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Many Elkhart students can no longer ride the bus

Originally printed at <http://www.wsbt.com/news/local/S380S467.html>

ELKHART Parents of children in Elkhart Community Schools have concerns about the safety of kids heading to school. As the school corporation continues to search for ways to cut spending, they have decided to bus fewer students.

Beth Calhoun's daughter Allison only has to walk a couple of blocks to school, but the concerned parent still does not agree with the school corporation's decision to expand the walk zones.

"It's not safe out here," she said. "There are too many pedophiles. It's a scary day and age for kids."

All primary students within a mile radius of the school have to walk or get dropped off. Intermediate and high school kids within two miles of school can no longer ride the bus either.

"In some cases, some students may walk in excess of that area because no one has a straight line from their door to the school in terms of going down city blocks," said Doug Hasler, director of support services.

Hasler said some bus riders will also see changes. With fewer bus stops, some kids will walk up to half a mile to get on board. The changes were made to save money.

"It gives me a lot of concerns. It's an awful thing to do, and the only reason we're doing it is the state has taken action to reduce our revenue to support our programming," Hasler said. "We really have no other choice."

Elkhart schools should save up to \$300,000 on transportation costs this year. He said that still might not be enough to make up for revenue losses from property tax reform.