

Tweak Committee Report

Tweak Committee

Four sub-committees were formed:

1. Alternative Transportation Methods
2. Consortia
3. Out-of Boundary Programs
4. Transportation Department Efficiencies

Subcommittee Reports

Each committee met separately to collect data, research, and develop recommendations.

Alternative Transportation Methods

Include taxis and other contracted transportation services,
public transportation,
private vehicles,
bicycling and walking

Alternative Transportation Methods

Examples of programs needing alternatives:

- Contracted transportation services (taxis) currently cost \$4.2 million per year.
 - \$2.0 million to transport 144 special education students
 - \$2.2 million to transport 218 students in alternative programs

362 students total
- Some full-size school buses transport less than 5 students to academies and special programs.
- Of the \$964,000 total cost to transport 4,200 Academy students, \$405,576 is incurred transporting 261 students on buses with 5 or fewer passengers.

Alternative Transportation Methods

Develop a partnership organization to support the schools in encouraging alternatives to school buses such as:

- Way to Go (Richmond, BC, Canada)
- Safe Routes to School (Arlington, VA)

Examples of resources available:

- Safe Biking Routes to Work Map (Fairfax County, VA)
- PTAs and local community to identify safe walking and biking paths
- Work with county and state transportation planners on pedestrian safety

Alternative Transportation Methods

- Consider linking transportation alternatives with Fairfax County's 20-year environmental plan or "cool counties initiative."
- Find routes on which public transportation can replace school buses

Alternative Transportation Methods

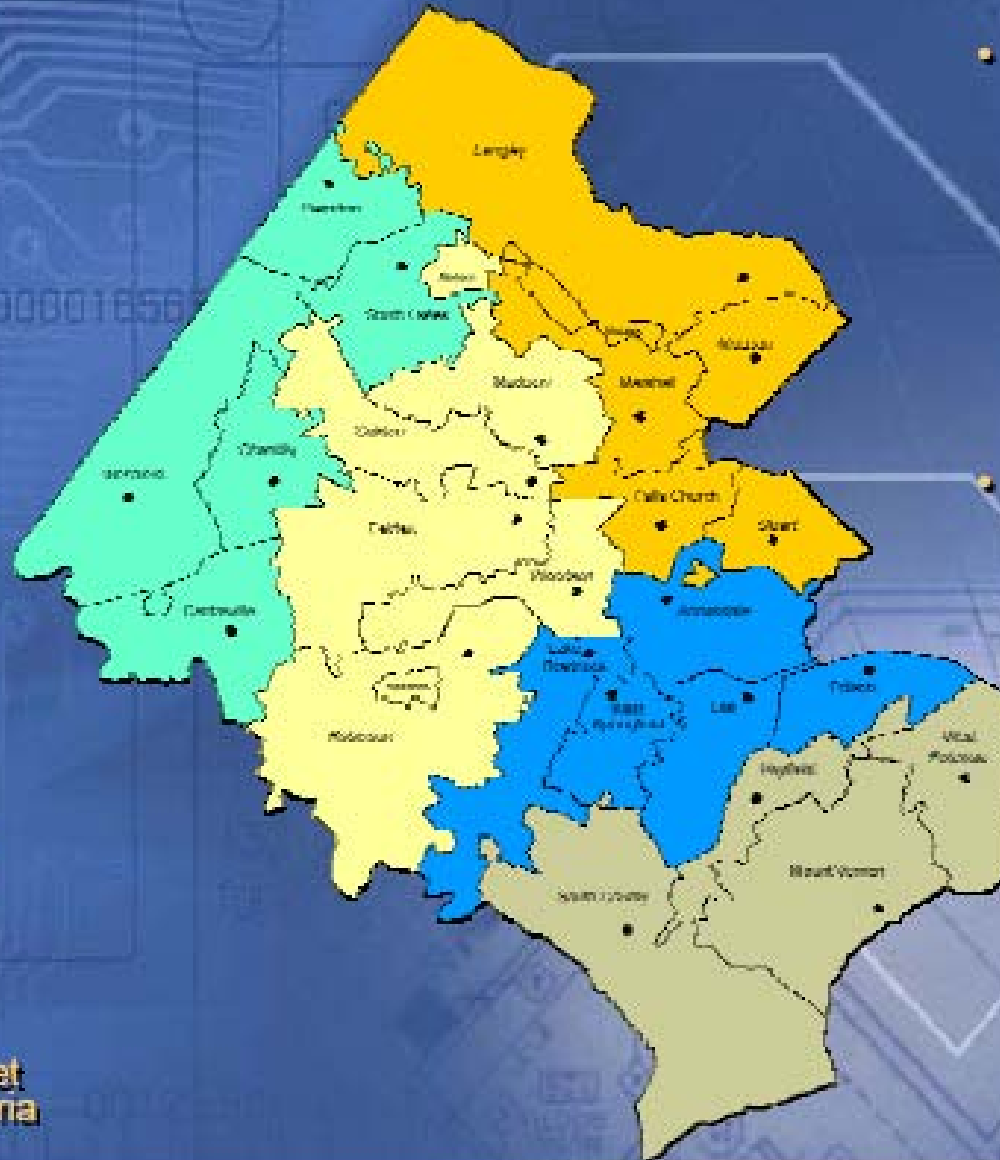
- Survey students on why they travel to school the way they do and alternative methods they would consider taking.

Consortia

FCPS developed 5 consortia to facilitate instruction and transportation of high school students in academies and specialized courses. Each high school consortium is developing similar offerings, eliminating the need for students to leave its boundaries for those programs.

Adopted Consortia

- **A**
 - Falls Church
 - Langley
 - Marshall
 - McLean
 - Stuart
 - Pimmit Hills*
 - TJHSST*
- **B**
 - Annandale
 - Lee
 - W. Springfield
 - L. Braddock
 - Edison
- **C**
 - Hayfield
 - Mt. Vernon
 - South County
 - W. Potomac
 - Bryant*



- **X**
 - Oakton
 - Madison
 - Fairfax
 - Robinson
 - Woodson
- **Y**
 - Centreville
 - South Lakes
 - Chantilly
 - Herndon
 - Westfield
 - Mt. View*

*students must meet enrollment criteria

Area 1

- Edison HS
- Hayfield HS
- L. Braddock HS
- Lee HS
- Mt. Vernon HS
- South County HS
- W Potomac HS
- W Springfield H

Area 2

- Annandale HS
- Centreville HS
- Chantilly HS
- Fairfax HS
- Robinson HS
- Stuart HS
- TJHSST
- Westfield HS
- Woodson HS

Area 3

- Falls Church HS
- Herndon HS
- Langley HS
- Madison HS
- Marshall HS
- McLean HS
- Oakton HS
- South Lakes HS

Tranportation
Area 3

Transportation
Area 2

Transportation
Area 1



0 2 4 8 12 Miles

Consortia

Expand the high school consortia plan to include the elementary and middle schools.

Consortia

Each consortium can be self-contained, providing the following benefits:

- Busing within the consortium alleviates long bus rides
- Student opportunities within the base school or nearby locations
- Cross-consortia busing would be prohibited except for programs that would not be cost effective to duplicate (e.g., hearing and visually impaired or TJHSST).

Transportation and administration should consider decentralization into areas paralleling the consortia

Out-of-Boundary Programs

- No change recommended for mandated programs.
- Bailey's and Hunter's Woods magnet program transportation is highly efficient and should be used as a model for other programs.
- GT students should attend base school GT program or geographically closest GT center. Parents can pupil place students, but transport to another GTC would not be provided.

Out-of-Boundary Programs

Grandfathering

- Do not provide transportation.
- Students who wish to attend the school of their choice should pupil place and the family should provide transportation.

Out-of-Boundary Programs

Administratively Placed Students

- Consider transportation requirements
- Make every effort to place these students in schools for which there already is nearby transportation.
- Require registration for transportation and if legally possible, a \$150 registration fee (waived for free and reduced lunch.)

Out-of-Boundary Programs

Academy transportation

- Provided only when there are 5 or more students riding the bus.

Exception-to-ride

- Eliminate or institute in the second quarter to avoid conflict with the enormous workload that supervisors experience in September.

Out-of-Boundary Programs

- If FCPS continues to provide bus transportation for non-mandated programs, establish centralized pick-up locations (like magnet transport). The family should provide transportation to these locations.
- Consider using buses designated for special education, academies and magnet schools as potential transportation options for other out-of-boundary students.

Out-of-Boundary Programs

- Restructure the three transportation areas to five or six with bus compounds, dispatch points and operations facilities at each site.
- Optimize the use of MapNet, so staff can use it to optimize routes and trip couplings.
- Re-evaluate each bus route twice yearly.
- Have students register online for transportation before the outset of the academic year.

TJHSST Transport

- Add a route supervisor for TJ.
- Allow students to self-select bus stops or centralized pick-up points they will use.
- De-couple the TJ start times from the other high schools.
 - Stop using high school buses to transport TJ students;
 - consider using elementary or middle school buses or special education, academies, and magnet school buses.
- Provide information on public transportation close to TJ—it may be faster for some students.
- Use the seats on buses from other jurisdictions coming through Fairfax County to TJ.

Transportation Department Efficiencies

- Focus on making the efficiency of the general education bus routes a priority to serve the majority of the student body.
- The sub-committee did not review Special Education transportation since it has its own transportation area and specialized requirements.

Transportation Department Efficiencies

Streamline busing for non-mandated programs

- Make parents responsible for some or all out-of-boundary transportation as they are in the language immersion program.
- Use centralized pick-up points or closest in-boundary stops to increase efficiency if transportation is to be provided
- Put a GT center/program in each middle school and/or elementary school.
- End transportation for grandfathering
- End or limit transportation to alternative schools and academies

Transportation Department Efficiencies

Improve transportation areas through

- Decentralized fleet management
- Rework number of transportation areas and boundaries to more effectively schedule, route, maintain and park buses
- Create additional bus parking areas convenient to drivers
- Centralized fleet dispatching
- Better communication
- Enhanced cross boundary capabilities
- Optimize bus routes and stops
- Acquire additional data analysis technology

Transportation Department Efficiencies

Reduce dependency on bus transportation by

- Re-engineering crosswalks
- Adding crossing guards
- Reviewing walking distances and walking routes
- Improving facilities and policies for kiss and ride

Tweak Committee Recommendations

These are the consensus recommendations of the Tweak Committee derived from discussions following subcommittee reports.

- General Education and Special Education transportation are the transportation priorities.
- All non-mandated out-of-boundary programs should have either centralized pick-up points or students should be required to go to the closest in-boundary bus stop for transportation.
- Require a minimum of ten students from each centralized pick-up point for transportation to academies or alternative programs.

Tweak Committee Recommendations

4. Institute a consortia plan at the elementary, middle and high school levels for the delivery of instructional services and transportation.
 - Add GT Centers to all middle schools and increase the number in elementary schools
5. Survey students on why they travel to school the way they do and alternative methods they would consider taking.
6. Dedicate resources to facilitate alternate methods of transportation and encourage walkers and bicyclists.
7. End transportation services for grandfathering.

Tweak Committee Recommendations

8. Consider the transportation needs of administratively placed students before placing them.
9. Eliminate the exception to ride program or start in the 2nd quarter.
10. De-couple TJHSST from high school start times and provide TJ with its own route supervisor.
11. Restructure transportation areas by decentralizing fleet management and centralizing fleet dispatching.
12. Acquire technology that will assist in transportation optimization and data analysis.

General Parameters Recommended by the Tweak Committee

Set clear objectives (parameters) for the transportation department, such as:

- Bus arrival times before the first bell should be
 - 5-15 minutes for elementary students
 - 5-20 minutes for middle school students
 - 5-30 minutes for high school students
- Length of time students ride the bus should be minimized with a goal of:
 - 30 minutes or less for elementary students
 - 45 minutes or less for middle school students
 - 45 minutes or less for high school students
- Buses should depart schools 10 – 15 minutes after the last bell
- Track the number of students who opt out of transportation and the number of service complaints.

Data

- Time constraints limited our ability to consider certain aspects of the “Tweak” task.
- Some of the data we requested was not available.

Subcommittee Membership

Alternative Transportation Methods

- Marie Reinsdorf
- Jenny Lindner

Consortia Subcommittee

- Rima Vesilind
- Doug Wright
- **Judy Harbeck**
- Marlene Parker
- John Chapman
- Gayle Wood
- Jan Thibodeau-Robitaille

Subcommittee Membership

Out-Of-Boundary

- Mahri Aste
- **Patricia Velkoff**
- Mary Ann Bosley
- Kathye Gillette
- Michele Menapace
- Phyllis Payne

Transportation Efficiencies

- Mark Emery
- Susan Culin/Pam Minnich
(police alternates)
- B.Z. Zikowitz
- Roger Cryan
- Rona Ackerman
- **Chris Worley***
- Stephanie Cox

*Chair of the Tweak Committee