

# **Duval County Public Schools**

## **ACE Transportation Study**

### **School Board Summary Document**

**DRAFT**

**March 2009**

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## Introduction

The following document narrates the tentative recommendations from the Superintendent as a result of the ACE Transportation community process.

**This document presents only the scenarios that are moving forward as the Superintendent's recommendations and will require School Board awareness and, and in most cases policy revision to implement in the 2009-2010 school year.**

Each recommended is described on the following pages in the following format:

### Community Meeting Results and Summary

On March 17<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> community meetings were conducted to communicate draft scenarios for reduction of costs for District transportation. Approximately 200 people attended the two meetings and answered questionnaires, while another 200 participated in the survey online. This document reports the tallied results of the questionnaire and provides a summary of comments for each scenario.

### Scenarios & Benefits/Challenges

This process established a community working group that was responsible for reviewing and analyzing data to develop a set of scenarios with the focus being the reduction of costs in District transportation services. After the group developed scenarios, a set of benefits and challenges were identified to assist other community members in community meeting settings to understand the pros and cons to each scenario.

### Policy

This document provides draft Policy revision for each scenario if action were to be taken. Some of the scenarios do not require policy revision and those are noted. Please note that these are DRAFT and will be reviewed upon direction from the final recommendations of implementation as provided by the Superintendent.

### Cost Impact

Cost impact is categorized in this document by level of cost savings and is color coded:

**Red:** Under \$100,000

**Yellow:** \$100,000 to \$1,000,000

**Green:** Over \$1,000,000

**Scenario 1**

Match current State of Florida Rule for any student who is not otherwise eligible for transportation, is defined as any distance not more than two [2] miles between the home and the school of attendance (currently 1.5 miles).

**Community Meeting Results/Summary**

Match current State of Florida Rule for any student who is not otherwise eligible for transportation, is defined as any distance not more than two [2] miles between the home and the school of attendance (currently 1.5 miles).					
	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>
<b>Elementary</b>	25%	16%	14%	20%	25%
<b>Secondary</b>	35%	28%	14%	11%	12%

The general response from those surveyed is the agreement that the mileage from 1.5 to 2.0 miles for those eligible is favored at the secondary grade level, with approximately 63% in agreement. At the elementary grade level the favorable response to this increase reduced to approximately 41% vs. 45% of those who disagreed with increasing the mileage distance.

Many comments centered around the safety of children. It is stated many times the concern for young elementary students walking further distances with darkness, traffic concerns, safety restrictions, etc... Safety of secondary students is a also concern, comments indicated understanding of the responsibility of the older students to be able to walk farther distances.

<b>Benefits</b>	<b>Challenges</b>
Creates a "Parent Responsibility Zone"	Safety issues with Elementary students
Creates a consistent/equitable approach	High School students walk in the dark
Significant cost savings	Possible increase of absentees/tardiness
Aligns with all other Counties in the State	May require increased number of crossing guards

**Cost Impact**

	<b>Less than \$100K</b>	<b>Between \$100K and \$1 Million</b>	<b>Greater than \$1 Million</b>
<b>Elementary</b>		<b>Middle</b>	
<b>Secondary</b>		<b>Lower</b>	

## Scenario 1 & 2

### Policy

#### Scenarios ONE and TWO

##### *Policy 8.30 Student Transportation*

V. Any student who resides ~~one and one-half (1½)~~ **two (2)** or more miles from his/her designated school is eligible to ride the school bus to and from that school. ~~One (1)~~ **One and a half (1 ½)** miles shall be considered a reasonable walking distance to a bus stop for students who are eligible to ride a school bus. Such distance shall be measured by the most direct route from the closest pedestrian entry point of the property where the student resides (where private property meets the public right-of-way) to the closest pedestrian entry point of the assigned school building or to the assigned bus stop. The District shall determine the shortest pedestrian route whether or not it is accessible to motor vehicle traffic. If the closest bus stop is a school less than ~~one and one-half (1½)~~ **two** miles from the student residence the **one and a half (1 ½)** mile rule **to a bus stop** will not apply.

Under the following conditions, students who reside within ~~one and one-half (1½)~~ **two (2)** miles of the designated school may be eligible to ride the school bus:

- A. Special authorization is granted by the Superintendent or designee and may include students who meet the requirements for Hazardous Walking as determined by FS. 1006.23 or students granted transportation under other statutory provisions.
- B. A student who is classified as a student with disabilities under the Individual with Disabilities Act (IDEA) if transportation services are required by the student's Individual Education Plan (IEP).

## Scenario 2

Match current State of Florida Rule a reasonable walking distance between the home and the assigned bus stop is defined as nay distance not more than one and one-half miles [1.5] (currently 1 mile).

### Community Meeting Results/Summary

Match current State of Florida Rule a reasonable walking distance between the home and the assigned bus stop is defined as nay distance not more than one and one-half miles [1.5] (currently 1 mile).					
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Elementary	20%	15%	15%	20%	30%
Secondary	31%	24%	17%	15%	13%

The response to scenario 2 was very similar to that of scenario 1. There was a higher agreeable response to secondary students walking to bus stops at 1.5 miles, an increase from 1.0 miles, over that of elementary students. According to the survey, approximately 55% agreed with increasing from 1.0 to 1.5 miles for secondary schools, where only 35% agreed at the elementary grade level, with 50% disagreeing.

Comments, much like scenario 1, stated the concerns of safety for the students. Those who favored seemed to agree according to the State of Florida Statute and the fact that all other counties in the State of Florida follow this policy and make it work.

Benefits	Challenges
Creates a “Parent Responsibility Zone”	Safety issues with Elementary students
Creates a consistent/equitable approach	High School students walk in the dark
Significant cost savings	Parents who wait for students may have to wait on busy roads instead of neighborhoods
	Safety and distance
	Possible increased absenteeism/tardiness

### Cost Impact

	Less than \$100K	Between \$100K and \$1 Million	Greater than \$1 Million
Elementary			
Secondary			

**Scenario 3**

Duval County Public Schools should reduce the number of activity buses for after school by:

**Community Meeting Results/Summary**

Duval County Public Schools should reduce the number of activity buses for after school by:

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
C. Reduce to only one pick up time at High School; keep current MS Activity transportation	25%	34%	15%	11%	15%
D. Partner with public transportation for after school activities	17%	19%	21%	19%	24%

Approximately 59% agreed with the reduction of High School Activity buses while maintaining the current level of service at the Middle School level.

The comments recognize that activity buses are a valuable service the District provides that is not necessary. Also, comments suggested that the loss of activity buses completely could jeopardize valuable participation in after school activities such as athletics, clubs, and tutoring. The time that parents can pick up students was also commented on frequently.

Benefits	Challenges
Cost Savings	Possibility of less participation in after-school activities
One pickup time for high schools offers limited service with some cost reduction in lieu of no service at all	Unsupervised students on campus.
Encourages more parent responsibility	3d. Only - Public Transportation times might not align with activities, transfers where students may have to wait at public stations may be safety concern
	3d. Only - Safety concerns that JTA transit buses are not as safe as school buses – i.e. lack of stop signal arms, structural rollover protection, body joint strength, requirements for seating and crash protection systems
	3d. Only - Since students are riding with the public, there could be safety perception concerns regarding the general public riding on the bus.

**Cost Impact**

	Less than \$100K	Between \$100K and \$1 Million	Greater than \$1 Million
C.	High		
D.	TBD		



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### Scenario 3

#### Policy

##### Scenario THREE - After School Activity (ASA) Routes

The Transportation Department has established a Standard Operating Procedure that provides one departure time for all middle school ASA routes as needed, one departure time for non-neighborhood high school ASA routes as needed, and two departure times for neighborhood high school ASA routes as needed. The current magnet policy provides that when economically feasible, activity buses will be provided to secondary magnet schools. It is recommended that this language be removed from the magnet school policy (5.46). We currently do not have a policy regarding activity buses provided to secondary, non- magnet schools.

**Scenario 5**

Duval County Public Schools should reduce transportation for secondary students of Magnet (and non-neighborhood) schools.

**Community Meeting Results/Summary**

Duval County Public Schools should reduce transportation for secondary students of Magnet (and non-neighborhood) schools.					
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
A. Develop "Express Routes" with bus stops at schools only	25%	28%	13%	11%	23%

The development of "Express Routes" got a much more favorable result than complete elimination of magnet routes, approximately 53% agreed with this option, while 34% disagreed.

Comments admittedly stated that this does put some scheduling challenges for parents, but is a good compromise to total elimination of magnet routes. Concerns of students that go to schools other than their own schools and chances of incidences occurring was stated several times and more monitoring may have to occur.

Benefits	Challenges
Significant Cost Savings	Could impact diversity of schools
Maintains service without eliminating it	Could impact grant status of some schools that require transportation services
Reduces number of buses with low ridership	Some students could return to already overcrowded schools due to no transportation
Possibly increase enrollment at underutilized schools	Must avoid timing of stop at elementary and middle schools during arrival / dismissal times to avoid supervision issues
Express routes reduce ride time and early pick ups	Parent parking could be an issue
Less time on the bus will reduce inappropriate bus behavior	
May reduce overcrowding in schools that are already diverse	
In schools where magnet population is low, elimination of magnet transportation service may have little effect on diversity	
Express routes will provide fast, safe, & equitable service to all magnet students	

**Cost Impact**

	Less than \$100K	Between \$100K and \$1 Million	Greater than \$1 Million
A.			

## Scenario 5

### Policy

#### Scenario FIVE (A) – Express Routes

##### *5.46 Magnet Schools and Programs*

#### XIII. Transportation

~~The School Board shall provide transportation~~ Transportation is provided for all students who are enrolled in magnet schools and programs who reside more than ~~1.5~~ 2 miles from their assigned school and are within the designated transportation zone. Magnet transportation will comply with Magnet Routes as defined in School Board Policy 8.32. ~~When economically feasible, the School Board shall provide activity buses to and from secondary magnet schools or programs to enable students to participate in extracurricular activities at the secondary magnet schools or programs which they attend.~~

##### *8.32 Bus Routes - Added Provision:*

- V. Magnet Routes – Transportation shall be provided to students who are enrolled in magnet schools and programs who reside more than 2 miles from their assigned school and are within the designated transportation zone according to School Board policy 5.46. Stops shall be established primarily at or near Duval County Public schools. The distance to a bus stop for magnet students may exceed 1½ miles.

**Scenario 8**

Duval County Public Schools should reduce transportation costs for students in the alternative schools by:

**Community Meeting Results/Summary**

Duval County Public Schools should reduce transportation costs for students in the alternative schools by:					
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
B. Shift select routes to JTA	15%	19%	24%	18%	23%

The response for this scenario is inconclusive. Though the percentages indicate that the option is not favored by the community, generating 41% disagreement the use JTA respectively, there were many that did not respond to this question.

Comments, much like the survey, varied greatly. Some stated the long-term value of keeping these students in school, in the long run saving the community dollars now instead of possible consequences of students dropping out of school. Other comments suggested that the responsibility of transportation of the students, who have broken rules, should be shifted to the parents or the student themselves.

Benefits	Challenges
Can reduce transportation costs	Could reduce participation in Alternative Education programs because students lack support structure to self-transport
	Could reduce participation if students are required to self-navigate JTA's routes to Alt Ed vice not going or going somewhere else

**Cost Impact**

	Less than \$100K	Between \$100K and \$1 Million	Greater than \$1 Million
B.		Lower	

**Policy**

**Scenario EIGHT –**

There is no current policy that addresses Alternative School transportation nor is one recommended. The Transportation Department utilizes trunk routes to provide transportation to students in alternative schools.

**Scenario 10**

Duval County Public Schools should reduce transportation for the Marine Science Center by:

**Community Meeting Results/Summary**

Duval County Public Schools should reduce transportation for the Marine Science Center by:					
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
A. Reduce transportation level of service	26%	22%	29%	10%	13%

The reduction of service to the Marine Science Center received below 50% agreement, however less than 25% disagreed with this option.

Comments from the community recognized the value of the Marine Science Center.

Benefits	Challenges
Significant cost savings	At risk students may not have opportunity to participate with no other source of transportation
	Schools may not be able to afford field trip cost

**Cost Impact**

	Less than \$100K	Between \$100K and \$1 Million	Greater than \$1 Million
A.			

**Policy**

**Scenario TEN –**

No policy revisions required.