

**Dexter Community Schools**  
**Single-Tier Transportation Plan**  
**(May 21, 2010)**

The following plan has been developed over the past six months as a result of an extensive independent study of our current transportation program, which yielded recommendations for making the system more efficient. The independent study was shared with the public through a series of well attended open meetings, where extensive public input was provided. A Draft Plan was then created by the administration and again, shared with the public, with feedback further shaping the plan as provided below.

**IMPORTANT:** The elements embodied in the proposed plan below attempt to describe the end result of full implementation as we see it from a purely operational point of view. The administration acknowledges that the plan below must next be made operational in the context of real-world complexities, with safety in the forefront of our thinking. We understand that this plan represents substantial change, which creates uncertainty and anxiety, especially in the absence of a detailed plan yet to be developed. Our next step is to continue fully and actively engaging the community as we create more specific plans. We will continue to gather input and are willing to make adjustments to the content and phasing of this plan to make it commensurate with to the needs and expectations of the community, while still aiming for the basic elements as set forth here. Perhaps it is not reasonable to expect every stakeholder to be pleased with every element of this plan. However, please understand that we have listened and made adjustments along the way, which has resulted in the plan improving over time. The administration is not finished listening-- we will continue to take input, weigh it, and adapt the plan as we move forward. Thanks for your feedback and your partnership!

**1) Transportation Center Remains at Current Site for 2010-11**

We plan to use what we learn from the implementation of transportation initiatives in 2010-11 to investigate, advise, and prepare for implementation of additional transportation initiatives for 2011-12. The decision to possibly relocate the transportation facility, the construction of a new central transfer location, and the construction of an intra-campus roadway for bus traffic will be deferred based upon community feedback.

**2) Reduce department overhead (Savings \$65,000-\$75,000)**

The new Transportation Director, together with his staff, are in the process of evaluating and developing a multi-year plan for an appropriate level of administration for the department. Implementation will occur over the next two years. With the magnitude of changes to service planned for 2010-11, adequate support will be necessary during the transition.

**3) Transfer special education transportation to WISD (Savings TBD)**

The WISD will take over all out of district special needs transportation using the countywide consolidated operation beginning in 2010-11. Special Education transportation of students attending schools within Dexter will continue to be provided by Dexter Schools. Special provisions will be made on an individual student basis to ensure the safe transport of students with special needs. In such cases, no transport zone/community hub stops would not apply.

**4) Pilot a central transfer location (Savings \$50,000)**

Pilot a central transfer location using the existing intra-campus roadway that extends from Bates Elementary to Wylie Elementary. All students will be dropped off and picked up at the central transfer location. Bates, Cornerstone and Wylie students will walk to and from their buildings to the central transfer location. Creekside students will be provided a shuttle and HS students will be provided a shuttle. Detailed plans for ensuring a safe and orderly on-campus walking experience for children will be developed and implemented. We are also willing to explore adaptations to the specific patterns outlined in this central transfer location plan. A dedicated crosswalk across Baker Road between Bates and Creekside is being planned in collaboration with the Village of Dexter. This crosswalk is currently designed with a pedestrian island and a specialized traffic signal. If/when this new crossing is constructed, the administration will evaluate its suitability for significant student traffic to/from school and may assign a crossing guard to the crosswalk. It is possible this new crosswalk could facilitate the migration of all Creekside students to and from the central transfer location as a way of augmenting or replacing the shuttle. This determination will not be made until after the crosswalk has been constructed.

**5) Implement a Community Stop/ No transport zone, mainly within the Village of Dexter (Savings \$180,000)**

General operating principle: All students in grades K through 12 residing within one and one-half (1 ½) miles (most are under 1 mile) from their home school may access community stops or will not be provided transportation services. A master plan will be developed in consultation with appropriate local authorities based upon an evaluation of local conditions, including availability of safe crossings, sidewalks, etc. We will work collaboratively with local neighborhoods and subdivisions to develop plans to enhance supervision and safety for students who walk to school or to community stops.

Our K-8 school buildings are for the most part within 1.1 miles walking distance of any Village address. HS students within the Village limits who are more than 1-1/2 miles from Dexter High School will be assigned a bus stop at the central transfer location near Wylie. The administration will work with the community to minimize walking distances.

We *will* provide a community stop or some level of transportation within this zone under the following conditions:

- Students who would have to cross over or under railroad tracks
- Students within the zone but outside the jurisdiction of the Village of Dexter (some possible exceptions TBD)

☒ Other hazardous conditions as identified by the Transportation Director.

We recognize that the no transport zone involves many complexities, entities and infrastructure considerations, and may be the most complex portion of the entire proposed plan. We further recognize that specific ages of children and locations of household create questions and anxieties about safety. Therefore, we will shortly begin engaging each area and neighborhood in the process of more detailed planing. We understand that people need specific information about this zone and, in the absence of such, are understandably very concerned about safety. The administration is committed to responsible planning and is willing to adapt the content and timing of the no transport element of the plan as necessary to ensure high levels of safety.

#### **6) Adjust Grade Configurations**

##### **Single bus run for grades K-12 (Savings \$200,000-\$275,000)**

*All schools start at approximately 8:00 a.m. and end at about 3:00 p.m.*

Since K-12 students will be riding together on the bus at the same time (as Chelsea and other districts have done for many years) we will be proactive in developing plans to ensure that K-12 students are separated on the bus by age. In addition, we will provide intensive, ongoing training to students and adults to promote positive peer modeling/mentoring, emphasizing the responsibility to care for one another. We recognize that some concern has been vocalized regarding single tier, but it is important to note that we have also received considerable feedback supporting single tier. Every system has advantages and drawbacks. Despite the concern of older students riding with younger, we also recognize that single tier allows more opportunity for students to ride with neighbors, babysitters, etc., while also allowing us to develop safety patrol and similarly organized peer supervision networks. In addition, single tier provides parents with a single departure time, possibly making mornings more convenient whether their children are walking, riding or driving. It's important to note that this entire plan is designed as a one year pilot, meaning that we will carefully evaluate the success of the single tier system and adjust accordingly.

##### **7) Hub bus stops (savings included in grade configuration)**

Hub bus stops will be developed and bus stops will not likely be directly in front of students' residences. School bus riders may find it necessary to travel some distance (likely a half-mile to one mile maximum) to a designated bus stop. We will not go into most subdivisions, public or private, unless it is necessary to create a safe or efficient route. Transportation will only be provided to and from the bus stops assigned and only to a single location. Any other arrangements are the responsibility of the student's parent or guardian. This will reduce ride time of students by reducing the number of times a bus has to stop to load students and unload students and reduce the miles required to provide personalized service. *We will evaluate each proposed hub stop for safety, and will not institute hub stops in areas where local conditions make their use unsafe.*

In establishing bus schedules, it shall be the objective to arrange for buses to arrive at school approximately 20 minutes before the scheduled time for the beginning of

scheduled activities in the morning and to leave approximately 10-15 minutes after the scheduled dismissal time.

**8) Communication, Education, Training, and Enforcement-- With a clear emphasis on maintaining Safety**

- Student communication, education, and training
- Bus Driver communication, education, and training
- Staff communication, education, and training
- Parent communication, education, and training
- Community communication, education, and training
- Neighborhood and Subdivision communication, education and training
- Work with District liaison officer, Village of Dexter, Washtenaw County Sheriff and others units of government as needed to encourage enforcement of traffic laws around school buses and school zones.

**9) Use what is learned in 2010-11 to advise plans for 2011-12**

Additional transportation initiatives for 2011-12 may include possible relocation of transportation facility, construction of central transfer location, contract negotiations, all-day kindergarten (eliminate mid-day kindergarten service), and reevaluation of joining the WISD transportation consortium.