125

## School Bus Routing and Bus Stops

7125

- A. The Board endorses the routing strategy which is prescribed in the statutes and charges the Superintendent to designate Transportation Department staff to implement this strategy
- B. Routing strategy:
1. The Transportation Department staff is responsible for centralized bus routing.
  2. The transportation department operates a three-tiered system:
    - In the interest of operational efficiency, each driver and bus is responsible for delivering students to three schools in the morning and returning them home in the afternoon, unless precluded by the length of the run.
    - The Board of Education approves the schedule for school opening and closing times annually.
    - Operating the three-tier system saves the cost of buying more buses and hiring more drivers, because each is used to make the greatest number of runs within the time available.
  3. Buses must follow the routes as designated, unless the Transportation Operations Manager approves a change.
  4. Bus routes must follow state-maintained highways, municipal streets or other streets with publicly dedicated right-of-way, unless road conditions or other factors make this inadvisable.
  5. School bus stops will be located on divided highways only if the stop is a door-side stop or if the bus stop is at a point where pedestrian and vehicular traffic are controlled by traffic signals.
  6. Buses shall be routed to receive and discharge pupils living more than one and one-half miles from the school assigned at established stops. Refer to Policy 7105—Use of School Transportation Services.
  7. The Board endorses keeping student ride time to a minimum. Ride time goals are listed in R&P 7125.
- C. Number of students on buses:
1. Student capacity limits are displayed inside each bus. Refer to R&P 7125 for a summary of school bus capacities.
  2. Band instruments, projects, and other objects cannot take up pupil seating space or block the aisle.
- D. Establishment of bus routes and bus stops:
1. Bus stops are placed no closer than two-tenths of a mile apart, unless safety hazards exist.
  2. In the interests of safety and efficiency, buses will in general be routed on main thoroughfares, and buses will not be routed off of those thoroughfares for distances less than one-half mile, except for groups of ten or more students or for students with disabilities.
  3. Buses are generally prohibited from traveling into cul-de-sacs.
  4. Generally, bus stops are placed on corners.

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5. State statute requires that a bus will pass within one mile of eligible students' residences; however, the Board establishes reduced maximum walking distances to bus stops for students as follows:
    - Elementary students -- three-tenths of a mile
    - Middle School students -- five-tenths of a mile
    - High School students -- five-tenths of a mile
    - Distances to express bus stops may exceed these maximums.
  6. The presence of factors that may endanger the safety of students will be considered when the location of stops is designated. Refer to R&P 7125.
- E. Process for requesting changes to bus stop locations:
1. Parents/guardians who are seeking a change to the location of the bus stop may request a change by completing a Transportation Service Request Form. Refer to R&P 7125.
  2. If the request is denied, the parent may seek review of the decision in accordance with Policy 6520, Student Grievances.
- F. Assignment to buses:
1. Students may ride only the bus to which they are assigned. However, parents/guardians may request a one-time exception by submitting a written request to the principal or designee. The Superintendent will provide procedures in R&P 7125.
  2. In order to assure safety of and accountability for students, they will be dropped-off in the afternoon at the same stop where they were picked-up in the morning. Exceptions are addressed in the section "Service to or from Before and After School Care Providers".
- G. Service to or from Before and After School Care Providers may be provided when specific criteria are met. The Superintendent will identify the criteria in R&P 7125.
- H. Express buses:
1. The purpose of express bus stops and express bus routes is to reduce the ride time on longer routes by consolidating stops into as few as possible. Adding "local" stops to these routes has the effect of increasing ride time.
  2. Express bus stops are designed for students to be dropped off and picked up by parents at designated "express" bus stops.
  3. Each morning, parents are expected to accompany students to the bus stop approximately 10 minutes prior to the scheduled pickup time and wait with the students until students are safely on the bus.
  4. In the afternoon, parents are expected to be at the bus stop 10 minutes prior to the scheduled arrival time, awaiting afternoon bus arrival, and to remain at the bus stop until all students have exited the bus.

Legal References: G.S. 115C-241, 242, 244, 246  
Adopted: \_\_\_\_\_

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- A. The following goals are established to keep student ride time to a minimum.
1. Less than forty-five (45) minutes one-way ride time should be expected for most students.
  2. Goals for maximum one-way ride times:
    - Base Elementary Students - One hour and 15 minutes
    - Base Secondary Students - One hour and 30 minutes
    - Magnet and calendar option Students - Thirty (30) minutes in addition to the above times.
- B. Number of students on buses: students are assigned based upon the following load limits:

Bus Load Limits				
Bus Size # of seats	# students Elementary	# students Middle	# students High	# students Middle & High
12	36	30	24	24
16	48	40	32	32
18	54	45	36	36
20	60	50	40	40
22	66	55	44	44
24	72	60	48	48
26	78	65	52	52

- C. Requesting changes to bus stop locations:
1. Parents/guardians who are seeking a change to the location of the bus stop assigned to their children, shall submit a request for change by completing a Transportation Service Request Form to the Transportation Operations Manager.
  2. The appeal should state clearly the action which is desired and justification for the requests.
  3. After receiving an appeal concerning a stop, the Transportation Operations Manager may:
    - Let the original decision stand with respect to the establishment of a stop, or
    - Make a change in accordance with state law or the established rules and regulations of the State Board of Education.
  4. The response to the request shall be provided to the requestor in writing within two weeks of the date of receipt, with answers clearly stated and fully explained. A copy will be provided to the principal.
  5. If the request is denied, the parent may seek review of the decision in accordance with Policy 6520, Student Grievances.

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- D. Requesting one-time permission to ride a different bus home:
1. Parents/guardians must submit a written request to the school principal or designee providing date, specific destination, reason for the request, and identification of person who will receive student at the destination.
  2. The principal or designee will verify the request by contacting the requester, and determine whether the request should be approved.
  3. If approved, the principal will verify that space is available on the bus and provide written notification to the bus driver.
- E. Requesting service to or from before or after school care providers:
1. General transportation: Service to or from before or after school care providers for the duration of the school year may be provided when all of the following criteria are met:
    - Approval of a request to transport the student to a before or after school care provider will be for the school year, and not for one-time use;
    - The provider must be located in the base attendance or application draw area of the student's school;
    - Seating space must be available on the bus;
    - Provider must be located along an existing established school bus run and an existing stop must be used;
    - Must be of no additional cost;
    - Must not be in the designated walk zone;
    - Buses cannot enter day care or after school care center property, which is considered private property;
  2. Exceptional children: service to or from before or after school care providers for the duration of the school year may be provided when all of the following criteria are met:
    - Approval of a request to transport the student to a before or after school care provider will be for the school year, and not for one-time use;
    - The provider must be located in the base attendance or application draw area of the student's school, or the schools serving the area in which the student resides.
    - Seating space must be available on the vehicle;
    - Must be of no additional cost;
    - If the provider is a day care or after school care center, staff must be present to load/unload students;
    - Buses/vehicles cannot enter daycare or after school care center property, which is considered private property.
  3. Requesting service:
    - Parents/guardians may request service to before or after school care providers using Transportation Service Request Form.
    - Each request will be considered according to the criteria listed above, and the parent/guardian will be notified of the decision in writing. A copy will be provided to the principal.

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- If the request is denied, the parent may seek review of the decision in accordance with Policy 6520, Student Grievances.

F. Criteria for determining safe bus stops:

1. Transportation Department will staff consider the following criteria—not necessarily in priority order—when determining the location of bus stops:
  - Adequate lighting
  - Students' pathway to the bus stop
  - Stop is not isolated by its surroundings (visibility from nearby residences, etc.)
  - Availability of space for multiple students to wait
  - Approaching motorists' view of the bus stop and the stopped bus
  - Street traffic patterns --curves, blind spots, etc.
  - Street or highway traffic volume and speed
  - Available space for bus to safely stop and/or turn around
2. Transportation Department staff will drive the affected bus route and/or visit the bus stop in order to obtain full information about requests for change.

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