

Dear Lexington Parents/Guardians:

The Transportation department is working with parents to understand and resolve parent concerns. We have experienced some significant problems with school transportation during the first week of school. The purpose of this memorandum is to summarize the changes from last year, the current transportation problems, and the steps we are taking to resolve these issues and offer quality reliable service.

Transportation service this year has changed in a number of different ways. Listed below are the major changes since last year.

1. We opened the new school year welcoming Joanne Tringale as the new part-time district Transportation Coordinator. She officially started August 20 and was able to work a few days in July with a mentor Transportation Coordinator from an area community. The goal of the position is to provide parents with a single point of contact for transportation of their child to and from school. Coordination of school bus transportation has fallen on the Principal and School-building secretaries. With the advent of increased education requirements, it is appropriate to move this function to a centralized delivery system. Principals are still responsible for handling disciplinary actions on our school buses, but they do not need to spend time with bus routes, stops, traffic safety issues and the like. The Coordinator will work with the Bus Company, DPW, Police, or other municipal department to coordinate safe and efficient bus routes.

Contact information: Telephone: 781-861-2540 is the direct line for transportation. (temporary alternative 781-861-2563 press 1 or x221 when you hear the attendant)

Email: [transportation@sch.ci.lexington.ma.us](mailto:transportation@sch.ci.lexington.ma.us)

Parents expressed concern and frustration with the difficulty of contacting anyone in Transportation this week. We had thought it was simply a call volume issue. We have since learned that during the Central Office move from 1557 Massachusetts Ave to 146 Maple Street the telephone number was not programmed to ring on the desk of the Transportation Coordinator. We were not aware the main number was not ringing through until today. A temporary message has been placed on the telephone instructing callers with a backup number and a repair order has been placed. We hope to have the correction made as soon as possible.

2. Reduction in the number of buses: We have reduced buses from 22 to 14.

	2006-2007 School Year	Change	2007-2008 School Year
Fiske School Construction	4	-3	0
Base Routes	18	-5	14
Total	22	-8	14
Riders Supported	Roughly 2400 without Fiske	-700	Roughly 1900 and rising
Ratio of students to buses	133:1		136:1

3. Reduced ridership due to increased fee- The large increases in the bus fee for bus service was a major factor in causing ridership reduction. Based on our registrations received by the deadline of June 15, we ordered only the number of buses we needed to transport the students. Routes

were created based on those registrations in July. Since June 15 we have received over 250-300 registrations, the majority of which were during the month of August. This has resulted in routes having waiting lists, Hayden transportation being limited to only their after school daycare program operated by Brian Doherty, and out-of-district transportation requests being placed on a waiting lists.

4. Buses are crowded-

a. Buses are crowded due to a couple of different factors-

i. Registrations for buses are at their limits for the elementary schools (60-71) and middle schools (55-60). Based on the registration lists of prior years this is not out of the ordinary. Buses are often crowded during the first few weeks of school because after school programs have not started, cold and flu season has not hit, and daily life interrupts the ability to get on the bus in the morning.

ii. Students who are not registered are riding the bus and taking seats that are not available. Remedy: as of August 30, 2007, the Principals have the final list of students who are registered and assigned to each bus route. Bus passes are being mailed directly to each registered student and should be in their hands next week. Students will be encouraged to place the pass in a luggage tag holder and attach it to their backpack. This will ensure that the pass is available at all times.

b. Will additional buses be added? This is currently under review. Adding a bus once the school year begins becomes difficult due to the financial obligation of \$65,000 per bus. In addition, we need to locate and train a driver, potentially reroute all bus routes, and reissue passes and disseminate information. It is not out of the question at this point, however, if the students who are registered are the only ones to ride the bus we do not need to add a bus. Registration by the deadline is critical to efficient bus routing and balancing of riders.

5. Bus stops/Routes have changed- Yes, bus stops and routes have changed. We have reduced the number of buses and therefore bus numbers have changed. The bus routes were designed to be completed within a 20-minute window allowing for time delays due to road construction, loading and unloading, or other event that may delay the bus. Along with the students who registered, students are collected into stops that are more common rather than many individual stops. Bus Stop Change Request forms are being collected and reviewed with the bus company to determine if changes need to be made. A typical bus stop change takes three to five days to implement once a decision is made. The decision-making process and review can be one to five days. Review of requests often includes the Bus Driver, Police Traffic Safety, Bus Company, and the Transportation Coordinator. In addition, once the determination is made for a change, all families need to be notified and be given enough time to know when the change will be implemented. Some changes may not be made due to the length of the bus route.

6. Traffic Congestion delaying routes – Road repair occurring on Woburn Street is severely affecting the timing of our routes. We are in touch with DPW to work out a solution to keeping our buses on time. However, car traffic backing up at intersections due to this major thoroughfare being closed or detoured is also having a system-wide effect on all of our routes.

7. LexPress has put a moratorium on student passes- Due to the number of passes sold for September to students, LexPress has stopped selling passes until they can assess the impact.