

Glossary of Transportation Terms

Travel Distance

Travel distance is the distance students are expected to travel to access a yellow school bus. The student's primary residential address is used to calculate the most direct route, using sidewalks and pathways, to the bus stop.

On September 4, 2015 the Chief Superintendent directed Administration to take the necessary steps to ensure that all students riding yellow school buses would be accessing stops in alignment with the maximum travel distances of 1.6 km for students in elementary schools, and 1.8 km for students in middle and junior high schools. As safe and accessible bus stop locations are planned, slight variances can occur for some students.

Bus Ride Time (Student and Route Ride Time)

The student ride time is the actual amount of time a student is on the school bus. Route ride time is the time difference between the first stop and the last stop, and is the maximum time any student is on the school bus. For example, if stop #1 is at 8:00 am, and the school arrival is at 8:30 am, the route ride time is 30 minutes. If a student at stop #2 gets on the bus at 8:10 am, the student ride time is 20 minutes.

Eligibility for Ridership

Consideration regarding who is eligible for transportation is based on the distance from home to community or designated school, student age and program affiliation (i.e. alternative programs, complex learning needs, junior high to Calgary Transit.) These factors also contribute to the decision between assigning modes of transportation such as yellow school bus or Calgary Transit but are not the sole determining factors.

Students who are not attending the designated school for their program, or who are not within the transportation service area may be able to access existing service if there is a space on the bus and a suitable stop on the existing bus route. These students are considered "Conditional Riders".

Bell Times

Currently the CBE operates using a two tiered bell time system for its schools. This means that some schools begin earlier in the morning and finish earlier in the afternoon while other schools begin later in the morning and finish later in the afternoon. A tiered bell time system provides some cost savings as some school buses are able to complete two routes each morning and two each afternoon. When one bus can pick up for two schools in a morning/afternoon combination, we say that the buses are "partnered". Partnered schools also try to accommodate common non-instructional days as a cost savings measure.

Number and Location of Pick Up Stops

School bus stops are designed for safety and efficiency across all routes. Bus stops are located on collector roads within a community, where possible, to reduce the number of entrances and exits buses make throughout a community. The number of stops is based on a student's primary residence and the maximum travel distance to a bus stop described above under Travel Distance. There is no maximum number of bus stops per route. The number of students using a bus stop depends on the number of students in a community attending a specific program. The more stops made by a bus, the longer the bus ride time for students and the longer the route time, making it less likely that the bus can be 'partnered' or do two routes.

Access to Waivers

Within the CBE we believe that access to programming should be available to all students regardless of the ability to pay. Parents of students who require and are eligible for transportation to and from school but are unable to pay are eligible to apply for waivers. Conditional riders (riders who are not eligible for transportation) are not eligible for waivers. There are two levels of waivers: 1) system waivers (must meet minimum employment income standards) and 2) principal approved waivers (at the principal's discretion based on family circumstance if they otherwise do not qualify for the system waiver but cannot afford to pay).

User Fees

User fees are the amount charged to parents of students who access transportation services. These fees are charged only as a way to recover unfunded costs. Currently the annual fee charged for yellow school bus transportation is \$300/year which can be paid monthly at \$30/month. This current fee rate amounts to approximately \$1.67/day (\$300 divided by 180, the minimum number of days students attend school within a school year).

Low Ridership Routes

Due to a variety of factors, from new communities with few students to alternative program students coming from many parts of the city to one location, as well as kindergarten routes, the CBE has some buses that travel at less than half full. In a highly efficient system, most buses should be operating at $\frac{3}{4}$ to maximum utilization. Given where students and schools are located, this is not always possible. CBE general guidelines for utilization on buses with a legal capacity of 72 are 60 students for elementary schools, 55 students for middle schools students, and 48 students for junior high and high schools.

Two-year or three-year implementation plan for changes

The 2016-2017 school year is fast approaching. No major service changes will be made to transportation for the upcoming school year. Major service changes requiring more planning may be implemented once the transportation engagement is completed.