

SYNOPSIS  
SPECIAL MEETING OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF  
BLAINE COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 61  
FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 15, 2006, 4:00 P.M.,  
DISTRICT OFFICE

**I. Call To Order And Welcome**

Vice Chairman Kim Nilsen called the Special meeting of the Board of Trustees of Blaine County School District No. 61 to order at 4:05 p.m. and welcomed everyone in attendance.

Present were Superintendent of Schools, Jim Lewis; Assistant Superintendent, Mary Gervase; School District Treasurer, Mike Chatterton; Transportation Director, Rex Squires; Administrative Assistants, Darlene Kisler and Kate Heinecke; and Board Clerk, Cathy Zaccardi.

Vice Chairman Nilsen stated that a quorum was present.

**II. Information Agenda**

**a. Discussion And Reconsideration Of Bus Routes**

Dr. Lewis thanked Darlene Kisler, District Office Administrative Assistant, for all of her efforts in re-working the bus schedules and coming up with new schedules. This was a daunting task that required many hours of hard work.

Dr. Lewis stated, "Very seldom do we make major changes in schedules or programs after the school year begins. In this case the programs have finally broken the schedule's back. After adjusting the bus schedules to accommodate regular routes, neighborhood schools, dual immersion shuttles, kindergarten and pre-school, we have very young students riding buses in excess of an hour one-way each day and we haven't even gotten to winter yet. Since educating our students to the highest level possible during the regular school day is our main priority, we cannot accept this consequence for the nearly one thousand children who ride our buses."

Dr. Lewis then stated, "Einstein wrote; 'We can't solve problems by using the same kind of thinking we used when we created them'. With that premise in mind, we set about to change the way we transport students to and from schools in our district. We set thirty minutes as a maximum one-way trip for 99% of our bussed students and the shortest time possible for students to be held after school for busses. We still have to mix some routes in the A.M. with secondary and elementary students but in the P.M., we will separate those routes with all elementary going home before the secondary is picked up."

Dr. Lewis then stated, "How effective will this new routing system be? Preliminary projections estimate we will be saving 275 hours of student ride-time every single school

day. Many children will be saving over one half-hour each of riding the bus per day, in fact, the average per student savings of time on the bus each day is over 15 minutes considering both morning and afternoon trips. This is 7.5 six-hour school days per year that we will be saving the average student who rides the bus. That is why we feel it is important enough to make this change mid-year. It is too critical to the educational effort we make to allow this to continue. Many of you know this already by the tired eyes you see in your classrooms or the discipline problems you see on the bus or during bus supervision.”

Dr. Lewis then stated, “In order to accomplish this we will need to change school attendance times. Beginning Tuesday, October 3<sup>rd</sup> we will change the start times for elementary to 8:00 a.m. at the elementary schools of Bellevue, Woodside, Hemingway, and Hailey and 8:35 a.m. at the middle school and high school. The Dual Immersion classes at Bellevue, Hailey, and Woodside will start at 7:50 a.m. and end at 2:20 p.m. We will set the release time at 2:30 for the elementary schools, 3:25 for middle school, and 3:35 for the high school. We will set the times best suited for the alternative school students to ride their busses. Carey will not change. We chose October 3<sup>rd</sup> as the target date because it is not a Monday where students might forget and we have two non-student days (teacher in-service) later in that week to make any adjustments that might be needed. We will make an all-out effort to publicize this in every media available to us because we know it will affect many families. You will see large ads in this week’s local papers announcing the school board’s decision to make these changes.”

Dr. Lewis then stated, “These time adjustments will allow enough time between elementary and secondary schedules to accommodate the huge reduction in student bus ride times. It also allows us to pick all students up after school much sooner. We will be reducing the walk-zones around schools to eight blocks, which we hope will help reduce the traffic line-ups in front of your schools. We will have to adjust field trip times up so the busses can return to make their regular routes in time but the actual length of the school day will not change. Hopefully, the amount of time supervising students after school will make up for any teacher inconveniences we may have created.”

Dr. Lewis concluded, “The principals will receive packets to answer any specific questions staff might have and more information will be forthcoming. We appreciate their patience on this, but we knew the change to Neighborhood Schools might test the status quo of our system and it has in a good way. Many of these students have been on buses too long in the past but the Bellevue-Hailey shuttle made it impossible to change. After a few days of the first year of Neighborhood Schools the Transportation Department was able to step back and look at the problem in a completely new way.”

Board Member Julie Dahlgren made a motion to approve the changes in the bus routes and the start and stop times of the mid-valley schools beginning 03 Oct 2006. The motion was seconded by Howard Royal and passed unanimously.

The Board thanked Ms. Kisler and commended her for a job very well done.

There being no further business to discuss, Board Member Julie Dahlgren made a motion to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Mari Beth Matthews and passed unanimously.

The Special meeting of the Board of Trustees of Blaine County School District No. 61 adjourned at 5:10 p.m.