



Transportation Strategy Engagement Workshop

William Aberhart High School

April 12, 2016

41 Participants

Interests	# of Participants
My child takes transportation arranged by the Calgary Board of Education to get to school (yellow school bus, handybus etc.)	18
My child gets to school in another way (walks, private vehicle, public transit etc.)	20
My child attends an alternate program (language, Montessori, science, TLC) or complex needs program	29
I currently have no children in the Calgary Board of Education system	0



William Aberhart High School Flip Chart Summary

Travel Distance

Preserve

- It is reasonable for travel distance to vary depending upon the age of the student.
- Walk distance should stay the same regardless of school program.
- Do not feel that I should have to pay more because I am at an alternative (language) school.
- K-6 travel distance to yellow school bus at 1.6km.
- Walk distance should stay the same regardless of school program.
- Walk distance should be age appropriate.
- Alternative programs should be provided where the demand is geographical.
- CBE made decisions to (repurpose) use inner city/underutilized schools with alternative programs; therefore they need to transport kids to these schools. They are saving in infrastructure cost savings by repurposing these schools.
- Reduce K6 to 500m walk based on number of kids in community.
- Explore opportunities to share busing with CCSD/other districts.
- Look at what other school districts are doing (within AB + beyond).

Flexibility

- Why would you pilot ZONAR in a year that we are expensing a budget gap??
- Travel distance should be a door service (walk to the stop should be fractioned in to the travel distance. i.e.: walk 1.6km for a kindy approx. 40min + bus ride). Walk time plus travel time should be factored.
- Walk distance should stay the same regardless of school program.
- Walk distance should be age appropriate.
- Willing to pay more for less walking distance.
- Willing to pay more because I send my child to an alternate program.
- Travel time should include the walk time to the stop and bus time and walk time from stop to school (e.g. when student is on transit and stop is not right at school).
- Not willing to pay more because my child attends alternative program, especially since my child would ride a bus to their designated regular program.
- Expand the community walk zone to lower number being bussed close.

Observation

- Not flexible on safety of walk.
- Do not have to cross street with speed limit over 50km/hr.



Bus Ride Time

Preserve

- 1 hour maximum commute time.
- Keep average ride time at 34 minutes or less!
- 45 minute max time.

Flexibility

- Pay a higher fee, within reason, to reduce ride times.
- Number of stops – balance to keep within 30min ride time.
- Full day kindergarten on alternate days to reduce need for midday busing.
- 45 minute maximum time.
- Route time should be less for those that live close.
- Use GPS System.



Eligibility for Ridership

Preserve

- K-6 on yellow bus.
- All programs offered by CBE should be eligible for yellow bus (K-6).
- Preserve Elementary and Jr. High bus partnering that currently exists.
- Middle school and Jr. High buses where currently are be preserved.

Flexibility

- Bring back Transit subsidy for 7-12 riding city transit. -> must arrange express transit routes.
- Gr. 7-12 all use Transit (walk with Calgary Transit to improve Transit routes).
- Flexibility to limit accessibility to alternate programs outside of zone (bussing only provided to alternative programs within 'designated zone') – (i.e. if parents close an alternative program across the city, they are responsible to transport child)
- Consider allowing 'daycare' or 'childcare' address be used for eligibility instead of only home address.
- Can CBE and Calgary Catholic combine resources/bussing?
- Decrease travel distance to qualify (1.6->12).
- Have a bus perimeter which limits distance that bus would be provided; outside of that you would drive.
- Yellow bus service to school/alternative programs that are economically viable -> i.e. if 40 students come from 1 community same school is not viable; therefore they don't get bussing -> not all kids in the same school/program/community would not necessarily get the same service.

Observation

- Still unsure bussing to alternative programs from all communities.
- Conditional riders don't exist anymore -> they existed more to cover cost of lunch room. If you fix route then allow anyone to ride if they get to the stop.



Bell Times

Preserve

- Reasonable time (i.e. 9:30am is too late).
- Bell times aligned within geographical areas to make it easier on families with kids in multiple schools.
- Preserve partnerships that are in place and working efficiently (coordinating and sharing between 2 schools)
- Change what is not working.
- It's a great strategy, especially when elementary is earlier than junior high school.

Flexibility

- Moving bus times to allow sharing with multiple schools.
- Perhaps high school starts later and families with older kids can help get younger kids on bus.
- Marry buses with other boards where it is appropriate. i.e. Catholic vs. Public ->example Northmount Drive.
- Maybe school times need to be changed to ensure buses arrive for start time.
- Hard for families to rely on older kids to look after younger kids.
- Hard for parents and work when start time change each year.

Observation

- Consider sharing buses and routes between CBE and Catholic School Boards – especially on low ridership routes.
- It would be feasible to “marry” schools by having kids from one neighbourhood share buses (yellow or designated transit) heading in the same direction. This would require coordinated bell times. (i.e. Edgemont kids going to SPB could share a bus with kids going to TLC at Brentwood)



Number and Location of Pick-Up Stops

Preserve

- Reduce the travel distance to bus stop and equitable for all students (K-6).
- 500 meters distance.
- Junior-high designated public transit (single route/bus); not bus transfer.
- Safety.

Flexibility

- Willing to pay more.
- Alternative programs parents are willing to pay some (reasonable amount more).
- No fee cap (for additional fees).
- No flexibility on safe stop location.
- Consider day-home - daycare stop locations if possible – other locations.
- Look at multiple solutions to alternative programs.
- Consider using community venue parking lots as drop-off-pick-ups.

Observation

- Designated bus stops at City Transit stops.
- Bus stops for day-homes.
- Bus stops not on high speed roadways.
- Schools of choice/alternative programs should pay more for busing than children who go to their designated school.
- Designated City Transit buses for Junior High/High School.
- Congregated Alternative Schools in each quadrant of the city.
- When complaints on bus stops from a residence - CBE contacts to school - school contact – bus stop parents to find a resolution.
- Complaints on parents parked in bus zones take more seriously (police ticketing) but no loss of bus stop. Parents need to understand legally that stopping in bus zones, double parking is not allowed.
- Cancel separate Boards make one board.
- GPS systems should be used with phone Apps for parents. Indication where buses are.
- As a parent of 3 (and eventually 4) children in alternative programs (language) I am not willing to pay more for bussing. These are public programs and therefore bus fees should make them programs only accessible to those who are financially well off.



Access to Waivers

Preserve

- Maintain access to waivers for family need.
- Need to consider the families who don't qualify for their cards (live on line).

Flexibility

- Reconsider CT subsidy rebate.
- Make sure those getting fees waived are actually those in need to and not ones that just don't want to pay.



User Fees

Preserve

- Fees remain the same for (alternative) speciality programs or local designated school.
- Cannot increase substantially. Too much increase = more waivers, more people driving, more pressure on some high-registration schools.
- Fees need to be reasonable for families with 3 or more.
- Fees should remain the same for all programs.

Flexibility

- Transit vs. yellow bus: all kids accessing public school transportation should have similar to equal transport fees \$300 vs. \$650
- Increase fees over time, in small increments
- Different fees for single site schools.
- One bus from a neighbourhood could stop at many schools.
- Different (higher) cost for alternative program? Cost per km?
- Multiple child discount i.e. sibling rate -> 1st child = \$ - 2nd child = 10% less – 3rd child = 15% less.
- Fees can be increased gradually but for all programs.
- Bring back transit subsidy.
- Include junior high also (Gr. 7-12).

Observation

- Please remember that the community school for my family is also considered an alternative program to the CBE. VAS is only 500m from our home.
- I chose a smaller sized family for a reason. More children does cost more.



Low Ridership Routes

Preserve

- We have to continue getting students to their schools/programs.
- Keep non-congregated stops to ensure travel distance (walk distance to bus stops) remains the same.
- Do not force younger children to take city transit to school if it requires multiple transfers. They are unable to problem solve issues (i.e. bus does not arrive due to weather problems) on their own.
- Consider safety concerns with respect to bus stops (i.e. unsafe to assume walking to the bus through an unlit/unshovelled ravine pathway inhabited by coyotes is okay). Also consider parking for drop-offs.

Flexibility

- Options other than yellow bus ->transit -> taxis if numbers low enough.
- Consolidate student population so more students go on one bus to same school.
- Considering increasing eligibility envelopes -> shrink walk zone or allow more conditional ridership. -> Add community stops along a route to add students to bus.
- Get smaller busses.
- Early access to school before classes, and after school supervision, to allow the parents to drive the kids to, and from school.
- Willing to pay extra fees, reasonably.
- Perhaps, have parent volunteers to assist with supervision before and after school.
- Examining low bus routes in some areas to combine ridership with multi school drop off.



Two- or Three-Year Implementation Plan for Changes

Preserve

- Fees.
- Consider price elasticity -> changes need to be phased in over time.
- It is too quick – you will have people making other choices which will create a domino effect or other problems increasing enrollment in over enrolled schools.
- Increase in number of people driving which will decrease what you get in total user fees.
- Parents need to be informed of pricing changes in advance of timing for other choices. (i.e. application times for public/charter schools.)

Flexible

- Being flexible.
- May be gradual.
- We should ask yellow bus riders to meet the city bus riders fees then add after that “ouch” but the gap is a reality.
- People might have flexibility in start times etc. But need advance notice i.e. 6 months to adjust , day home, work start, etc.



Other

Preserve

- Is the question really transportation – or is the question that CBE got into the business of specialty schools – which should have been left to private or charter schools. This waters down resources throughout the system – transportation other resources. While my specialty program is public – I want public fees. Do not make a 2-tie public system.
- Should the CBE have a seat at Planning Commission – because many of the decisions here have implications in the long and short term for CBE. Need to be at this table.
- Safety
- I am flexible (to some extent) on walk distance but not on safety. Same safety parameters should be established. i.e. Not required to cross 6 lanes of traffic. – Not required to cross a street with speed limit over 60. – Not to have stop located by a known stop for pedestrian car fatalities.
- Sidewalks to the bus stop.
- Safety assurance for children with disabilities (blind) when bus drivers change how this being communicated about its riders is and ensuring safety.
- Idea: tiered system depending on distance from school - 10km pay more an/or ride time expected to be higher. No more postage stamp treatment.
- Idea: Lobby gov't for additional funding for transportation based on kids using busing.
- Preserve varsity acres route A & Branton Route I. We are happy with stops (safe) and length of ride and the general coordination between the schools.
- There already is disparity between communities within a school and between schools. Look at the economic viability of each bus, not one size fits all according to program or age.
- Routes that break even should be maintained.
- Routes that aren't breaking even due to low ridership/distance... should be considered on case by case basis. Look at the routes not the programs.

Flexibility

- Where is the buy in to take the bus?
- Bussing and fees.
- If you choose to drive when you are eligible for bus there should still be a fee you pay.
- Congestion at schools by cars could be reduced by busses only.
- Pick-up for after school programming yes but I don't understand why not more people taking the bus.
- Late birthday = 11 year old female.
- On city transit + cell phone = \$65 + \$30 = per month.



- Cell phone made her mom feel better regarding her safety on city bus with strangers.
- Busing in tandem with the Catholic schools.
- Funding package from developers to support busing until Province builds a school in neighbourhood.
- One board – get rid of Both CBE and Catholic Schools.
- Cancel schools of choice.
- No taking of children from other areas.
- Look at all day kindergarten options.
- Have kindergarten possibly vary times (omit midday).
- Take a look at extending the walk zone of each school. It would be great to have an idea of the savings from an 1800m/2000m/2200m walk zone.
- Safety – lack of marked crossing walks what are you doing to implement lights of cross walks near bus stops (my child is blind).

Observation

- We are very pleased with our current transportation. Tuscany bus B (kinder bus 4) to W.O. Mitchell. Thank-you!
- What is missing from analysis is not cost/rider but cost/km -> then the proper bread even analysis can be made.
- Language schools should not be considered. Alternative programs.



Public and Parents Engagement Evaluation – William Aberhart 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.

27 Agree 5 Somewhat Agree 0 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.

15 Agree 9 Somewhat Agree 2 Somewhat Disagree 2 Disagree 3 Not Applicable

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

11 Agree 16 Somewhat Agree 3 Somewhat Disagree 1 Disagree 0 Not Applicable

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

12 Agree 15 Somewhat Agree 5 Somewhat Disagree 0 Disagree 0 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.

11 Agree 12 Somewhat Agree 1 Somewhat Disagree 0 Disagree 0 Not Applicable

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

20 Agree 11 Somewhat Agree 1 Somewhat Disagree 0 Disagree 0 Not Applicable



P7) What did you like most about this engagement?

- Great information from the staff present! Thank you. Best information available.
- The tone and available personnel to aid in the discussion.
- To learn that other parents had the same concerns as me. The opportunity to speak up.
- Interactive table discussions.
- The ability to voice my opinions.
- Group discussion.
- Listening to other points of view.
- Lots of different options for discussion.
- That it was happening.
- Lots of school location.
- Discussion with groups of parents with various degrees of use of the bus transportation situation.
- Discussion.
- The openness and up front attitude from CBE and transportation.
- CBE representatives available and open to discuss. Constructive dialogue and Q&A's.
- You are engaging parents in the process. How much you "listen" remains to be seen?
- Chance to talk to decision makers.
- The opportunity to provide my opinions.
- Chatting with like minded parents about common values and concerns.
- The chance to get other opinions.
- Organization of topics and the creation of an "other" catch all area.
- Having CBE staff available to ask questions and get clarification.
- Well organized. I liked how each table addressed unique issues.
- Rotating locations.
- That you actually encouraged parents to be involved to give our feedback suggestions, comments.
- Like how you will be having summary online.
- That all parents with different needs are able to come together and have a dialogue.



P8) What did you like least about this engagement?

- No downside.
- Not enough time to discuss.
- Not long enough.
- N/A.
- Too much gray area.
- There was a specific Reg/alternative program split that I feel is wrong. CBE needs to consider what the definition of an “alternative” program should be. Language schools should not be an alternative program.
- Not a sheet for those safety concerns. Children with disabilities.
- Cap on amount of parents who could register on-line.
- N/A.
- Lack of information available from CBE. They were unable to answer very relevant questions pertinent to facilitating the conversation. i.e. % increase of students. This year over 2012-2013 stats provided showing difference between Calgary vs. Edmonton but no supporting details - stats pulled from website.
- N.A.
- Facilitator (cost and not necessary).
- Rushed.
- The framing of the questions as a dichotomy between ->distance-> specialty. Even framing it as transportation is that the real problem?
- Some people at the table were very angry and wouldn't listen to a constructive argument to their opinion.
- Possibly not long enough.
- Would have liked more data on information gathered before hand – What are differences in other school boards – ridership/routes/costs? – What actual numbers are of ridership increase?
- Groups were too large it was hard to get “any time”.
- Engagement is for transportation only. I'd love to engage over the financial statement and operating costs for the CBE.
- Short time frame to have really meaningful conversation.