

Transportation Task Force Minutes  
December 11, 2017  
Council Chambers  
8:00 AM

|          |             |            |               |          |
|----------|-------------|------------|---------------|----------|
| Present: | L. Rodrigue | L. Cohagen | T. Kuroski    | T. Vadas |
|          | J. Beaudry  | R. Dufour  | M. Ku         |          |
|          | L. Brennan  | J. Fonovic | C. Moretti    |          |
|          | K. Burke    | T. Galassi | T. Napolitano |          |

Dr. Rodrigue reviewed initial responses to the transportation system. Most concerns had to do with start and end times, bus rides, teacher extended day, dismissal, and stress on the students. Most of the late bus arrivals are at Reed. She asked for thoughts on the current bus schedule.

Chris Moretti: We have one small subset waiting longer but that time has been cut with buses from Reed arriving earlier.

Tracy Galassi: Buses 8, 9 and 10 shuttles are still late.

Chris Moretti: No additional issues – less drop offs in the morning but more pickups in the afternoon.

Lianne Cohagen: Teachers are still concerned about being in class 10 extra minutes in the morning because of the student drop-offs.

Tracy Galassi starts instruction by 9:11 a.m.

Chris Moretti: Our age group needs to be supervised and most teachers decided to start their day as soon as the students were in the room.

Lianne Cohagen: Students are in her class by 8:47 a.m.

Jill Beaudry: All buses arrive by 9:03 to 9:05 with the last ones usually from Head O'Meadow. A large group from Sandy Hook drops off at 8:45 which is when teachers start. We dismiss a few minutes earlier at the end of the day and can get everyone boarded in 10 minutes. There are very few issues on the shuttle buses. Most disciplinary issues on the buses are between Reed students.

Laura Brennan: At the PTA meeting last week the parents were fine with transportation. Parents can pick up their children at Reed and still get to their elementary school on time.

Tim Napolitano: Sandy Hook has an increase in drop offs and pickups. They changed their pickup location which is also better when Reed parents pick up.

Katie Burke: With the five minute earlier dismissal at Reed, her daughter who gets on at Head O'Meadow School, still gets home at 4:15.

Jess Fonovic: The Head O'Meadow union reps have not complained. It's running smooth there.

Rich Dufour: Last year some buses didn't get to Sandy Hook or Head O'Meadow until 3:45 p.m. It's better with the shuttle. There are more stops now with the Reed and elementary schools together so that adds some time.

Chris Moretti: Suggested looking at the length of the rides. It sounds like they are under 40 minutes with most clearing by 4:30.

Mrs. Burke noted that one morning several buses at Head O'Meadow turned them off while waiting.

Mrs. Beaudry said buses arrive at 8:40 and shut off the bus. Students get off at 8:45 without jackets as it is very warm on the buses.

Mr. Dufour said that in Torrington they drop off 10 minutes earlier and the students wait outside until 8:55. In other towns, the students wait in the cafeteria in the morning.

Ms. Galassi: This year everyone is in class within five to six minutes.

Ms. Fonovic: In Southbury students go to the cafeteria or stay outside after being dropped off at 8:45. Drop off at Reed now is 8:45 with Sandy Hook buses arriving first.

Mr. Moretti: His morning staff meetings have been impacted and have to end by 8:40. They only have 34 to 40 minutes for these meetings.

Mr. Napolitano said Sandy Hook faculty meetings start at 7:45.

Ms. Cohagen: Some teacher talked about how this impacted their daycare costs. They have to pay for a full hour if they go over the pickup time.

Chris Moretti: We allowed wrap around time as there are some teachers who come in at 7:00 and leave at dismissal. Those times now have to be adjusted.

Dr. Rodrigue wanted the committee to break into groups to work on what the committee hopes to happen to move forward next year. We have been working with teachers about the extra time in the morning. She wanted to find equitability. We looked for grants for para time to support recess. Elementary principals will be hiring them as a team from January to the end of the year. This will be in next year's budget. We also have to look at PLC days and how much time staff is with students.

Mr. Kuroski: An important outcome of the transportation situation is that it made us aware of the elementary teacher schedule losing the time in the morning.

Dr. Rodrigue: We are also working on a policy for walkers when a student goes to an elementary school on a shuttle and potentially checks out and walks home. This would only be the case if there was a shuttle. The policy will be system-wide.

Mrs. Ku: We have a lot of walkers from the middle school and we need to tighten up a little.

Dr. Rodrigue: We have to have better communication to parents as far as their children walking after school. One task for the committee is to share thoughts about next steps for next year.

Mrs. Burke: At the last meeting the plan was that we had tentative proposals if we can do it without the shuttles.

Dr. Rodrigue: We are going to move in that direction but need to discuss other possibilities. The committee broke into groups and shared the following.

Ms. Fonovic: Regarding staggered times they feel that Reed should start earlier than the elementary schools. They also talked about Old Farm Road opening up for morning buses. The outskirt buses need to flow a little better.

Dr. Rodrigue: If certain buses are consistently late we can have express buses which we for Reed and Head O'Meadow. We should look at bus reconfiguration.

Mrs. Fonovic: Staggered time will help elementary teachers with student arrival times.

Dr. Rodrigue: Concerned about how elementary parents will feel with longer ride times in the morning.

Mrs. Burke: Leave the schedule as is but use paras in the morning for students to go outside or to the gym to give the teachers 10 minutes in the morning.

Dr. Rodrigue was meeting with EdAdvance today to talk about a possible solution in the morning.

Mrs. Ku spoke about eliminating the shuttle but still keeping the transportation time to a minimum.

Mr. Dufour didn't see how the shuttle could be eliminated even with staggered times. It will be a 14 to 15 minute load time as opposed to the current seven minutes. An option was to continue Sandy Hook the same way which will eliminate having 10 more buses go to Reed.

Mrs. Ku said the idea of upsetting the system again for a small change is not what we are looking forward to.

Dr. Rodrigue: We agreed that the five minutes is all we need in the afternoon at Reed.

Mr. Moretti: Regarding staggered times – it solves every problem but some students will have longer rides.

Dr. Rodrigue: Travel time needs to be under an hour but closer to 45 minutes. We have buses driving 45 to 50 minutes. We have to decide route changes.

Mrs. Cohagen: The morning time at Middle Gate has negatively impacted the staff.

Dr. Rodrigue was hopeful we can work on staging in the schools.

Mrs. Burke: Give parents an option for activities in the morning.

Mr. Moretti: Questioned who would be working with the students before they went to their classrooms. Also, the students don't arrive at the same time.

Dr. Rodrigue: They are considering enrichment in the morning, and keeping the shuttle and dismissing Reed five minutes earlier in the afternoon.

Mrs. Burke: Suggested looking at paras in the afternoon if Reed kept the end times the same. How much will it actually cost for them and could the money be used for more buses?

Mr. Dufour: Getting another five minutes at Reed would be ideal. A problem with EdAdvance enrichment is we can't drop off until 8:45. Many buses are waiting earlier to unload at the elementary schools.

Dr. Rodrigue said there could be enrichment if we drop off at 8:40.

Mrs. Ku asked to look at data for arrival times, attendance and fuel costs.

Dr. Rodrigue has that material and will get answers from EdAdvance. She will speak to Tom Kuroski about teacher time and will look at the routes with Mr. Dufour and Mrs. Vadas.