

SCHOOL BOARD WORK SESSION

Date: December 5, 2005

After reviewing this agenda item, Board Members are requested to e-mail any questions or issues about this agenda item to the staff contact person listed below prior to the work session. Those issues and questions will be used as the framework for the staff presentation at the Board work session.

Agenda Item: Transportation Consultant Study

Staff Contact: Dean A. Tistadt

Board Member Lead: Brad Center, Chairman, Facilities & Operations Committee

Background

1. The School Board recently contracted with MPS to conduct a study to determine the fiscal and operations implications of moving high school start times to later in the morning.
2. The MPS report will be submitted in final form to the School Board in the near future (approximately 2 weeks). The consultants were asked to hold the preparation of the final report until staff had an opportunity to ensure all RFP requirements were being addressed by the consultant.
3. The preliminary report presentation to the School Board indicated that the cost of changing the current bell schedules would be prohibitively expensive based upon the parameters provided to MPS by the advisory committee and individual Board members.
4. The associated costs could be reduced if certain parameters were modified in the next phase. The two major parameters are the length of the instructional day, i.e., elementary schools have a 20 minute shorter day than secondary schools; and, the bell schedule window remaining at 2 hours versus the initial study's 1 ½ hours.
5. The next phase of the study will modify those parameters. The Board can then weigh the "least cost" alternative for later start times against the any concerns from altering the parameters.
6. Additionally, the School Board expressed concerns about developing a long-range strategic plan for transportation and conducting a "sensitivity analysis" as a first step in that long-range plan. Staff is working on those issues separately and will report back to the Board soon with respect to those issues. It is possible that the issue of later start times for high schools may be addressed at that time as well.

Key Issues During the MPS presentation of its Phase I report, the majority of School Board members appeared to support contracting with MPS to conduct a Phase II study that would provide more detailed cost estimates. The estimated cost of the phase II study is about \$45,000.

School Board Discussion/Decision Reaffirm School Board support for the Phase II study.

Staff Recommendation None

Options

1. Do not conduct the Phase II Study at this time and address later start times as part of the “sensitivity analysis” in the long-range transportation plan. Issues that will be addressed during that study include the bus driver shortage, route efficiencies, the impact special and new programs etc.
2. Do not conduct the Phase II study but instead hire a consultant to assist the school system in determining what actions need to be taken to ensure adequate numbers of bus drivers. We continue to suffer from a shortage of bus drivers and while progress has been made with driver recruitment, it does not appear that the problem is solved.

Attachments None