



WE ARE YOUR SCHOOLS

FORT WAYNE COMMUNITY SCHOOLS

July 6, 2009

Roberta Abbott
16201 Canyon Ridge Rd.
Leo, IN 46765

Dear Roberta,

Thank you for sending your letter of concern about the safety of our students because of the varied time zone changes. Dr. Robinson forwarded your letter to me for response because of my responsibilities of managing the transportation services for Fort Wayne Community Schools. The issue of added risk for students who wait for buses in the dark is discussed frequently, and as your data shows, is made more difficult as transitions take place in rolling the clock forward and backward. We all would certainly agree that it is much easier to insure the safety of students with daylight being present to enhance visibility. It is because of the liability of safely transporting more than 25,000 students that we focus our efforts on driver training to insure that every effort is made to prevent student risk. Our drivers are among the most professionally trained in the State and are continually reminded of their need to be cautious.

Similar data has been used by this school corporation in the evaluation of changing bell times and most recently to determine if younger students could benefit from instruction starting earlier in the day. One factor in not recommending change to an earlier day for younger students was the lack of daylight for transportation. School districts have the ability to establish the starting times for schools, but have not considered changing the starting times mid-year related to the changing daylight hours. Your data gives opportunity for consideration in the future. It is typical for school districts to consider to a larger extent the presence of parent supervision early in the morning to insure the safe delivery to bus stops. Educators have for a long time recognized the difficulty in adjusting the internal biological clocks in individuals as it relates to student performance. Your information makes for some legitimate arguments about the influence of the impact of varied time zones in a region.

Transporting students to school by way of the school bus is statistically six times safer than any other form including that of parents taking students to school. Any effort you can make to suggest that it can be safer because of daylight would be encouraged by us. The establishment of time zones is probably more of a discussion for political or economic groups and consequently they would have greater influence on change.

Thank you for sharing your information. It will become a part of consideration for future decisions regarding the safe transportation of students. Good luck in persuading others to accept remaining on Central Standard Time the entire school year.

Best regards,

A stylized, handwritten-style signature of the Director of Transportation, featuring a large ampersand (&).

Director of Transportation

Transportation

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