



Acton-Boxborough Regional School District

15 Charter Road Acton, MA 01720
978-264-4700
www.abschools.org

Peter J. Light
Superintendent of Schools

Transportation Update - August 2018

August 16, 2018

ABRSD Families,

The purpose of this communication is to provide you with information regarding school bus service changes that have gone into effect for the 2018-19 school year.

As you are aware, a significant goal of the school district over the last several years has been to support student wellness by studying school start times. The district convened a task force to study school start times, conducted considerable research and sought feedback from families in order to inform the decision. The research gathered and feedback from families strongly supported later start times for secondary students. A concern of elementary parents was that continuing two tiers of bus service, coupled with later start times for secondary students, would result in elementary students returning home past 5:00 p.m. Additionally, having "two-tiers" of elementary start times caused elementary schools to rotate annually between an earlier and later schedules which was not ideal. We are happy that we have been able to move students in grades 7-12 to later start times, and that all elementary schools will be on one schedule. All research shows that later start times will improve wellness and learning for secondary students, and having all elementary schools on one consistent schedule can have a great benefit for families.

The three year effort to study start times resulted in changes that are being implemented this fall, most significantly for high school and middle school students. In addition, the district was able to address elementary family concerns around two start times and keep a reasonable return time, by implementing a "single-tier" start for all elementary schools.

It is important for all families to know that all students will be on a new and different schedule this year, and that bus pick-up and drop-off times and the location of bus stops will be different. For this reason, please review the attached schedule and look up the new bus routes that will be posted next week.

In order to implement these changes in a safe, yet cost-effective manner, the district has made some notable changes to the transportation system including:

Developing engaged, well-balanced learners through collaborative, caring relationships.



- Adding additional bus routes to the elementary school “tier”
- Maximizing ridership on school busses to ensure efficient and cost-effective operation
- Consolidating some bus stops and prioritizing route efficiency to reduce the total time students spend on busses each day

You likely have questions about how these changes will impact your child and your family. We have included a [“Frequently Asked Questions” \(FAQ\)](#) document with this letter in order to provide you with the most up-to-date information regarding school bus transportation.

Our transportation department has been working diligently to plan for the implementation of these changes. This has entailed hiring and training additional drivers, reviewing bus routes and stops individually for each of our 5000+ students, and conducting “test runs” of the bus service to ensure our transition is as smooth as possible.

Even with thorough preparation, we anticipate that there may be some unanticipated issues that will need to be resolved during the first days and weeks of the school year. We are committed to working with you, our families, in order to resolve issues as quickly as possible and to be as responsive as possible to the needs of our students and families.

The attached “FAQ” document will provide you with additional details about what to expect from the transportation changes, and who to contact in order to have issues resolved in the most efficient manner. I ask that you review this document prior to bus routes being released on Monday, August 20th.

Finally, I want to take this opportunity to thank our Transportation Department staff for the tremendous effort they have put forth in making these significant changes and keeping student safety and well-being at the forefront of their decision making. Their commitment to reducing overall ride time for student while maximizing the efficiency of the bus service will have a positive impact on our students.

Thank you for your understanding and we are committed to working with you to make this transition as smooth as possible.

Sincerely,

Peter Light
Superintendent of Schools

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