

Dear United Community -

Over the course of our 12 years of existence, we have witnessed many changes. Some of those changes were forced upon us due to legislation and/or financial constraints while others were decisions that were for the improvement of the district. We've reached a point in our transportation program where change is necessary - but for both types of reasons.

For safety reasons, it will be required that students utilizing pm bus routes to get home will be asked to commit to one location for drop off. We can no longer accommodate schedules in which students make changes to their drop offs from day to day or even week to week. We understand that life is busy and that this creates complications, but from a district perspective we have to lessen the possibility of students landing in the wrong location or riding the wrong bus. Over the years, the demand on our office staffs, teachers, and drivers has become daunting and this should provide for the absolute safest method of transport for all of our students.

Which leads to the other change coming this year. Those resident students considered "West campus" in boundary will be seeing a change to their morning routes starting in the 2016-2017 school year. No longer will the district be running dual routes - meaning all PK-12th grade students will be riding the same routes - morning and evening. This is a change to those west campus routes. This will allow us to start many of our routes at a later time, saving many students, particularly high school students, a great deal of time in the mornings. Routes that were beginning at 6:20 am will now start closer to 6:50 am. This will create some changes for those junior high and elementary students on those routes, both later and earlier in some cases. The overall gain in time for those students that were getting on before 6:45 am will be welcome however.

With that, all west campus junior high and elementary students will be arriving at their attendance centers at 7:30 am. This too is a change for students on those campuses, but aligns them with both the north and south campus students that have been doing this for years. Breakfast services will begin earlier, allowing for more students to take advantage with more time to complete breakfast. Adult supervision will be arranged and as time goes on, additional programming will be available to those students during this morning time. It has been our experience that students at both the North Elementary and the High School find this time as "good" time and enjoy the downtime prior to school starting.

There will be some nominal cost savings, which is obviously important in this situation, but not as important as the overall time our kids will save. The added bonus of the consistency of the am and pm routes being the same for students is welcome as well. No longer will a student ride a different bus home at night than they rode in the morning. This should provide for better consistency and less anxiety among students, parents, teachers, and drivers.

We ask for your patience as we implement these changes for the 2016-2017 school year and we promise that your students well being is still first in our list of priorities. Thank you for all you do for United and we hope that 2016-2017 is the best year of school for your student so far.

Sincerely

Jeff Whitsitt
Superintendent
United CUSD 304