

Parents and Guardians:

For years our "little students" from the primary and elementary schools have been riding the bus to and from school with our "bigger students" from the middle school and high school. This has caused problems over the years with discipline, safety, and social issues. Some students attending our primary and elementary school are on their bus each morning for 90-120 minutes while middle and high school students are dropped off at their respective schools. In the afternoon, our "little students" are on the bus for 90-120 minutes including a minimum of 60 minutes for our primary and elementary students while waiting on the high school students to dismiss.

In order to address this issue, as well as identify other areas for improvement and strengths in our Transportation Department an *Efficiency and Operations Review* was conducted. This review was facilitated by Mr. Dannie Reed who is a retired educator that served for many years as the Transportation Director in both the Gwinnett County Schools and DeKalb County Schools. Upon his retirement, Mr. Reed has traveled all over the state conducting reviews leading to the implementation of either a Two-Tier or Three-Tier System in school districts across the state.

As part of Mr. Reed's recommendations and the approval by the BOE last evening, the Two-Tier System will be implemented in the Haralson County Schools beginning next year on August 5<sup>th</sup>. This system will incorporate the full use of a Versa Trans Program that will greatly assist with improving the efficiency of routing our student transportation. Also, the implementation of this system will allow for routes to be designed with one bus run to pick-up our primary/elementary students and one bus run to pick-up our middle/high school students. Through this proven system we will be able to separate our "little students" from our "bigger students" in both the morning and afternoon routes.

With the Two-Tier System our primary and elementary students will go straight to their school and spend far less time on a school bus each morning/afternoon since their route will no longer include the dropping-off/picking-up of middle and high school students first. According to our Transportation Director, Sue Thompson most of our students are picked-up between 6:00-6:15 a.m. for school. With the Two-Tier System students will not be picked-up up any earlier than 6:00 a.m. each morning.

As a result of this review and in collaborative agreement with all our principals new bell schedules have been approved by the BOE for implementation beginning with the upcoming school year beginning on August 5, 2014 (see below). As you will notice after reviewing these schedules, our primary and elementary students will be arriving earlier and our middle and high school students will be arriving later to start the school day during the 2014-2015 school year. Evidence suggests that teenagers are indeed seriously sleep deprived. A recent poll conducted by the National Sleep Foundation found that 60% of children under the age of 18 complained of being tired during the day, according to their parents, and 15% said they fell asleep at school during the year. Then there is House Congressional Resolution 135 expressing the sense of Congress that secondary schools should begin classes no earlier than 8:30 in the morning. The resolution goes on to state, "Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate concurring), that it is the sense of Congress that secondary schools should begin classes no earlier than 8:30 in the morning."

#### 2014-2015 Bell Schedules

##### BPS/TPS

Moving from 8:00 a.m. to a 7:20 a.m. start time

Moving from 3:00 p.m. to a 2:20 p.m. dismissal time

##### BES/WHES

Moving from 8:00 a.m. to a 7:30 a.m. start time

Moving from 3:05 p.m. to a 2:35 p.m. dismissal time

##### HCMS

Moving from 7:55 a.m. to 8:10 a.m. start time

Moving from 3:27 p.m. to 4:14 p.m. dismissal time

##### HCHS

Moving from 7:40 a.m. to 8:30 a.m. start time

Moving from 3:44 to 4:02 p.m. dismissal time

Please know I hope you and your family have a safe and enjoyable summer!

Sincerely,

*Brett Stanton*