



Phyllis A. Edwards, Ed.D.
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March 7, 2011

Dear Parents,

I have heard many comments about the possibility of extending the elementary school day. As always, I read and consider what you say. I have worked at CSD as Superintendent with the intention of doing the right thing for students and the entire system for the past eight years. Some of the considerations I must think about when making a decision are:

- middle school and high school student times;
- elimination of bus hub for 2011-2012;
- reduction of bus costs;
- working a new school into the schedule;
- allocating enough time between bus runs;
- making sure that buses can complete two major runs;
- always looking for ways to reduce bus routes;
- working with the city to determine start and end times for crossing guards and our certificate of occupancy for the new 4/5 Academy;
- removing the Pre-kindergarten routes from the bus schedule; and
- completing this item in a timely manner to assure a certificate of occupancy from the city for the 4/5 Academy.

Over the last three years, I have also heard comments from teachers and principals about the stress of trying to fit mandatory subjects into a school day along with 30 minutes of Spanish, art, music or physical education; and recently an outcry from parents for a daily recess.

As I have said many times before, public schools are in place to serve the needs of all students. However, whenever a situation arises in Decatur, the comments are fraught with personal and sometimes sarcastic statements which are not necessary. I respect your concerns for your child. Extending the school day was not meant as a punishment but as a way to keep up our high level of educational delivery.

Please understand that there is no action item on the Board of Education agenda. This is an administrative decision not a policy decision and one that I have made for several years now. It would also not be feasible to go to the School Leadership Teams since the start and end times for school all impact other schools' start and end times. We only have so many buses to move between the elementary and the middle/high school students. I am currently looking for ways to reduce the CSD budget and had hoped that with the new K-3 at Glennwood, most k-3 students might walk or roll to school.

To reassure you that I am listening to you, I plan to meet with principals today. I will also meet with the transportation director to review options. I will share my thoughts and the issues with them so you may have more information.

Parents
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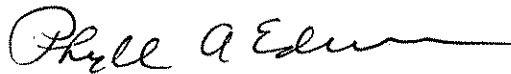
Once I have talked again with these professionals and asked for comments from the teachers, I will wait to make my final decision. Let me repeat, there will be no final decision prior to Spring break. I think it is important to note that at most of our elementary schools activities actually start now earlier than the official start time.

At the bottom of this letter, I have provided a memo of some options that we are considering for next year, along with some of the parameters.

We have much to concentrate on with the district-wide SACS visit this week, continuation of our work on the new Strategic Plan and working on our development of a final budget for 2011-2012.

I hope this relieves your concerns and that I have conveyed to you my willingness to take your comments into consideration along with those of our CSD staff.

Sincerely,



Dr. Phyllis A. Edwards
Superintendent of School

To: Dr. Edwards, CSD Superintendent
From: Simonia Elder, Director of Transportation
Date: 03/04/2011
Re: Bell Times

Message:

School	Current Times	6.3	6.45	7
Pre-K	8:00-2:30	TBA	TBA	TBA
K-3	8:15-2:45	8:15-2:45	8:00-2:45	8:30-3:30
4th-5th	8:00-3:00	7:30-2:30	7:30-2:30	8:15-3:15
RMS	8:30-3:30	8:35-3:35	8.35-3:35	7:30-2:30
DHS	8:35-3:32	8:35-3:32	8:35-3:32	7:30-2:30

Discussion Points

- 45-50 minutes are needed to run a complete route
- 20 minutes are needed for students to consume breakfast
- HS and MS are interrupting instructional times for extra -curricular activities

- Students living one mile outside of their school will not receive transportation, unless safety out-weighs distance
- Pre-K students will not ride with K-5 students
- The transfer point has been removed
- It takes at least 15 minutes to move from 4-5 to K-3 morning and afternoon
- Parents and staff have asked for more time added to the instructional K-3 day on numerous occasions
- The lack of practice space and lights will be *less* of issue if the HS and MS goes 1st
- Track, baseball, softball, tennis, golf and swim are practicing off campus and use most school buses to travel.
- DeKalb ES 7:30-2:30, Cobb 7:45-2:15, Cherokee 7:45 -2:15, Clayton 7:45-2:15, Atlanta 8:00-2:30, Pickens 8:00 – 3:00, Douglas 8:15-3:30, Gwinnett, 8:15-02:45