

**Why do these changes need to be made?**

Bell times are directly connected to transportation services. The cost of a yellow school bus is based on a block of time. The more routes a single bus can run during this block of time, the more cost-effective the transportation service is. Aligning bus times allows a bus to run two, and in some cases three, routes during each block of time.

Who made this decision? Who decides bell times?

This decision was made by CBE leadership team. In the past, Principals worked with their Area Director in consultation with their school communities and the Planning and Transportation Department to establish bell times. Into the future, bell times will be set centrally and communicated to schools.

Will bell times change again next year?

We expect that bell times for most schools will remain consistent year to year, however, bell times will be reviewed and may be adjusted annually based on enrolment or programming changes.

How will my child's lunch hour be affected?

A change in start and end times for a school can mean a change in the time set aside for lunch hour. The setting of lunch hour times is at the principal's discretion and reflects the unique circumstances of each school.

CBE elementary schools provide an average lunch hour of 55 minutes and at junior high/middle schools, an average of 45 minutes. This allows students who remain at school approximately 20 minutes to eat and additional time for activity. For students who do not stay for lunch, this time allows for them to walk home, eat and return to school.

How will bell time changes affect the scheduling of classes at my child's school? Will the hours of instruction be affected?

"Timetabling," or the scheduling of classes, is an activity completed by school administration and school staff annually. Timetables are developed for each division of students (K-6, 7-9 and 10-12) and specialized settings using the required hours of instruction. The mandatory hours of instruction are established by Alberta Education and bell time changes do not compromise these requirements. Each school is responsible for scheduling classes according to the legislated instructional minutes for each grade configuration and bell time changes do not affect this requirement.

What do teachers do with extra time on early dismissal days?

Early dismissal days provide an opportunity for teachers to engage in ongoing professional development and may also provide times for meetings with parents to support student success. Early dismissals allow time for educators to collaborate as teams as part of a formal process called Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) to plan and improve student learning. PLCs and professional development are integral components to teacher development and enhancing teaching and learning for students. This work is connected to each school's School Development Plan as well as the CBE Three-Year Education

Plan. Common time to meet as a whole staff provides an opportunity to ensure there is strong continuity across the school and CBE system with respect to best practices in support of student learning and achievement.

Will extracurricular activities be impacted if my school experiences a bell time change?

The change in bell times should not affect extracurricular activities.

Extracurricular activities depend on staff availability, skill set and interest and may vary from year to year. These decisions are made by school staff at the beginning of the school year and, once determined, will be communicated to each unique community.

When can I drop my child off at school in the morning?

Supervision of students is provided 15 minutes prior to the start of school and 10 minutes before the afternoon bell. This means that students should arrive on school grounds no sooner than 10-15 minutes before school begins and must be supervised by their parent or caregiver if they arrive earlier.

How will bell time changes affect before and after school care programs in our school?

Before and after school care programs that are housed within CBE schools may need to adjust their schedules to meet the earlier or later arrival or dismissal of students. In most cases, these changes should have minimal impact on these programs.

Why is my early dismissal time changing?

Bell times are directly connected to transportation services. This includes school start time, dismissal time and early dismissal days. If a school without an early dismissal day is paired with one or more schools that do have early dismissals, the schools must align their dismissals for our transportation service to maximize cost-effectiveness.

If students are dismissed early, do they miss instructional time?

No. Instructional time requirements are mandated by the School Act, and every school must meet these requirements.

Is early dismissal a common practice?

Most (approximately 75 per cent) CBE schools already have an early dismissal day.

Additional Questions From May 24 – May 31, 2017 Information Sessions

Will earlier start times have a negative impact on student learning?

Throughout the CBE, many schools currently have early start times. We have not identified a negative impact on student learning. To gain efficiencies in transportation services, school start and end times need to be adjusted.

Working within our guidelines, we aim to have students begin busing at 7:00 a.m. Some may begin at a later time. For some specialized programs, it is not



always possible to fall within these guidelines and some students may begin busing earlier.

Can you tell me more about the transportation engagement that took place in 2016 and who participated? Participation in the engagement included:

- 300+ participants in 17 in-person workshops March 15, April 6, 7 and 12
- 1,600 responses to an online survey open April 6 – 17
- 41 participants in two community forums May 3 and 4
- 1,750+ responses to online scenario survey open April 29 – May 8

The CBE encouraged participation from all parents, including those whose children did not take transportation. In our [March 8, 2016 letter](#) we explained that “All families could be impacted by the choices we make.”

More information on the 2016 transportation engagement is posted on the [CBE website](#).

Why are many feeder schools no longer able to travel on the same buses and have their bell times closely aligned?

The CBE pays service providers for a block of time (90 minutes per shift). By aligning bell times, we are able to have buses complete two or three routes within that timeframe. There needs to be sufficient time between bell times for the bus to travel between a previous run's end point, and a subsequent run's starting point as well as complete the subsequent run. Double or triple routing reduces the overall cost of busing because fewer buses are required. This model was recommended in [a third-party transportation service review](#) conducted in the 2015-16 school year.

If we eliminate the alternative programs, does this eliminate the transportation budget problems?

The CBE values choice and eliminating alternative programs does not align with that value.

How will the CBE support families with increased before-and-after-school care needs resulting from these changes?

Where we can provide this service in our schools, we do. Some of our schools are full and don't have space available to provide this service. Parents can contact their school principal to discuss what is possible for their school community.

What is the earliest possible start time and latest possible end time, and how do you determine what is appropriate?

Working within our guidelines, we aim to have most students begin busing at 7:00 a.m. For specialized programs or one-of sites, this is not always possible but we try to build manageable routes. For bell times, the earliest start time is 7:50 a.m. and the latest end time is 4:00 p.m.

