

June 29, 2022

Dear Pembina Trails Families:

I write this letter to assist families, schools, and daycares to prepare for some changes coming to some of our schools with respect to start and end of the school day. Some minor changes will occur in September 2022. The more significant changes will occur in 2023-24.

Over the last decade, Pembina Trails School Division has experienced significant growth in the number of students eligible for transportation. The quirks of some of the new neighbourhood developments have had unprecedented impact on student transportation. The increasing demand for busing has brought the Division to the point where existing transportation infrastructure is fully used. There is no available space to increase the bus fleet. The bus compounds and garage space available to inspect and maintain our fleet are at capacity.

At present, the best way to address the situation of anticipated growth and fleet parameters is to increase the utilization of the existing buses. A two-year approach to increase utilization must be adopted. The following outlines the adaptation necessary to overcome this challenge.

Year 1 – 2022/23

Where possible bus stops will be on feeder streets. The result of this practice will reduce the number of bus stops per route and reduce student ride times. Total route travel times will be lowered. All bus stops will comply with Pembina Trails [Policy EEAC](#). Bus stop locations will be announced and will not change during the school year.

Bus stops will be placed at the safest available locations. Student safety before entering a bus and after leaving a bus remains the responsibility of parents, guardians and caregivers.

Year 2 – 2023/24

The reduction in route times resulting from bus stop adjustments made in 2022/23 will allow many buses to be double routed. Double routing will be achieved by school bell time coordination. In other words, some schools will start and end the day earlier, and others will start and end the day later.

The details of bell time coordination are not complete. To achieve bell time coordination, schools may be grouped by early years/middle years feeder group, geographical proximity or by another factor which increases fleet utilization. Bell times for the groupings would be adjusted to allow busses to service one group of schools with an early bell time and then service a second group of schools with a later bell time. This plan will be communicated by Jan 2023.

Benefits:

1. Less student ride time.
2. Increased fleet utilization and efficiency.
3. Buses will travel on fewer streets with low priority snow removal.

Inconveniences:

1. Short term family disruption from schedule change.
2. Daycares will need to adjust their schedules by Sept 2023.

We acknowledge that these changes will take some time for families, schools, and daycares to plan around. We appreciate the cooperative spirit as we find creative solutions to the constraints on our transportation department.

We will be in touch with families with additional information during the coming school year.

We wish you a relaxing and refreshing summer break.

Sincerely,

Ted Fransen
Superintendent