

February 16, 2011

**NEWTON COUNTY SCHOOL SYSTEM TO IMPLEMENT  
3-TIER PUPIL TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM**

By unanimous vote, the Newton County Board of Education on February 15, approved the implementation of a three-tier pupil transportation system for the 2011-2012 school year. According to Dennis Carpenter, Deputy Superintendent for Newton County School System (NCSS), the new system will provide a significant cost savings to the district of approximately \$1,477, 441 due to a decreased need for personnel, buses and fuel.

He added that the new transportation system will necessitate a change to school start and finish times next school year. NCSS currently utilizes a two-tier transportation system where middle and high schools share the same start and finish times. Elementary schools start and finish the school day earlier. The new, three-tier system will have staggered school start and finish times at the elementary, middle and high school levels. Under the new system, bell times and arrival/departure times will be as follows:

GRADE LEVEL	BELL TIMES	STUDENT ARRIVAL TIMES	STUDENT DEPARTURE TIMES
<b>Elementary</b>	7:40 a.m. – 2:10 p.m.	7:15 a.m. – 7:40 a.m.	2:10 p.m. – 2:20 p.m.
<b>High</b>	8:15 a.m. – 3:15 p.m.	7:55 a.m. – 8:15 a.m.	3:15 p.m. – 3:25 p.m.
<b>Middle</b>	9:00 a.m. – 4:15 p.m.	8:45 a.m. – 9:00 a.m.	4:15 p.m. – 4:25 p.m.

In addition to providing a significant cost savings to NCSS, the new system will offer many additional benefits, including the elimination of combined routes, meaning middle and high school students will not ride on buses together, which should also result in improved student discipline. There are currently many combined routes in the district which require middle school and high school students to ride together on the same bus. In addition to riding on the bus only with their peers, middle school students should see a reduced ride time with the new three-tier system.

According to Carpenter, the three-tier system will result in the district having adequate staff and buses to provide transportation for athletic events and field trips. The new system will also eliminate the need for substitutes, as substitutes are built into the three-tier system

“Three-tiered transportation has worked well in other localities around the nation,” said NCSS Superintendent Gary Mathews. “It brings NCSS different routes for elementary, middle, high, and alternative education students, respectively. With each population having its own buses, I believe we are more ‘age-appropriate’ when it comes to transporting our students. It should provide for better discipline as has been the case elsewhere.”

Superintendent Mathews added, “Academically, the new start/stop times for the school day are in keeping with the so-called ‘biological clock’ research related to when certain-age students learn best. That’s a good thing if we must change. Finally, at a savings of \$1.4 million, when facing an approximate \$9 million in necessary budget cuts for 2011-12, it is a wise move on the part of our Board of Education.”

\*\*\*