



GOOSE CREEK

CONSOLIDATED INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

District changes most school times, expands some 'campus walk zones'

Goose Creek CISD is reducing the number of bus routes and changing the start and end times at most schools as part of an overall strategy to address a \$15 million reduction in state funding.

The move to reduce bus routes by expanding "walk zones" affects more than 700 former bus riders who now will walk or get a ride to school. The start and the end of the school day will change anywhere from 15 minutes to 5 minutes for 16 campuses. The length of the school day will not change.

Both changes are part of a scaled-back transportation plan that will save the district \$1 million. Goose Creek CISD superintendent Dr. Toby York said there would be no impact to the amount of instructional time or the quality of education offered by the district.

"These are very difficult times and everyone must work together and share in the sacrifice as we try to save money," said Dr. York. "Students' families will have their routines change a bit, and this can be a challenge with siblings of various ages, so we want to give parents plenty of time to start thinking about how they will accommodate the needs of their family."

Walk Zones

The State of Texas does not fund school bus routes within two miles of a school, and the current loss in state funding requires Goose Creek CISD to create a leaner and more efficient school bus routing system. Parents with students who will be impacted by the walk zone changes have been mailed notifications. (Didn't get one? Call Transportation Director Rick Walterscheid at 281-420-4666 or email him at rick.walterscheid@gccisd.net to find out.) Schools with newly expanded walk zones are Ashbel Smith Elementary, Lamar Elementary, San Jacinto Elementary, Austin Elementary, Crockett Elementary, Harlem Elementary, Cedar Bayou Junior, Horace Mann Junior, and Highlands Junior.

In addition, the new three-tier bus transportation system — where each bus would serve an elementary school, a junior school and a high school — will provide cost-savings because of a decreased need for personnel, buses and fuel.

The district also is reducing the number of bus stops by 45 percent to improve the efficiency. These changes will also help reduce the district's annual bus replacement cost.

School bells

Beginning Aug. 22 with start of the 2011-2012 school year, Goose Creek CISD is changing the start and end times for 16 of its 24 schools. Lee High School, Sterling High School and Goose Creek Memorial High School will all begin at 7:15 a.m. and dismiss at 2:30 p.m. This past year, these high schools began at 7:30 a.m. and dismissed at 2:45 p.m. The five junior schools — Baytown, Cedar Bayou, Gentry, Highlands and Horace Mann — will all begin at 8:45 a.m. and dismiss at 4 p.m. This past year, these junior schools began at 8:40 a.m. and dismissed at 3:55 p.m. Six elementary schools — Austin, Crockett, De Zavala, Harlem, Highlands, Hopper, and Travis — and Hopper Primary will start and end school 15 minutes later. When school opens Aug. 22, these schools will start class at 8:15 a.m. and dismiss students at 3:30 p.m.

The district's other eight campuses have the same start and end times as last year. The length of the school day will not change under the new start and stop times. ? York said he understands how some parents may feel inconvenienced by the changes, but he added that with the various impacts of budget cuts, families have to ultimately evaluate their own situations. "Please know my goal is to strive for as much financial stability for the district as possible while providing quality programs for our students. To accomplish this, we will need your help and support in this very difficult financial situation," Dr. York said.

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