

2012 - 2013 SCHOOL TIMES FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQ)

Q: Why is Carroll County Public Schools changing its school start and end times next school year?

A: Last year, the Superintendent asked each department head to examine their operations in an effort to improve efficiency and to look at potential cost saving measures. The Transportation Services Department, through the restructuring of school starting and ending times and the realignment of bus routes, found significant efficiencies leading to the elimination of 40 buses with an annual cost savings of at least \$1.2 million. This change led to a reorganization of school start and end times by the Superintendent.

Q: Are the school times final?

A: Yes. The school times as published are the official start and end times for the 2012 – 2013 school year as determined by the Superintendent. There may be a need to make changes in future years for specific schools pertaining to student population growth, school boundary adjustments, and transportation efficiency. However, these are the final start and end times for next school year.

Q: Why are high schools starting earlier than middle and elementary schools?

A: The high school instructional day (6 hours and 50 minutes) is 15 minutes longer than the middle school day and 20 minutes longer than the elementary school day. If high schools had the later school times, elementary schools would have to start as early as 7:30 a.m. to allow high schools to start within the earliest time range of 9:15 a.m. to 9:30 a.m. With this starting time range, the high school day would not end until 4:05 p.m. to 4:20 p.m.

High school boundaries are much larger in area. This means high school bus routes are also longer, and many students would not arrive home until well after 5:00 p.m. While students at all grade levels participate in after school activities, many high school students participate in extra-curricular activities and many have after school job requirements. In addition, many elementary and middle school parents rely on an older high school sibling to provide after-school care.

Q: Why wasn't I notified earlier?

A: The Transportation Efficiency Study and the proposed 2012-2013 school times were discussed at several public Board of Education meetings, beginning at the March 23, 2011 meeting. The proposed school times were published on the Carroll County Public Schools website with the opportunity for parents and community members to provide feedback. There was much public discussion about the plan and several hundred emails were received. There were also several articles printed in the Carroll County Times and other local publications regarding the proposed changes for school start times. In addition, an email was sent to each family advising them of the proposal. An attempt was made by the school system to make sure that all families were informed of the proposal and received as much input as possible prior to a final decision.

Q: Was the need for daycare considered in developing the new school times?

A: There is no school schedule that would fulfill every family's personal schedule and daycare needs. The school system recognizes that the changes in school schedules will alter many families' current home schedules. As is currently the case for many families, before and after-school daycare service may be required.

Q: Will my child's bus number be the same next year?

A: Buses will be assigned to routes in the most efficient and economical manner based on the location of bus contractors and school routes. Many students staying within the same school will have a different bus number next year.

Q: You have eliminated 40 buses; does that mean my child's bus ride will be longer?

A: No, student ride times will not be made longer or shorter as a result of the reduction in the number of buses or the adjustment to school start and end times. However, because the school starting and ending times are changing for most schools, students will board buses and depart buses earlier or later depending on the change in school times. The reduction in the number of buses results from arranging the school start and end times to achieve the maximum use of each school bus every day. In most cases, each bus will complete three routes per day in school year 2012-13 allowing us to eliminate the 40 buses. We will not make any adjustments to bus routes that would impact student ride time beyond our normal adjustments for new students or students leaving.

Q: Will the changes to school start and end or the reduction in the number of buses impact special education routes?

A: No, the study that resulted in the new school times did not include special education routes. The 40 buses being eliminated are all regular education buses.

Q: When will specific information regarding next year's bus schedules be made available?

A: Bus routes and times will be published on the school system's website and given to schools in early August. The Carroll County Times normally publishes bus routes (by school) at least one full week before the start of school. Given the change in school times, we are exploring providing this information to parents earlier in the summer.