

STEO - Questions re: Bell Time Changes

- 1. If bus times are going to be aligning in the UCDSB and the CDSBEO, will students from both boards need to share buses and/or will this change affect the routes themselves?**

The sharing of buses between students from both boards is something that already occurs in many regions and will continue. In some cases, the routes themselves will change as a result of the bell time change.

- 2. With bell times changing, how long will my child be on the bus? Will their pick-up time differ greatly?**

Bell time changes do not correlate to longer ride times for students. Due to routing changes, some students may be on the bus slightly longer than in previous years, while others will experience a reduced ride time. STEO strives to keep ride times reasonable for its student passengers (e.g. less than 60 minutes), where logistics allow. Pick-up times will change in relation to the bell-time change. In most cases, the change will be proportionate to the change in bell time. Specific details as relates to pick-up times and locations will be available on STEO's website beginning August 12, 2019, once bus routes begin to take shape.

- 3. How many school buses are being eliminated as a result of these changes?**

Bell time adjustments allow for the gaining of significant efficiencies, without having to remove transportation. Strategically changing bell times allows for the doubling of routes, where a single vehicle and driver are used to service multiple schools.

As a result of bell time changes, in the 2019-2020 school year alone, STEO and the boards will eliminate more than 20 buses, without cutting transportation services for students. Additional savings will be achieved in each subsequent year of the bell time change implementation.

- 4. When do I find out specifically how my family is going to be affected by these changes?**

Families are being notified of the changes in bell times through various communications channels effective May 28, 2019. This includes letters home, email, call centre, etc. Families are encouraged to visit www.steo.ca/belltimechanges to determine if their school is affected and to gather additional information about the changes for September 2019.

- 5. What are the district-wide learning opportunities mentioned that will be implemented with the change in these bell times?**

Expanded learning opportunities within the CDSBEO and UCDSB resulting from common bell times could ensure that high school students have a wider range of access to curriculum options offered by the boards regardless of their location.

In addition, it may be possible to better align interschool athletics programs and sporting events. Field trips that involve multiple schools may also be a possibility.

6. What are the eligibility requirements for the child care assistance program?

Information concerning child care subsidies is available at www.steo.ca/belltimechanges

7. When is this child care survey going to be sent out? Where do I find another copy of the survey form if my copy was lost?

The child care surveys will accompany the school specific letters being sent home to parents on May 28, 2019. A copy of the survey can be requested directly from your child (rens) school or on the STEO website www.steo.ca/belltimechanges

If a school already has a before/after school program, parents can also contact their school principal or the provider.

8. How will STEO be communicating information to parents about these bell time changes?

STEO has a multi-level communication plan in place to ensure that all affected parents are notified of the changes for September 2019. Letters are being sent home to all families of the affected schools on May 28, 2019. STEO also has a dedicated call centre and webpage that will provide parents and families with valuable resources and information concerning the changes. In addition, STEO will also be using social media, press releases, dedicated parent information sessions in Perth and Carleton Place, as well as the myfamilyroom.ca app for UCDSB and School Messenger for the CDSBEO.

9. With bell times aligning across the entire region of service over a period of three years, what communities will be next?

[Link to Map of Implementation Zones](#)

10. Why were these schools chosen as opposed to others as first in the region to implement this change in bell time?

The North West zone schools had the largest number of single-run bus routes in the entire boards' regions. This was the area where the greatest savings could be achieved through the bell time realignment. The North Zone will experience the least significant impact to bell time changes overall, with most secondary schools in the zone already in alignment, or close to it. Changes in other zones, which may be more significant, will be implemented and communicated over a greater period of time to support the change.

11. How much money is being saved?

When fully implemented, STEO estimates that by standardizing bell times and bus schedules a cost reduction of more than \$3.3 million dollars will be achieved.

12. What other options are available to my child if I need before/after school care but the operator in my school is not able to expand services to accept my child?

A list of potential third-party child care operators is posted on the STEO dedicated webpage at www.steo.ca/belltimechanges under the heading Child Care Information.

13. What options are available for before/after school care if there is not a provider currently in my school?

A list of potential third-party child care operators is posted on the STEO dedicated webpage at www.steo.ca/belltimechanges under the heading Child care Providers in the Area.

14. What is the rationale for starting secondary schools early and elementary schools late?

The majority of schools within the boards were aligned already with an earlier start for the secondary panel and a later start for elementary.

There are further advantages to the early secondary start, including transition to post-secondary and work life scheduling, an increased ability to maintain extra-curricular volunteer and work employment activity and to provide after-school care for younger siblings.

15. Who did STEO and the boards consult with prior to implementing these changes?

The STEO Board of Directors reviewed these changes with the STEO Administrative Committee that includes representation from both the CDSBEO and UCDSB. The respective Trustees from both Boards that sit on the STEO Board of Directors also brought the information forward to the Board of Trustees for their input. The respective boards also sought input from school principals of the affected schools as well as the child care providers in schools. To support smooth implementation, STEO also consulted with neighbouring boards who have implemented universal bell times and with the Ministry of Education.