

**Dexter Community Schools
Frequently Asked Questions
to the Transportation Study Presentations
(revision February 26, 2010)**

A. Background Information

A.1. What is our budget?

	2009-10 <u>Budget</u>	2008-09 <u>Actual</u>	2007-08 <u>Actual</u>
Student count (all students)	3,648	3,640	3,642
Transportation expenses	\$2,203,244	\$2,090,203	\$2,140,343**
** excludes \$295,261 school buses purchased from General Fund			
Transportation expenses per student (all students, not just riders)	\$604	\$574	\$588
Per pupil foundation	\$7,773*	\$7,938	\$7,843
* after proration of \$165 from the State			
Blended state aid membership count	3,605		
Foundation grant from State Aid	\$24,302,221		
General Fund expenses	\$35,979,311	\$34,948,448	\$34,446,115

A.2. How much do other districts spend on transportation services?

Michigan School Business Officials (MSBO) conducts a bi-annual Student Transportation Benchmarking Survey. The 2009 survey uses data from the 2007-08 fiscal year. While this is somewhat already dated, it provides some comparison.

From the MSBO Transportation Benchmarking Survey, data for the average cost of providing pupil transportation for each regular education student who rides the bus on count day, including bus amortization (which is not an operational expense on any budget), is as follows:

	<u>2007-08</u>
All Districts in Michigan	\$724
Southeast Michigan <i>(Macomb, Oakland, Washtenaw, Wayne)</i>	\$720
South Central Michigan <i>(Branch, Calhoun, Clinton, Eaton, Hillsdale, Ingham, Jackson, Lenawee, Livingston, Monroe)</i>	\$739
Riders 2000-3000 students	\$731
Dexter	\$905
Chelsea	\$703
Saline	\$607

The full study can be reviewed at:

<http://www.msbo.org/services/Trans/2009/BenchmarkSurvey.pdf>

A.3. How much should we spend on transportation services?

A lot of factors determine how much other districts spend on transportation services. Density of students per square mile, number of students transported, number of square miles, level of special education transportation services, and amount of amortization on a newer fleet are probably the biggest factors in benchmarking against other districts. For our district to be able to do a reasonable benchmark, we might take a subset of districts in the State. The data used was from the 2007-08 transportation data collection submissions (SE-4094) from every school district in the State. The subset was districts reporting between 1,000 and 3,500 riders on count day. There are 170 districts in the subset. From this data we would look at the average and total cost of providing pupil transportation for regular education students, excluding bus amortization and geographic area.

	2007-08					2008-09
	<u>Riders</u>	<u>Area</u>	<u>Expenditures</u>	<u>Per Rider</u>	<u>Rank</u>	<u>Per Rider</u>
Statewide	1,668	100	\$1,101,075	\$660		
Dexter	2,083	85	\$1,744,421	\$837	153/170	\$816
Chelsea	1,534	124	\$ 934,086	\$609	63/170	\$646
Saline	2,961	95	\$1,707,922	\$577	43/170	\$592

To be in the 25th percentile of districts with the lowest operating costs, we would need to target a per rider cost of \$577.

Due to the complexities in funding for special education transportation services, that data is specifically excluded, although data suggests a similar comparison between Dexter and other school districts.

A.4. Why are we being compared to Chelsea and Saline?

Chelsea and Saline have comparable geographic and demographic characteristics. Dexter and Saline currently have a dual tier system. Chelsea has a single tier system.

A.5. Why are all the budget cuts falling on the transportation department?

The District has been planning for budget reductions throughout the entire district. The information was presented to the Board of Education and the community at a special Board Meeting held on February 8. The District website has a PowerPoint presentation with comprehensive information about districtwide budget reductions:

<http://sites.google.com/a/dexterschools.org/dexterity/>

A.6. Why did we do this Transportation Study, who did it, how much did it cost, and who paid for it?

The 2008 Bond Issue included capital improvements to the transportation facility. During the pre-construction phase, the needs and requirements for the facility and site were evaluated by the architects and construction manager. The design development estimate exceeded the budget by over \$900,000. We were obligated to ask whether it was

financially prudent to invest in the current facility or develop alternatives that could increase the likelihood of developing a Transportation facility within the Bond budget. All District Bond projects have included a specific goal that the design and functionality should maximize operational cost savings.

A request for proposal (RFP) was issued March 18, 2009 for a Transportation Study to provide analysis and recommendation regarding whether the current transportation department bus facility located on Marshall Road should be modernized in place or relocated to a site that would result in greater operational efficiencies. Several proposals were received and reviewed.

Midwestern Consulting was engaged to perform the technical evaluation of the study. The cost of the technical evaluation was \$29,259. The District chose to engage a separate consultant to assist in conducting an outreach campaign with our stakeholders (employees, parents, board, administration, and community). Hulings & Associates LLC was engaged to perform an outreach process. The professional service fees are paid for with Bond funds.

The final report (July 2009) of the Transportation Study can be reviewed at: <http://sites.google.com/a/dexterschools.org/dexterity/home/transportation>

A.7. What is the district expecting to save by implementing the various components recommended in the Transportation Study?

The Transportation Study identified that the implementation of optimization, a single tier system, relocating the transportation facility, and no mid-day kindergarten transport would save, in combination, \$730,000. In addition, implementing the no transport zone would save an additional \$202,000. Full implementation of all components would save approximately \$900,000 of our \$2,200,000 total budget.

Based on the 2007-08 statewide average annual expenditures per regular education rider in districts transporting between 1000 and 3500 students is \$668. If we were to get into the top 25% of those districts, our cost per rider would be \$577 per student.

An actual transportation budget will be developed once decisions are made about which components will be implemented for the 2010-11 school year.

A.8. No mid-day Kindergarten transportation?

At the time we engaged the Transportation Study, we were planning for an upcoming State mandate of all day kindergarten. The State has since postponed the mandate, but we fully expect the mandate to be reintroduced in the next few years. In addition, research supports the all day Kindergarten model. Our restructuring themes include both budget reductions and program enhancements. One of the program enhancements under consideration is the addition of all day Kindergarten, while maintaining a ½ day Kindergarten option. Mid-day Kindergarten transportation will not be provided for students.

A.9. Do the savings listed in the study include any capital costs that may be necessary to expend to allow for a single tier system or a relocated facility?

Capital related costs were purposely excluded from the transportation study. The 2008 bond issue was specifically designed to include capital improvements that would reduce ongoing operational costs AND to move the purchase of capital equipment (i.e. buses and computers) out of general fund.

Transportation related items included in the bond issue were:

\$6.1 million	79 school buses over ten years (we have purchased 15)
\$3.8 million	Facility renovation and security
\$1.5 million	Intercampus roadway for bus traffic

A single tier system, combined with no mid-day kindergarten routes, would reduce the miles driven per bus per year by more than one-half. In 2007-08 we drove 480,000 miles with our regular education buses, averaging 17,700 miles per bus and 100,000 miles with our special education buses, averaging 16,900 miles per bus. In 2008-09 we drove 470,000 miles with our regular education buses, averaging 17,400 miles per bus and 94,000 miles with our special education buses, averaging 18,800 miles per bus. On average, we “use up” a bus in 5.6 years. Chelsea, on a single tier system, averages 8,900 miles per bus per year. Statewide, buses average a 12-year replacement cycle, and this is consistent with industry best practices (source: MSBO Student Transportation Benchmarking Survey). Our bond dollars for the purchase of school buses would last longer.

A.10. How much does a bus cost?

The most recent 71-passenger buses we purchased cost \$77,179. Hybrid buses cost an additional \$90,000-\$150,000 depending on the type of battery used. Hybrid buses are most effective in urban settings. We could explore grant opportunities to introduce hybrid buses to the district.

A.11. Will we need to hire more bus drivers?

It will depend on which components we choose to implement. The Transportation Study was based on the configuration of the Transportation department at the time the study was conducted in April 2009. At that time we employed:

- 1 Director
- 1 Assistant Director/dispatcher
- 1 Secretary (has since been eliminated)
- 2 Mechanics
- 33 Bus Drivers (before changes implemented February 1, 2010)

At that time we had 27 dual tier bus runs of regular education students, 5 bus runs of special education students, a vocational education run, 5 mid-day AM kindergarten runs, and 5 mid-day PM kindergarten runs.

If we fully implement all components suggested by the study, a no-transport zone, no mid-day kindergarten routes, a relocated facility, and a single tier system we would need 28-29 regular education routes and 3-4 special education routes which would be a total of 31-33 bus drivers.

A.12. How will these changes affect the bus driver’s pay and benefits?

\$1.8 million of the current transportation budget (83%) pays for salaries and benefits for transportation employees, including bus drivers under a contract negotiated between their union affiliation and the board of education. Depending on the number and length of the bus runs, some changes may result in a reduction of the number of bus drivers and their hours.

B. Transportation Regulations

B.1. Isn't the school district required to transport my child?

School districts are NOT required by law to transport regular education students. Michigan Compiled Law (MCL) 380.1321 outlines the obligations of the school district IF its board of education elects to provide transportation. Under Article 3 of the Revised School Code, the school district is obligated to provide for the transportation of a special education student if the Individualized Educational Planning Committee (IEPC) has determined that the transportation is a specialized service which is included within and necessary to carry out the student's IEP.

B.2. Can't the school district just charge parents for transportation services?

No. IF the board of education elects to provide transportation, then transportation shall be without charge. Michigan Compiled Law (MCL) 380.1321 outlines the obligations of the school district for Transportation for pupils; requirements; payment.

The board of a school district may collect a fee for transporting pupils enrolled in grades K to 12 to or from nonmandatory and noncredit events sponsored by the school district (Michigan Compiled Law (MCL) 380.1332)

B.3. Can't the school district eliminate high school transportation services?

The board of education can define different levels of transportation for the elementary school level, middle school level, or high school level and can provide all, some, or no transportation for the different levels. Michigan Compiled Law (MCL) 380.1321 outlines the obligations of the school district for Transportation for pupils; requirements; payment.

We are not considering the elimination of transportation at any levels.

C. Optimization of Current Operations

C.1. How many students does a bus hold?

School buses transport passengers in a wide range of sizes. The bus seat is 39 inches wide and generally is considered to have a maximum seating capacity of three. This capacity rating is not meant to be a measure of the absolute capacity of the school bus seat for all sizes of passengers. Rather, it is the “rated maximum capacity” as determined by the

school bus body manufacturer and specified on the vehicle. The capacity is rated based on passengers being approximately 4 feet 11 inches tall and weighing 102 pounds. Most of our buses are designed to carry a maximum of 71 students. In practice, a 39-inch seat may safely accommodate three primary school-aged children yet two older children.

The 2009 MSBO Student Transportation Benchmarking Survey reported that 16% of districts use 3 per seat in all grades, 21% use 3 per seat in elementary and middle school and 2 per seat in high school, 55% use 3 per seat in elementary school and 2 per seat in middle and high school, 8% use 2 per seat in all grades.

When considering seating guidelines there must be sufficient space on the school bus seat for each passenger's body to be completely within the seat compartment. In the event of a crash or sudden driving maneuver, students that are not properly seated within the seat compartment may not benefit from the passenger crash protection systems built into the school bus under Federal and State Regulations. We will NEVER exceed the maximum capacity of any bus at any time.

We will evaluate future bus purchases for the efficiency that can be gained from purchasing 77 passenger school buses.

C.2. What guidelines do we currently follow for how many students are on our buses?

We do not have steadfast rules on deciding how many students are actually transported in our school buses.

Our utilization of the available seats on our school buses (on student count day in 2007-08) for regular education students was:

K-12 (3 per seat)	49.7%
K-8 (3 per seat)/9-12 (2 per seat)	51%
K-6 (3 per seat)/7-12 (2 per seat)	54%

C.3. Has our utilization increased since the routing changes were implemented on February 1, 2010?

K-12 (3 per seat)	55%
K-8 (3 per seat)/9-12 (2 per seat)	57%
K-6 (3 per seat)/7-12 (2 per seat)	61%

C.4. How can three students ride to a seat with all their backpacks and instruments?

The school bus is not to be used for transporting freight, goods, or merchandise other than that which is carried on the laps of individual passengers (MCL 257.1865(5)(c)). On days where a student needs to bring more items than can be placed on his/her lap, the parent should consider an alternate transportation arrangement to school.

C.5. How can a school bus driver manage that many students on a bus?

A school bus transports up to 71 students, a number of students far greater than what a classroom teacher would be expected to supervise alone. School bus drivers are confronted with this task on a daily basis. Qualified and well-trained drivers are the main defense keeping our school buses safe.

The District needs to provide school bus drivers with instruction and training on proper school bus etiquette including boarding and leaving the bus, evacuation of the bus in an emergency, road crossing procedures and the correct hand signal in the district, requirements of the Pupil Transportation Act, and student management. The Transportation Director has always had a discretionary budget for the professional development. In addition, our risk management carrier (insurance pool) and the Washtenaw Intermediate School District have opportunities for training at no or low cost to the District. Other aides such as cameras or bus buddies could be utilized as means of positive behavior supports.

C.6. The students think the bus is a playground. How will that many more students behave if congregated at bus stops or on the bus?

In addition to qualified and well-trained drivers, the students need to know the rules --- and obey them. The school district needs to provide students instruction on proper school bus safety including the time they are at the bus stop, boarding the bus, on the bus, exiting the bus, evacuation of the bus, road crossing procedures, and the correct hand signal in the district.

C.7. The number of students riding the bus fluctuates day to day. How will we determine how many students to schedule on a bus?

It may not be possible to know exactly how many students will arrive at the school bus stops on a route seeking transportation to and from school. We may need to survey parents in advance to better determine transportation needs. At certain times, there may be instances where overcrowding exists temporarily on some school buses. In such situations, additional efforts will be made to provide safe seating to all school bus passengers in a timely and efficient manner, so that during regular operations all passengers are safely seated.

From 2007-08 District count data, we experienced a 2.3% drop-off of student riders by mid-year.

C.8. How does the modeling in the Transportation Study relate to the maximum capacity of the bus?

The Transportation Study was modeled to pick up 69 students on first run (grades 5-12) and 71 students on second run (grades K-4) based on the actual students who rode the bus on those days that the data was collected in April 2009, and did not account for non-riding student fluctuations that may occur day to day. Thus there will be days when the actual number of riders will be less than the planned number of riders. Once routes are established, there will NEVER be a day when the number of students assigned to a bus exceeds its capacity.

C.9. Will children be allowed to cross paved roadways in the future?

Michigan Compiled Law (MCL) 257.1855(4) and (5) outlines the regulations for crossing roads and prohibited stops. A comprehensive PowerPoint presentation regarding the correct procedures for receiving and discharging pupils is available on the Michigan State Police website at:

[http://www.michigan.gov/documents/schoolbusstops\(revised\)_63777_7.ppt](http://www.michigan.gov/documents/schoolbusstops(revised)_63777_7.ppt)

In accordance with State law, at a minimum, students will not be allowed to cross paved roadways in the following instances:

- Within 200 feet of a public or private roadway intersection unless the stop is approved by the school administrator.
- Upon a roadway that has been divided into 2 roadways by leaving a center median.
- Upon a roadway constructed or marked to permit 3 or more separate lanes of vehicular traffic in either direction.
- If the lawful speed limit is more than 35 miles per hour and the stopped bus is not clearly and continuously visible to approaching vehicles on that highway or roadway for at least 400 feet. When the distance from the stopped bus to the end of the highway or roadway is less than 400 feet, clear and continuous visibility must be available from the bus to the end of the highway or roadway.
- If the lawful speed limit is 35 miles per hour or less and the stopped bus is not clearly and continuously visible to approaching vehicles on that highway or roadway, for at least 200 feet. When the distance from the stopped bus to the end of the highway or roadway is less than 200 feet, clear and continuous visibility must be available from the bus to the end of the highway or roadway.
- Within 50 feet of an intersection if the intersection is controlled by a traffic control signal.

The school district has discretion to be more selective on roads we choose to allow students to cross.

C.10. How can we protect our students when people speed excessively on our main thoroughfares?

Community input has made us acutely aware that some motorists are either unaware or choose to disobey traffic laws around school buses and school zones. We can and will reach out to the public to educate them about the traffic laws related to student transportation. We will fully cooperate with law enforcement agencies to enforce traffic laws related to the safety of our students.

- Red overhead flashing lights tell the driver of a motor vehicle that the school bus is stopped to load or unload children. State law requires a vehicle to stop at least 20 feet from the front or rear of a school bus when red lights are flashing and not proceed until the school bus resumes motion or until signaled by the school bus driver to proceed (MCL 257.682, Michigan Vehicle Code).
- A driver of a motor vehicle must stop when a school crossing guard is in a school crossing and is holding a stop sign in an upright position visible to approaching vehicular traffic (MCL 257.613d, Michigan Vehicle Code).

C.11. What factors are involved in establishing where the school bus stops?

There are many factors that are taken into consideration when establishing the placement of school bus stops. The basic legal factors are spelled out in MCL 257.1855, but the primary concern is visibility of the bus to other traffic and the consideration of stopping sight distances necessary for other motor vehicles in order to accomplish safe loading and unloading of the children. In general, state law requires 400 feet of clear and continuous visibility on a highway or roadway where the speed limit is more than 35 miles per hour, and 200 feet where the speed limit is less than 35 miles per hour. There is no state law that specifies a maximum distance between stops, however because of the requirements of actuating the hazard (yellow) flashers, the minimum distance between stops is effectively 200 feet.

A comprehensive PowerPoint presentation regarding school bus stops is available on the Michigan State Police website at:

[http://www.michigan.gov/documents/schoolbusstops\(revised\)_63777_7.ppt](http://www.michigan.gov/documents/schoolbusstops(revised)_63777_7.ppt)

C.12. Is there a law about how far my child has to walk to the bus stop?

No law specifies the maximum distance a student may walk to the bus stop.

C.13. What about the safety of my child getting to and from the bus stop? There are no sidewalks where we live and it's not very safe walking on the busy road we live on.

It is the responsibility of the parent or legal guardian to see that a child gets safely to and from the bus stop. The school district provides transportation as a non-mandated service and establishes placement of the bus stops in accordance with the requirements of the law.

C.14. My child spends over two hours a day just riding the bus to and from school. Is there a maximum riding time in the law?

There is not maximum riding time in the law for children in kindergarten through grade twelve. However, we are sensitive to minimizing ride time on the bus. The current configuration of pickup at every individual school building, constraints we have in place about right side of the road pick-up and right turn only routing, in addition to pick up locations in private subdivisions adds significantly to the time the students are on the bus. The optimization of our current operations will require that we modify our current constraints. A central transfer location outlined below will eliminate the time spent on the bus driving between school buildings, and subsequently reduce the time students spend on the school bus.

Another factor in student drop-off time involves the length of time it takes to load the buses and get them on the road to take students home. By creating at a central pick-up and drop-off location multiple schools could load or unload at a common time. We know that from a child's perspective, the length of the trip home starts at dismissal and ends when they arrive in the house. By trying to route efficiently and make afternoon pick-up procedures more streamlined, we are attempting to address overall trip length.

The Transportation Study model predicts the average length of time spent on a bus once it has either made its first pick-up in the am, or once the pupils have boarded in the pm for each scenario:

- Grades 5-12 pickup of the optimized dual tier system with the current transportation facility: 32 minutes (average), with a range between 16 minutes and 53 minutes.
- Grades K-4 pickup of the optimized dual tier system with the current transportation facility: 36 minutes (average), with a range between 15 minutes and 51 minutes.
- Grades 5-12 pickup of the optimized dual tier system with the moved transportation facility: 36 minutes (average), with a range between 15 minutes and 54 minutes.
- Grades K-4 pickup of the optimized dual tier system with the moved transportation facility: 37 minutes (average), with a range between 19 minutes and 65 minutes.
- Single K-12 pickup with the current transportation facility: 33 minutes (average), with a range between 16 minutes and 62 minutes.
- Single K-12 pickup with the relocated transportation facility: 30 minutes (average), with a range between 16 minutes and 57 minutes.

Remember that the relocated facility will allow a 2-bus reduction so the increased average riding time is a function of greater use of bus capacity and thus the longer average riding times.

D. No-Transport Zone/ Central Transfer Location

D.1. How will we determine the areas of the village for a no-transport zone?

Suggested “no-transport zone” maps have been presented to administration over the years by the Transportation Director. The practical suggestion has been that a no-transport zone be established for all village residents living within 1-1/2 miles of the pupil’s school building excluding those pupils who would be required to cross (over or under) any railroad crossings that do not have specific pedestrian crossings.

A school district is not required to transport or pay for transportation of a resident pupil living within 1-1/2 miles, by the nearest traveled route, to the public or state approved nonpublic school in which the pupil is enrolled (MCL 380.1321).

D.2. How may students that are currently transported actually live in a possible no-transport zone?

In April 2009, there were 276 students who live within a possible no-transport zone (who reside in the Village).

D.3. How will students who live in the no-transport zone get to school?

That will be up to the parent. Some options are to walk, bike, be transported by the parent, walk with parent, or carpool with friends or neighbors.

D.4. How can the students walk safely across the roadways?

Safety of our students is a team effort. In partnership with the Village of Dexter, the Washtenaw County Sheriff, Dexter Community Schools, and parent groups we are committed to student safety. The Village of Dexter has made significant commitment to making this a walkable community. Crosswalks have already been added throughout the village and more will be added. Safe Routes to Schools, a parent-initiative that had previously been formed and received grant funding, possibly could be relaunched. Our students need to know rules for safety – and obey them.

D.5. Who will pay for the added cost of crossing guards?

We use district employees as crossing guards, however the Village reimburses us for the cost. The Village is responsible for the cost of crossing guards (MCL 357.163(c)).

D.6. What is a central transfer location?

A location that serves both as a drop off and pick up location and parking for buses. Students would be dropped off at this location and walk to their respective buildings (or get onto a shuttle bus to the High School). At the end of the day, students would walk to this central location to get on their respective school bus.

D.7. What happens when it snows and rains and is cold outside? How will the kids walk to school from home or from the central transfer location?

Parents are responsible to be sure their children are appropriately dressed for the weather conditions expected during the day.

During extreme inclement weather students who normally ride the bus would be provided a revised service directly to school buildings to protect students from extreme elements, which may involve delayed drop off times at students' homes.

D.8. Will the central transfer location increase traffic in the village?

No. Buses would be removed from Village streets and neighborhoods if they occupy a central transfer location and will no longer circulate on Village streets between adjacent schools. One of the major causes of congestion in the Village of Dexter, at certain times of the day, is school buses.

E. Single Tier System

E.1. What is a single tier system?

A single tier system is when all students in grades K-12 are consolidated for a single ride time, such as Chelsea and Manchester school districts currently use. All buses would be dispatched on routes throughout the district in the morning and pick up all students in grades K through 12 and take them to school. We currently operate a dual tier system where buses are dispatched on routes throughout the district to pick up students in grades 5-12 and take them to their schools, then the buses rerun routes throughout the district a second time to pick up students in grades K-4. Five of the buses are dispatched a third time to pick up the PM K students and five additional buses a fourth time to drop off AM K students.

E.2. How does a single tier system save money?

All of our buses drive routes throughout our 85 square miles two times every morning and two times every afternoon. Ten more buses drive routes throughout our 85 square miles an additional time every day. By picking up all the students at the same time, the buses will only drive routes throughout our 85 square miles one time in the morning and one time in the afternoon. By implementing a standard program of all-day kindergarten the mid-day routes would also be eliminated. A single tier system is when all students in K-12 are consolidated for a single ride time.

Special education transportation would also realize significant savings. In 07-08 the special education rider count was 53 riders and we had 6 bus routes. In 08-09 the special education rider count was 50 riders on 5 bus routes. Again, each route served K-4 and 5-12 separately.

If we reduce our number of miles driven annually by more than 50%, we would achieve savings from fuel, maintenance, and repairs exceeding 50%. Our vehicle related purchases totaled \$216,611 in 2008-09 and \$307,907 in 2007-08 (The price we paid for fuel was \$1.86/gallon in 2008-09 and \$3.08/gallon in 2007-08.)

E.3. Has anyone done a study of how many parents would drive his or her kids if we went to a single tier system?

We contacted 40 school districts whose average annual expenditures per regular education rider (2007-08 data) was in the lowest one-half of school districts transporting between 1000 –3500 students. In those with a single tier system (2007-08 data) 64% of students rode the bus. Those with a dual or three-tier system had a 56% of students ride the bus. Dexter (dual tier) has 57% riders, Chelsea (single tier) has 57% riders, and Saline (dual tier) has 54% riders. It is possible that implementing a single tier system would increase the number of students who ride the school bus.

E.4. How does the modeling in the single tier Transportation study relate to the maximum capacity of the bus?

In the Transportation study, the model used 71 students per bus at the K-4 level and 69 students per bus at the 5-12 level.

However, in practice, in a single tier system, the assignment of students will be a blend of 3 students per seat at the K-6 or K-8 level and 2 students per seat at the 7-12 or the 9-12 level. In a single tier system between 62 and 64 students will actually be on each bus.

In an optimized dual tier system, the assignment of students will target 3 students per seat at the K-6 or K-8 level and 2 students per seat at the 7-12 or the 9-12 level. In building optimized routes we expect that there will be approximately 46-60 students per bus on the first run and up to 71 students per bus on the second run.

E.5. How can we expect a kindergarten student to ride the same bus as a high school student?

A single tier system is common throughout the State. Locally, both Chelsea and Manchester schools use a single tier system. Preliminary contact with districts that already have a single tier system yielded only positive comments. “Switched to a one-tier system two years ago. We have not seen an increase in discipline problems, and parents have not made any complaints.” “It really isn't a problem and quite honestly the older kids that do ride the bus are very helpful to the driver with the little ones!”

There were 114 school districts that responded to the 2009 MSBO Transportation Benchmarking Survey (there are 611 school districts in the State who provided any type of transportation service). The “typical” district that responded to the survey was a district operated transportation program (versus privatized) utilizing 33 buses in a single bell system (versus dual or three-tier system) that transported slightly more than 2,000 students.

Operational procedures will need to be developed to support a single tier system. We will continue to gather specific details about operational procedures and impact of a single tier system from districts that already use a single tier system.

We currently have students assigned to specific seats or rows of seats. A bus under a single tier system might be depicted:

Driver					
K-2	K-2	K-2	K-2	K-2	K-2
K-2	K-2	K-2	K-2	K-2	K-2
K-2	K-2	K-2	K-2	K-2	K-2
WY	WY	WY	WY	WY	WY
WY	WY	WY	WY	WY	WY
CRK	CRK	CRK	CRK	CRK	CRK
CRK	CRK	CRK	CRK	CRK	CRK
MC	MC	MC	MC	MC	MC
MC	MC	MC	MC	MC	MC
MC	MC	MC	MC	MC	MC
DHS	DHS	DHS	DHS	DHS	DHS
DHS	DHS	DHS	DHS	DHS	DHS

E.6. How long will my child be on the bus if we implement a single tier system?

The Transportation Study model predicts the average length of time spent on a bus once it has either made its first pick-up in the am, or once the pupils have boarded in the pm:

- Single K-12 pickup with the current transportation facility: 33 minutes (average), with a range between 16 minutes and 62 minutes.
- Single K-12 pickup with the relocated transportation facility: 30 minutes (average), with a range between 16 minutes and 57 minutes.

As we do currently, the first student picked up in the morning (rides the bus the longest) would be the first student dropped off in the afternoon (rides the bus the shortest).

F. Relocation of Transportation Facility

F.1. Where will the relocated transportation facility be located?

We do not know for sure because we have not been through a site selection process. The Transportation Study assumed a location central to our current school buildings. During a site selection process we would evaluate multiple sites.

F.2. What attributes would the relocated transportation facility have?

The desirable attributes were listed in the presentation and included:

- Area – 7 to 8 acres
- Utilities – water, sewer, natural gas, telephone
- Compatible surrounding land uses (nonresidential)
- Future land use
- Transportation Safety,
- Connectivity/Congestion
- Noise Compatibility
- Drainage and wetlands
- Employee parking
- Berm & landscape
- Air quality emissions
- District ownership
- Security & supervision
- Site flexibility
- Site plan approval
- Centrally located

F.3. How is the existing Transportation Facility deficient?

The current facility was built in 1988, when our student enrollment was 1,951 students. We currently have 3,648 students.

We own 5 acres of land, on an unpaved road, located in the southern portion of the school district boundaries. Access to major thoroughfares is by a stop sign at Baker Road and a stop sign at Zeeb Road. There is not sufficient space for on-site parking for our bus fleet and bus drivers' personal vehicles. The offices and the building are not compliant with Americans with Disability Act (ADA), the parking lot is gravel contributing to premature corrosion of buses, the bays cannot accommodate newer longer buses, there is no wash bay, there is no fill overflow protections at the fuel facility, the site does not comply with current Scio Township regulations, the portable buildings where the offices are located

are inefficient to operate, the roofs leak, and the floors are weak, and the connectivity of internet and telephone service has been costly and unreliable, to name a few deficiencies.

If the facility is renovated for any improvements, it must be brought up to current standards, including standards for storm water detention.

F.4. We only have two mechanics, why do we need four bus bays?

The facility should be sized to enable you to service 10% of your fleet in a day. With 36 buses, we need to be able to service 4 buses. We also anticipate that we will resume our growth trends when the economy improves. Currently there are times when two bays are full and one bus is waiting on parts, then we only have one operational bay for preventive maintenance or other repairs of the buses. When this happens, we need to reassemble the bus and move it into the parking lot until the parts arrive.

F.5. Can't we contract bus-washing needs instead of building a bus wash bay?

Buses should be washed weekly, which is not our current practice, because of cost. The portable power washer we have cannot adequately flush the undercarriage. We have used the bus wash facility at the truck stop at I-94 and Baker Road. The cost is approximately \$45 per bus, plus bus driver time and mileage. Annual operating costs for this bus wash option approaches \$60,000, plus driver wages. An on-site powering washing contractor charges nearly \$500 per wash cycle. Annual operating costs for this bus wash option approaches \$20,000.

Especially with optimized systems, the buses will be expected to last longer and corrosion will be a limiting factor in how long our buses will last. We plan to include a bus wash bay in the renovated or relocated facility. The cost of equipment and installation will be paid for by the bond project. The water would be reclaimed and recycled so the only operational costs would be limited to make up quantities of water.

F.6. Why have we identified Wylie as a possible site location?

The bond project included several different projects that if combined with integrated design and functionality, would enable us to accomplish multiple needs within the funding allocated. In addition, we are prohibited from building a new stand-alone transportation facility, so a relocated facility would need to be attached to an existing district building. Budgets for the transportation facility renovation and security, an intercampus roadway to separate bus and car traffic at Wylie, renovations at Wylie pool, and renovations at Wylie Elementary School all tend to suggest Wylie as a location we should further investigate.

Wylie is a central location to our school buildings, has space in the rear wing that could be renovated into transportation offices, bus drivers could use existing parking lots for personal vehicles, the Wylie pool accesses water utility that excludes sewer consumption that could be tapped for the make-up water for a bus wash bay. The only addition necessary would be the 4-bay garage. The Wylie playground on the west side of the building could be relocated to the east side of the building.

Moving all school bus access to Dan Hoey Road would remove school bus traffic from Village streets and neighborhoods. Dan Hoey Road is a major street with existing traffic signals located at Ann Arbor Road and Baker Road. These traffic signals can be easily retimed to accommodate the changing bus volumes associated with the central transfer location.

F.7. What will be the cost of the relocated facility?

Transportation facility related items included in the bond issue were:

\$3.8 million	Facility renovation and security
\$1.5 million	Intercampus roadway for bus traffic

F.8. Have we considered displaced fields if we would use a site at Wylie?

Yes. We would relocate displaced fields. We would work with current users of the fields to determine the most appropriate options.

F.9. What fuel do we use in the buses?

Currently we use premium diesel fuel that has lower emissions (burns cleaner) than regular diesel fuel. Our buses are under stricter Federal emission regulations than are normal automobile diesel engines.

Our current underground fuel tanks preclude our ability to switch to biodiesel. If we install new tanks at the relocated facility (or existing facility) then we would be able to use biodiesel in our existing and future buses. Biodiesel fuels generate lower emissions than the premium diesel fuel we currently use.

Community input has suggested, and we will look at, future bus purchases to be of hybrid and/or natural gas technologies.

F.10. What will be the air quality impact on our students in the school buildings near the central transfer location?

This is an area that needs further study. The transportation facilities at many school districts are adjacent to school buildings.

Our expectation is that with the optimized system and the relocated facility, total engine run time is predicted to be less than current operations. The operational plan for the system will minimize the amount of time the buses are running during the school day. Particularly, the buses may be directed to start up in the afternoon only after all students are loaded on the buses. The need for warm up time in the afternoon is unnecessary (and not currently done).

Although the buses will be running for less time than they are now, if it is decided that the facility should be relocated, we will we will look at the impact of the revised starting patterns and test to make sure that adjacent buildings ventilation systems are structured in such a way that fresh air intakes do not include air that may be negatively impacted by clean diesel emissions or biodiesel emissions.

F.11. What will be the air quality impact be on the area near the central transfer location when buses are started up each morning?

The operational plan for the system will minimize the amount of time the buses are running each morning. Under normal operating conditions, buses are not started until after the pre-trip inspection. The buses are then started and after approximately 10 minutes the air pressure builds in the brake system, the buses leave the parking lot. Buses burn a lot of fuel at idle and it is not our operating practice. During cold weather 10 degrees F and below, buses are started 20 minutes prior to departure. During these times, no students are in adjacent buildings and there is a significant delay between the bus startup and when students enter the buildings.

F.12. Will the District be doing an Environmental Impact Study (EPA) on a new location?

No. The National Environmental Protection Act criteria for mandating an Environmental Impact Study is not needed because no federal funds are being used to support the bond project.

F.13. Is the current site contaminated or a Brownfield?

We do not know, but we have no indications that would lead us to believe that there is contamination. A level-2 contamination screening would verify the presence of underground containments. The cost would be approximately \$1,500. This would be a normal part of a site plan process.

F.14. If we relocate the transportation facility, what would happen to the current site?

No options have been considered.

G. Timeline

G.1. What is the next step?

On March 1, the Board of Education will be presented with an overview from the Transportation Study consultants and the results of the Transportation Study community forum series. Administration will then develop a recommendation for implementation of specific initiatives. District administration will continue to include the leadership of the drivers in our ongoing discussions.

G.2. What is the timeline for implementing components of the Transportation Study?

The Washtenaw ISD countywide transportation study will be completed in mid-April and the District will need to be prepared to evaluate the countywide initiative against our own initiatives at that time.

A transition plan to implement any selected individual components will be developed shortly after decisions are made to implement them. Timelines will be determined based on the needs specified in the transition plan. We understand that in order to implement any of the components for 2010-11 decisions need to be made soon.

We realize not all components could possibly be implemented for the 2010-11 school year. For example, a possible relocation of the Transportation facility will require investigation, planning, and construction that would not be complete until the 2011-12 school year. All day kindergarten (and associated elimination of the mid-day routes) are under consideration for the 2011-12 school year, and not sooner. We realize that not all cost saving initiatives would be fully realized in 2010-11 and our plan will need to include a phased implementation.