

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

For the 2006-07 school year, the School Board established common hours for most elementary schools. To accommodate changed opening times, bus schedules were also revised. When schools re-opened in September, ACPS offices received calls and messages from dissatisfied parents. As a result, ACPS bus schedules were adjusted October 2, 2006.

The School Board asked Superintendent Perry to collect information to determine parents' satisfaction with efforts to meet the transportation needs of ACPS students.

ACPS Transportation

ACPS Transportation Services operates 168 regular bus routes for 17 schools in the City of Alexandria. According to state-specified criteria, 5759 students representing 57 percent of September 30th enrollment were identified as eligible for bus service for fall of 2006. As well as travelling to and from schools, ACPS buses also provide transportation for student activities, in total making stops at some 4263 locations each day.

Method

Monitoring and Evaluation Services created an Internet survey that was available to parent respondents through a link on the ACPS web site. To inform parents of the opportunity to express their concerns, flyers were mailed or distributed via backpack. Parents who clicked onto the survey link were presented with series of questions that flowed from their response selections. For parents without computer access, telephone support for the survey was also available in both English and Spanish.

Results

When the survey closed at midnight on Nov. 17, 304 responses had been received, 241 from parents whose children are transported by ACPS buses. Responses represented approximately three percent of the population of ACPS students eligible for bus service (see Table 1). Schools with reported problems higher than the district ratio were: George Washington Middle School (5%); Lyles-Crouch Academy (6%); and Douglas MacArthur Elementary School (15%).

Scheduling issues (e.g., late, early) accounted for 64 percent of concerns selected by parents. Eight percent of responses revealed that parents were concerned about crowding on buses. Five percent of the responses reflected a concern that parents had not received sufficient notice of bus schedule changes.

By the time the data collection period ended, 65 percent had no problems to report. However, parents provided comments about continuing concerns. Findings provide guidance for monitoring bus services by the Transportation office and also suggest a need for division-wide staff development to ensure appropriate communication with the public.