

Calgary Board of Education School Transportation Survey

Report of Findings
April 19, 2016

Prepared by:



DELANEY + ASSOCIATES



**Calgary Board
of Education**

Background

- ❖ As part of the transportation strategy development, the CBE contracted Delaney + Associates to be its partner to help engage all stakeholders in its decision-making.
- ❖ The process is to work directly with parents, students, staff and other stakeholders in order to ensure a safe, reliable and cost-efficient program.
 - ❖ Specifically, the expected 2016-17 budget gap must be closed.
- ❖ This report shows the results of an online survey conducted with stakeholders (parents, CBE employees, students and other interested parties) that was undertaken as part of this community engagement project.

Methodology

- ❖ The online survey was open to the public and accessible through a link on the CBE website as well as on its Transportation Strategy Facebook page.
- ❖ The survey was fielded between April 6 and 17, 2016.
- ❖ A total of 1821 respondents started the survey, with approximately 1600 completes.

❖ In reading this report, please note that some results may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

About the Participants

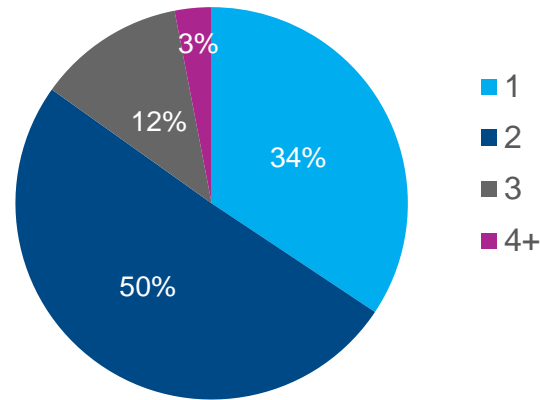
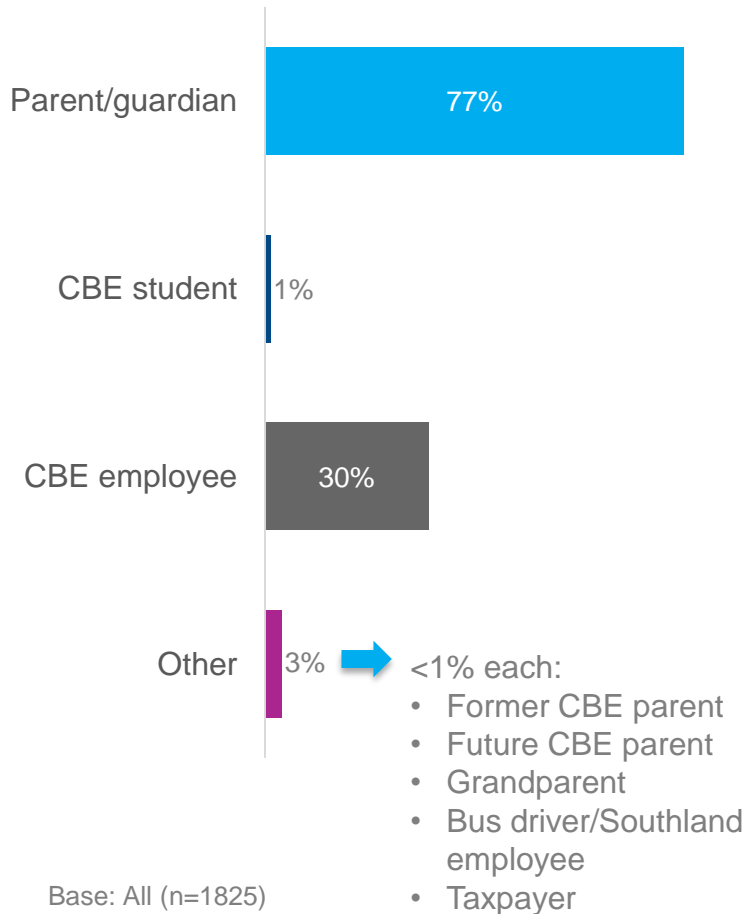
About the Participants - Summary

- ❖ Three quarters of respondents (or 1,407) were parents/guardians of children in CBE schools; a sizable group of CBE employees was also represented (552).
 - ❖ The remainder were a mix of students, bus drivers, parents of pre-schoolers (“future parents”), parents of children no longer in a CBE school (“former parents”) grandparents and other interested parties (“taxpayers”).
- ❖ On average, each responding parent had 1.8 children in a CBE school.
- ❖ Parents of elementary school children were the most represented group at two-thirds of respondents, followed by those of middle/junior high children (just over half);
 - ❖ Only one in five responding parents had children in senior high school.
 - ❖ Respondents chose all categories that applied.
- ❖ Parents with children in a regular program made up 48% of respondents, 47% were parents with children in an alternative program and roughly 5% were parents with children in a complex needs or unique setting program.
- ❖ Half of the children use the yellow school bus as their main mode of transportation;
 - ❖ One in five gets driven in a private vehicle while the same percentage roughly the same number of students walk.

Respondent Profile

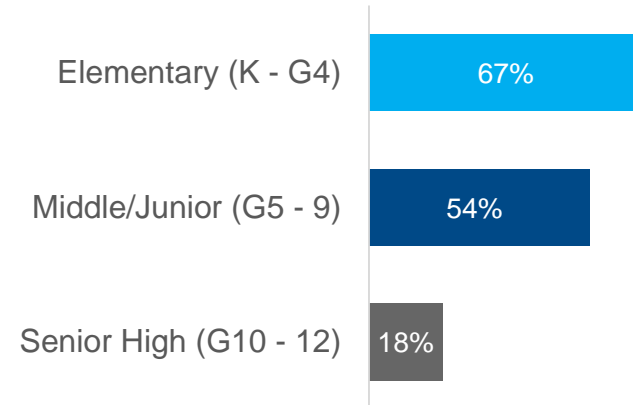
Are you a...[Select all that apply]

Number of children in a CBE school:



Representing:
 • 1376 parents
 • 2510 children

Grades of children:

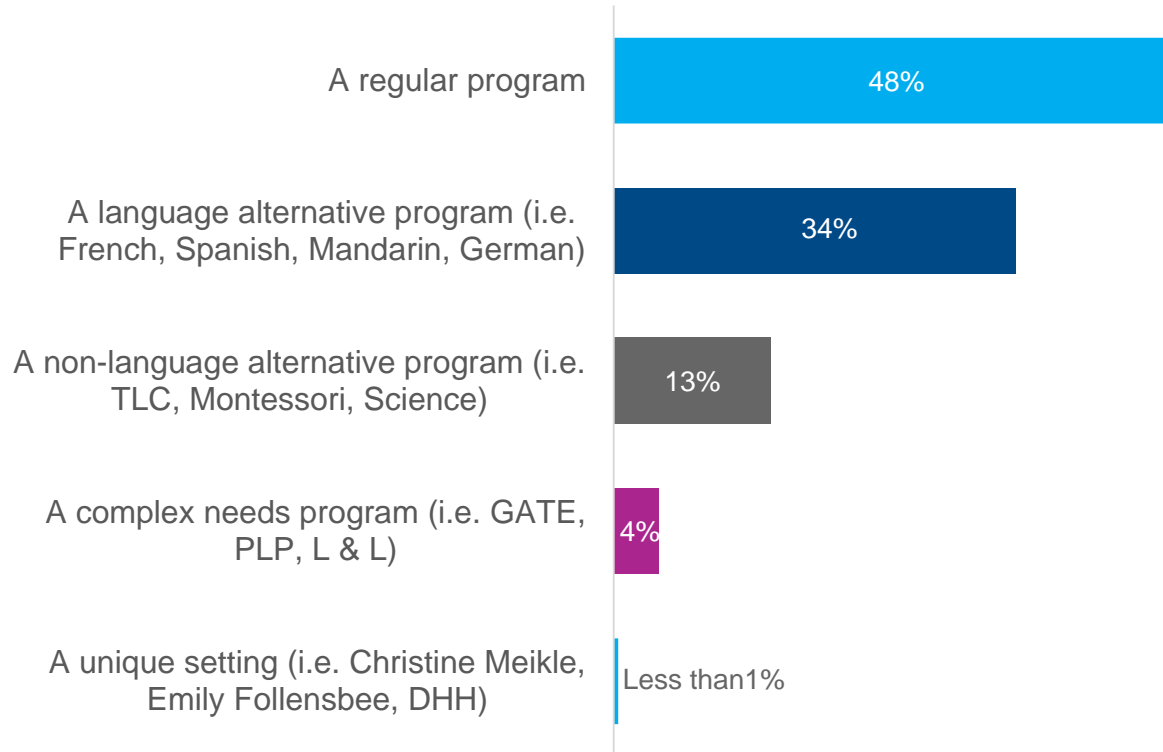


Base: All (n=1825)

Base: Parents (valid n=1376)

Programs

Children in the following programs:



Base: Parents (valid responses = 1521)

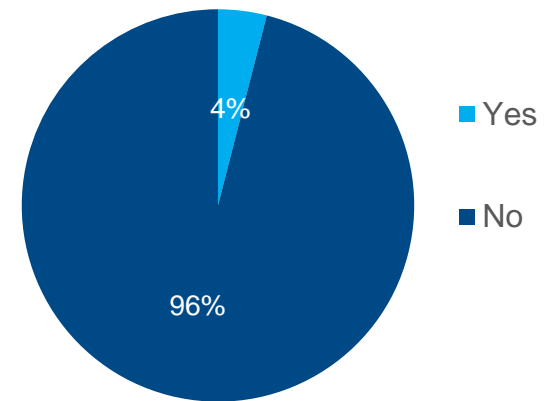
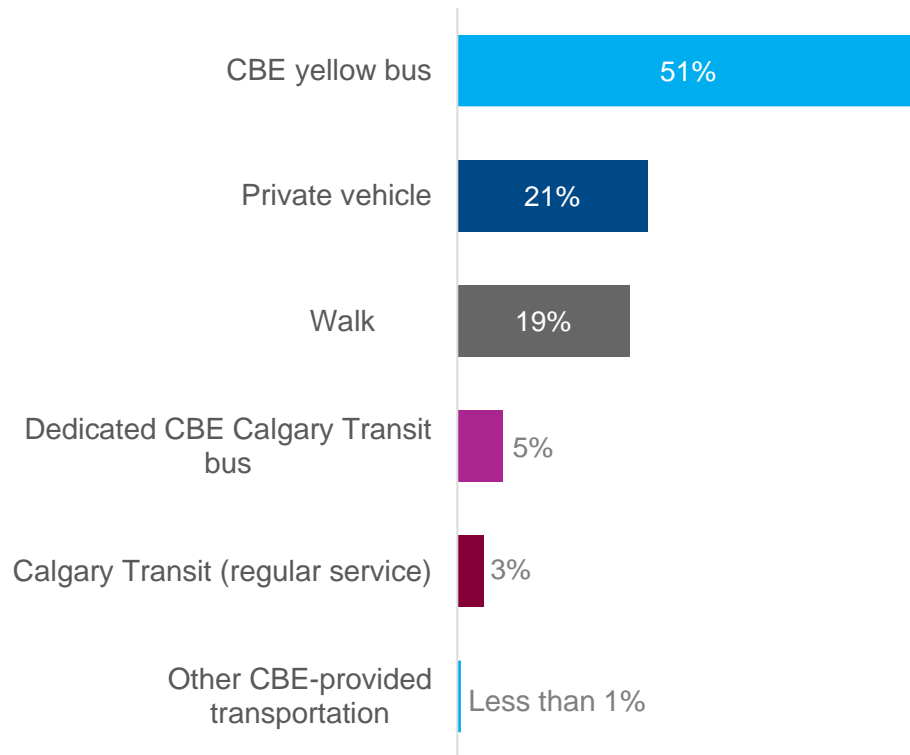


Current School Transportation

Please tell us how your child(ren) currently get(s) to and from school on a typical school day:

Do any of your children have identified complex learning needs that require support for transportation?

% of CHILDREN:



Base: Parents (valid n=1366 ; 2513 children)

Base: Parents (valid n=1344)



Values

The Calgary Board of Education is committed to student transportation that supports student success and is: safe, efficient and cost-effective.

What other values or principles would you add to this list?



Base: All (valid n=799)

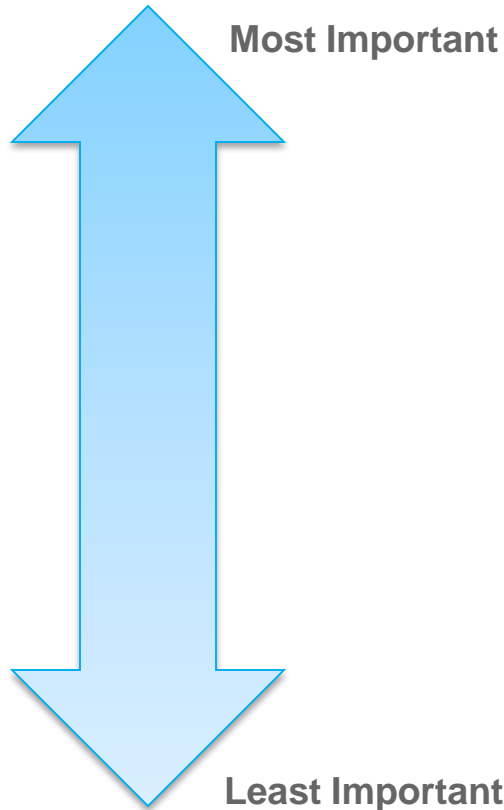


Main Findings

Main Findings - Summary

Factor:	Respondents Say:
Service Levels and Fees	The majority (two-thirds) support a fee increase if that would be required in order to maintain or increase service levels.
User Fees and Programs	Respondents were split as to whether fees should be different or the same regardless of program.
Taking Transit	Most (six in ten) feel that by Grade 9, it would be appropriate for students to take Calgary Transit to school; Support is nearly universal (nine in ten) by Grade 10
Bell Times	Many (six in ten) are open to changing their schedules by half an hour or less if adjusted bell times would help to reduce transportation costs, with only a handful indicating they are not willing to change. However, if asked to change their routines by up to an hour, opposition outweighs willingness to change.
Walking Distance to Bus Stop	More than half feel that the current maximum distance to the bus stop is appropriate (or could be expanded) for those in middle/junior and senior high (1.8 km and 2.4 km, respectively). However, when asked about the current 1.6 km walking distance for elementary students, a small majority feels this is too far.
Bus Ride Times	While most feel that half an hour one-way on a bus for elementary students is long enough, many feel that for older students, up to 45 minutes would be appropriate.
Number and Location of Bus Stops	In a case of a trade-off, a majority (six in ten) would prefer shorter walking distance to the bus stop even if it means a longer ride to and from school.

Decision Factors - Summary

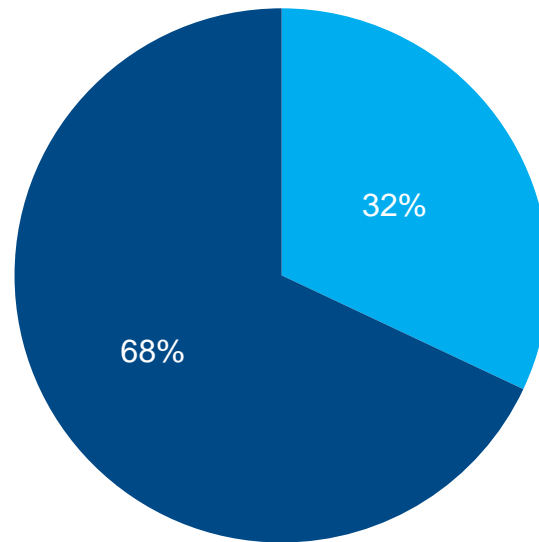


- ❖ Distance to bus stop
- ❖ Bus ride time
- ❖ Number and location of bus stops
- ❖ User fees
- ❖ Waiving fees
- ❖ School bell time
- ❖ Low ridership routes

Service Levels and Fees

Service levels (travel distances, number and location of bus stops, bus ride times, etc.) affect costs and costs affect fees.

Which of the following is your preferred option:



- I would prefer lower levels of service to keep fees as low as possible
- I would prefer to maintain or improve service levels even if that means fees may increase

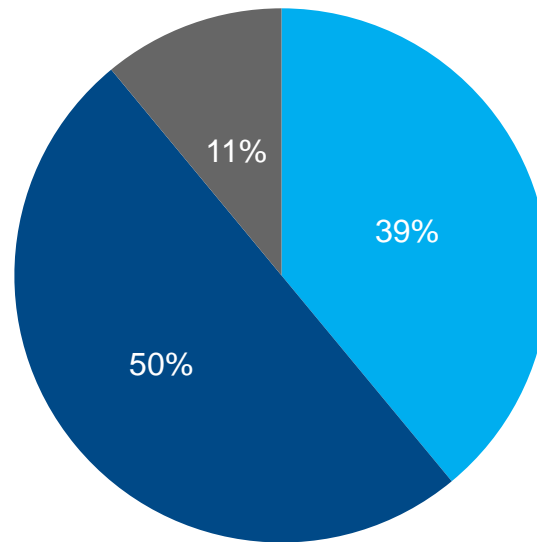
Base: All (valid n=1584)



User Fees and Programs

The CBE averages the total cost of yellow bus transportation across all students taking the bus, regardless of the program they attend or the distance travelled to school. However, there is a higher average cost to transport students on yellow buses to alternative programs such as language, Traditional Learning Centre or Montessori programs.

Which of the following is your preferred option:



- All students should pay the same transportation fees regardless of the program they attend. This means students in alternative programs pay the same amount as students in regular programs.
- Students registered in alternative programs should pay a different transportation fee than those in a regular program to reflect the higher overall cost of transportation to these programs
- Another option should be considered

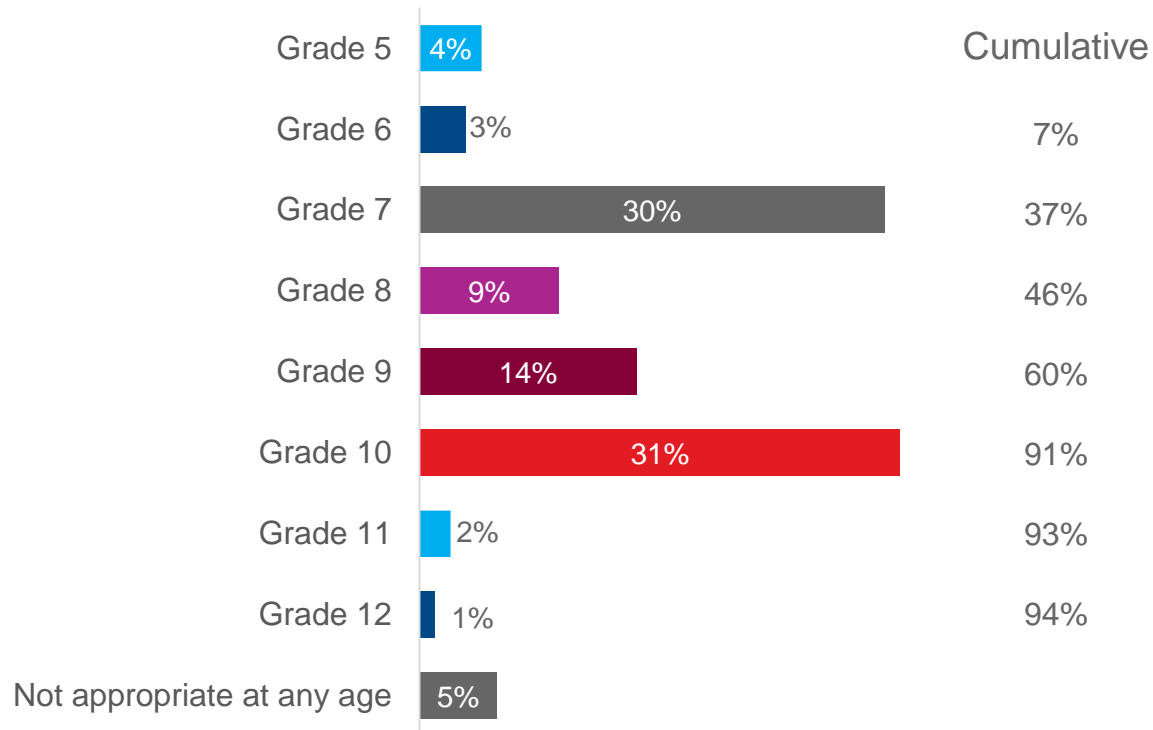
Base: All (valid n=1628)



Taking Calgary Transit

We understand there are varying views within the CBE community about what grade level or age is appropriate for students to begin taking regular Calgary Transit (public buses and the C-Train) to school.

Please indicate the grade level you feel is most appropriate for students to start taking Calgary Transit to/from school.



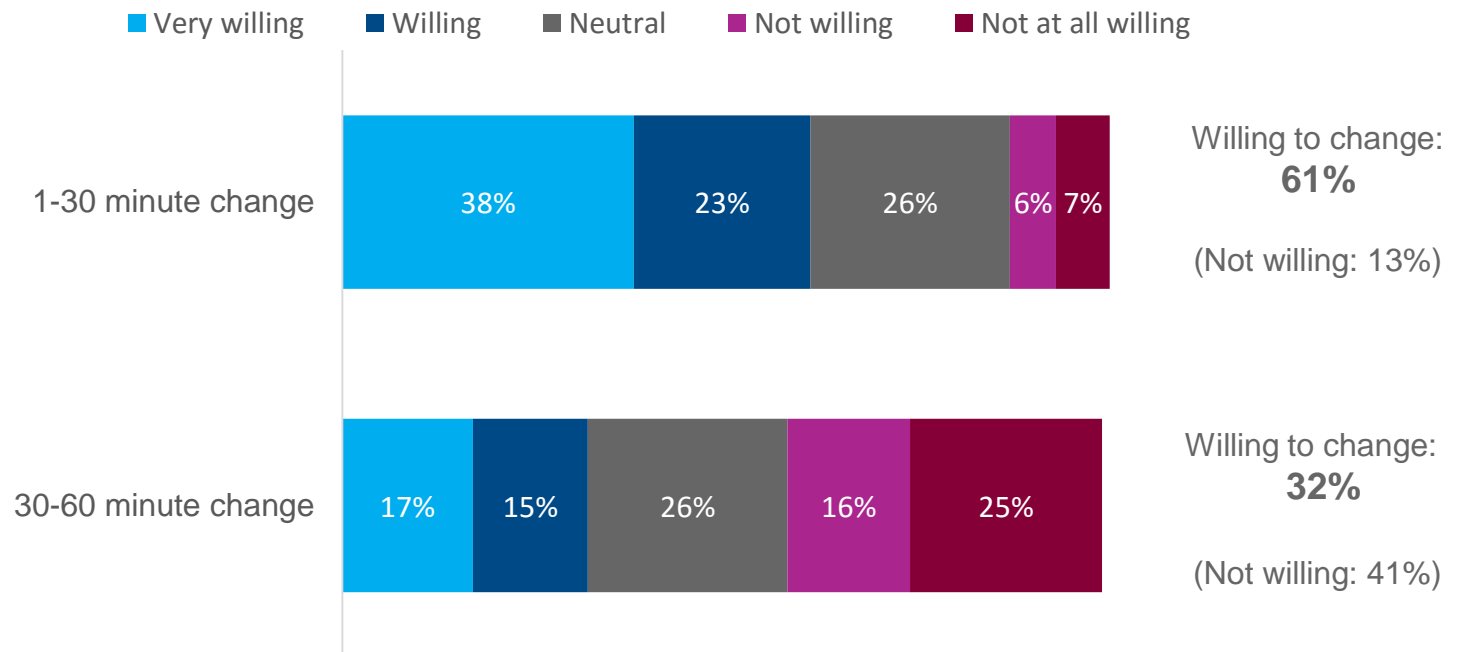
Base: All (valid n=1630)



Changing Bell Times

The CBE recently hired industry experts to review the efficiency of its transportation services. These experts suggest that adjusting bell (start and dismissal) times can potentially lead to cost savings. Currently, the CBE does partner many routes and coordinate bell times across multiple schools.

On a scale of 1-5, how willing would you be to consider adjusting your family schedule so that bell times can be coordinated to reduce transportation costs?



Base: All (valid n=1584; 1423)



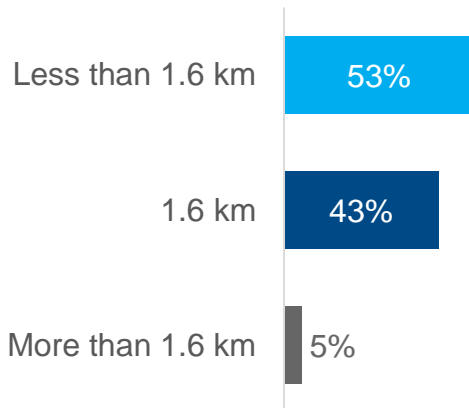
Walking Distance to Bus Stop

We know that some students travel to the bus stop by walking and others are driven. Safety of our students is a shared responsibility; the CBE is responsible for providing safe reliable transportation and parents are responsible for providing supervision and transportation to and from the school bus stop. The CBE has a Transportation Advisory Committee comprised of CBE staff, parents and school administrators who meet to establish walk zones for our schools. The guidelines that are created through the work of this group are also used to establish travel distances to a bus stop, as measured by the distance from a student's home via pathways and sidewalks to a bus stop.

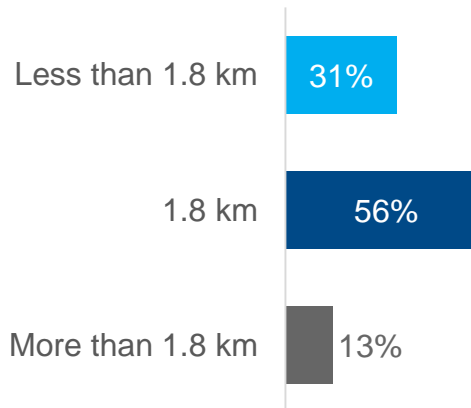
The current maximum travel distances are 1.6 km for elementary students, 1.8 km for middle/junior high students and 2.4 km for senior high students.

For each of the following categories please select the travel distance you feel is most appropriate for that age group.

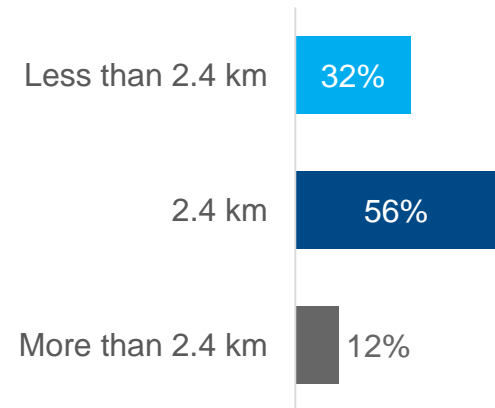
Elementary:



Middle/Junior:



Senior High:

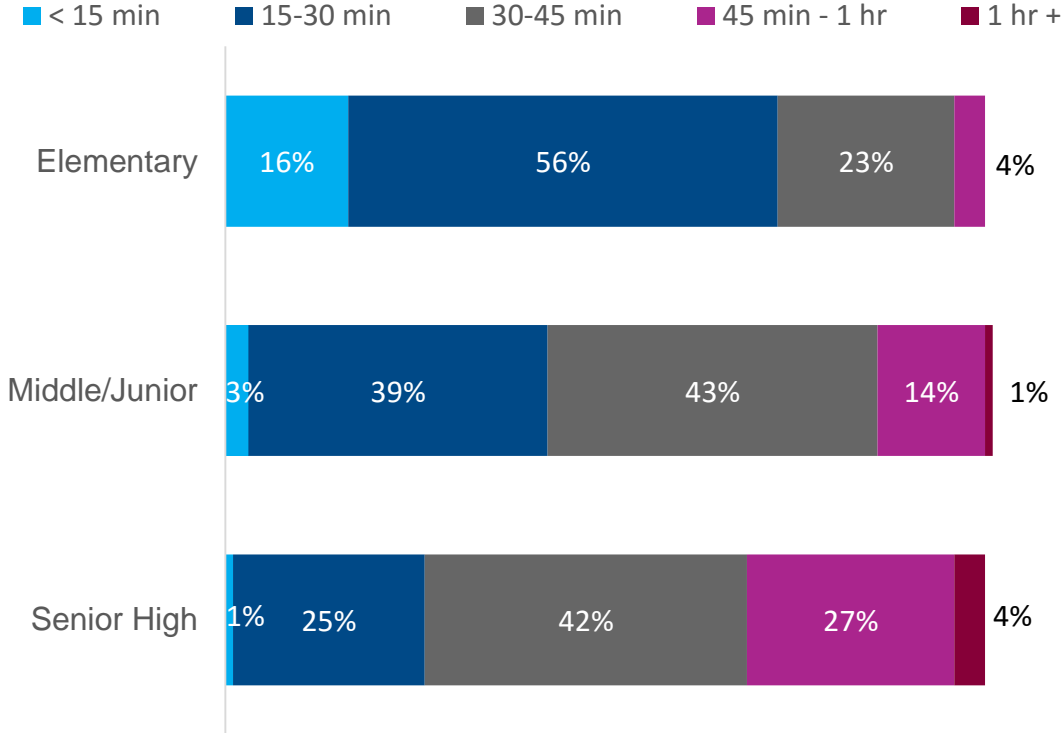


Base: All (valid n=1625; 1620; 1614)



Bus Ride Times

What do you believe is a maximum acceptable ride time for students (one-way ride time) for each of the following grades?

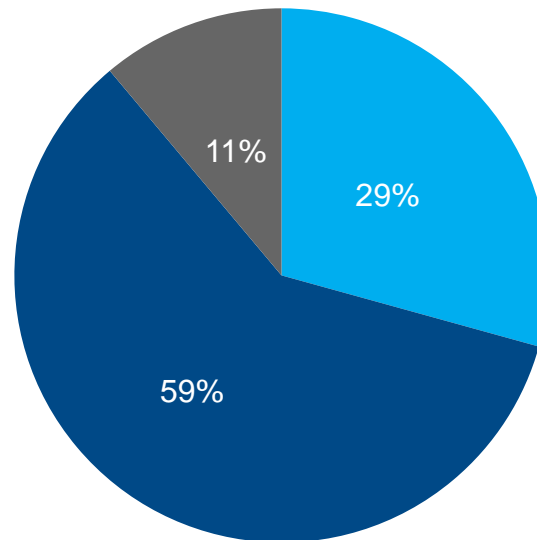


Base: All (valid n=1603; 1597; 1572)

Number and Location of Bus Stops

The number and location of bus stops impacts ride times for students.

Which of the following is your preferred option:



- I would prefer fewer bus stops to ensure a shorter ride time, even if that means that students have to travel further from their home to and from their bus stop
- I prefer bus stops close to home even if that means students spend more time on the bus
- Another option should be considered

Base: All (valid n=1583)

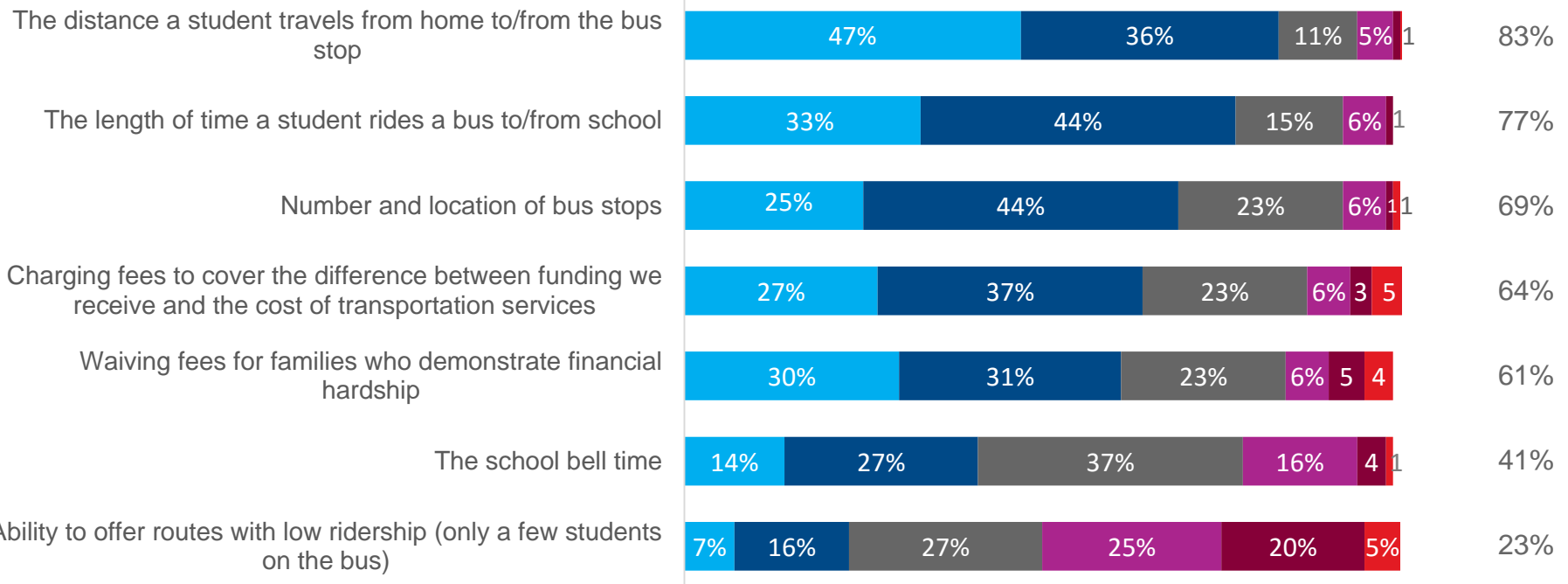


Importance of Factors

Now that you have had a chance to consider the various factors affecting transportation service levels and costs, we want to understand which aspects of transportation are most important to you.

Please rate how important you think it is for the CBE to consider each of the following factors in decision-making on a scale of 1-5, where 1 is not at all important and 5 is very important.

■ Very important
 ■ Important
 ■ Neutral
 ■ Not very important
 ■ Not at all important
 ■ DK/PNTS
 % important



Base: All (valid n= between 1581 - 1593)