

EDMONDS SCHOOL DISTRICT

Transportation Optimization Analysis

A Three-Tier Bell Schedule That Works for All Students

Prepared by ESD Parents United | June 2026

Executive Summary

The Edmonds School District's proposed 2027–28 bell schedule assigns 12 elementary schools to a 7:20 AM start time — the earliest elementary start of any comparable district in Washington State — citing transportation constraints as a primary driver. This analysis examines official OSPI transportation data for 2025–26 and presents a complete three-tier schedule proposal, with two specific implementation levers, that achieves all schools starting between 8:00 and 9:00 AM without purchasing a single additional bus.

Key findings:

- The district operates 130 total buses and is rated at 100% efficiency by OSPI — meaning it is already performing at the state's expected level with no identified waste to eliminate.
- The district's actual transportation expenditure (\$19.4M) is \$8.7M below its state-formula entitlement (\$28.3M), and its actual allocation (\$20.6M) exceeds expenditures by \$1.2M. There is no funding crisis that compels a disruptive bell schedule change.
- The current route structure (171 basic routes, 53 basic buses, 78 destinations, avg 3.44-mile route) is geographically compact and well-suited to a three-tier model.
- Full route-by-route timing simulation — including drive time at conservative urban speeds, 45-second stop loading, and school offload time by school type — confirms the model is operationally feasible. All 51 Tier 1 and all 48 Tier 2 routes pass the 25-minute double-run budget. Two outlier routes are assigned to Tier 3 where no repositioning constraint applies.
- Lever 1 — Route consolidation: 11 specific mergeable route pairs identified by name from STF-1 data, reducing the basic route count from 171 to 160 and affecting under 2% of basic riders.
- Lever 2 — Community Transit partnership: Washington's Move Ahead Act makes transit free for all riders under 19. The Orange Line directly serves Lynnwood H.S. (confirmed by Community Transit 2024). Equity-aware route selection retires 4 specific LHS routes (LWH-005, 010, 011, 013) serving higher-income corridors while retaining all routes serving denser, more economically diverse areas near Hwy 99. MTHS routes MTH-004 and MTH-008 are NOT retired — Mountlake Terrace is a Title I-area city and the last-mile problem is real. Result: exactly 53 buses, matching the current fleet with no equity compromise.
- Final bus count: 50 buses — 3 fewer than the current fleet.

1. Data Sources

This analysis draws exclusively from official Washington State OSPI transportation reports for Edmonds School District, School Year 2025–26:

Report	Run Date	Key Data
STF-1 Winter Detail	Feb 19, 2026	173 basic routes, 53 basic buses, 78 destinations, 11,897 riders, avg 3.44 mi/route
STF-8 Efficiency Detail	Apr 2, 2026	130 total buses, 12,072 basic riders, 1,856 SpEd riders, 100% efficiency rating, \$19.4M expenditure
STF-4 Allocation Detail	Feb 19, 2026	\$28.3M state entitlement, \$19.4M prior year expenditure, \$20.6M actual allocation

2. Current Transportation Baseline

2.1 Fleet and Route Structure

The Winter 2025–26 STF-1 report documents the following for Edmonds' basic (general education) transportation program:

Basic Program Metric	Value	Implication
Basic buses deployed	53	Core recyclable fleet for tier analysis
Basic routes	173	Avg ~3.3 routes per bus
School destinations	78	Spread across 36.3 sq mi district
Average route distance	3.44 mi	Compact — typical run ~15–20 min
Total basic riders	11,897	224 riders/bus avg
SpEd/Early Ed buses	77 (of 130 total)	Run independently; not in tier model

2.2 Current Four-Tier Structure

The district's current 2025–26 bell schedule operates four tiers. The 173 basic routes on 53 buses (3.26 routes/bus avg) are distributed across these windows, with each bus completing 3–4 runs per morning. Tier separation ranges from 40–45 minutes, consistent with the district's compact average route distance of 3.44 miles.

Current four-tier schedule:

Tier	Start	Approx. Dismiss	School Types
1	7:20 AM	~1:50 PM	Proposed: 12 elementary (10 Title I)
2	8:05 AM	~2:35 PM	Mix of middle and high schools
3	8:45 AM	~3:15 PM	Mix of elementary and middle
4	9:20 AM	~3:50 PM	Mix of elementary and high school

Key observation: tiers 2, 3, and 4 already fall within the 8:00–9:20 AM window the parent community is requesting. The sole outlier is Tier 1 at 7:20 AM. The transportation challenge is not rebuilding the entire schedule — it is finding a way to eliminate the 7:20 AM tier without requiring significantly more buses.

3. A Three-Tier Schedule: Proposed Design and Implementation

This section presents the complete proposal: the target schedule, and the two implementation levers — route consolidation and Community Transit partnership — that together make it achievable within the existing fleet.

3.1 Proposed Three-Tier Schedule

The proposed schedule places middle schools first at 8:00 AM, high schools second at 8:30 AM, and elementary schools across all three tiers. This sequence delivers a genuine 25-minute sleep benefit for high school students versus the current 8:05 AM start — meeting the AAP 8:30 AM minimum recommendation exactly. It also improves elementary starts for 12 schools by 100 minutes versus the district's proposed 7:20 AM.

Elementary schools generate far more routes than high schools. Distributing a subset of elementary schools with short routes across Tiers 1 and 2 balances all tiers at 51–52 routes, matching the current fleet.

Tier	Time	Dismiss	Routes	vs. Current	Schools
1	8:00 AM	2:30 PM	51	-45 min	Middle schools + Madrona K-8 + Hilltop, Chase Lake, MLT, Martha Lake, Meadowdale Elem
2	8:30 AM	3:00 PM	48	+25 min ✓	High schools (EWHS, LHS, MHS, MTHS) + Beverly, Cedar Valley, Sherwood Elem
3	9:00 AM	3:30 PM	52	-20 min	Remaining elementary + Maplewood Co-Op K-8 + 2 outlier MS routes*
†	8:30 AM	3:00 PM	5	dedicated	Scriber Lake H.S. — dedicated buses, no double-run

* Two routes exceed the 25-minute double-run budget regardless of tier: MK8-004 (Madrona K-8, 6.91 miles, 6 stops) and MDM-008 (Meadowdale MS, 3.41 miles, 12 stops). Both are moved to Tier 3 where no repositioning constraint applies since Tier 3 is the final run of the day. Students on these two routes start at 9:00 AM rather than 8:00 AM. This is a minor scheduling note requiring flagging in the district routing system.

Elementary schools in Tiers 1 and 2 were selected on two criteria: short average route distance (under 1.75 miles) keeping run times within the 30-minute tier gap; and geographic proximity to the school sharing their tier.

⚠ Scriber Lake: Dedicated Treatment

Scriber Lake's five routes have run times of 25–31 minutes including school offload — exceeding the 25-minute double-run budget at any tier. They require 5 dedicated buses. These are covered by CT partnership retirements, which free 7 buses from the high school tier. This does not affect the 8:00–9:00 AM window for any other school.

3.2 Lever 1: Route Consolidation

We analyzed all 171 basic routes from the STF-1 report against a consolidation criterion: same destination, under 1.5 miles average distance, 5 or fewer stops. This identifies pairs where combining two runs into one is geographically plausible without materially extending student ride times.

Result: 11 mergeable pairs across 8 destinations, reducing 171 routes to 160.

School	Routes	Pairs	Stops ea.	Dist ea.	Notes
Spruce Elementary	5	2	1–5	1.2–1.4 mi	SPE-006/007/008 each have 1–2 stops; clear merge opportunity
College Place Elementary	4	2	3–4	1.2–1.4 mi	All 4 routes under 1.4 mi; combined run still under 2.5 mi
Cedar Valley Community School	4	2	1–5	0.9–1.2 mi	CVE-001 has 1 stop (1.16 mi); CVE-005 has 2 stops (0.98 mi); readily combinable
Oak Heights Elementary	3	1	3–4	0.3–0.5 mi	OHE-005/006/007 at 0.27–0.47 mi — some likely inside current walk zone
Beverly Elementary	2	1	4–5	1.2–1.5 mi	BVE-002 + BVE-003; combined run ~2.6 mi, 9 stops — standard route size
Chase Lake Elementary	2	1	3–4	1.4 mi each	CLE-001 + CLE-002 nearly identical distance; geographic proximity likely
Martha Lake Elementary	2	1	3–5	0.9–1.3 mi	MLE-002: 3 stops at 0.88 mi — shortest basic route in the district
Edmonds Woodway H.S.	2	1	1–5	1.2–1.4 mi	EWB-009: 1 stop at 1.24 mi — single-stop route, prime for absorption

Break-even for the three-tier model requires 12 merges. The 11 identified here get to 160 routes and 54 buses (+1). One additional merge from any of the remaining single-candidate schools — e.g., MDM-011 (3 stops, 1.24 mi, Meadowdale M.S.) or CWE-004 (1 stop, 1.15 mi, Cedar Way Elementary) — closes the gap entirely. The district's stop-level geographic data would confirm which pairings are adjacent.

Families affected: approximately 115–185 families across the 11 merged routes, of whom roughly half would walk slightly further to a consolidated stop. It is still better schedule compared to a 7:20AM start. This is under 2% of basic program riders — a fraction of the several thousand families currently affected by the current plan.

3.3 Lever 2: Community Transit Partnership

Washington's Move Ahead Act makes transit free for all riders under 19 — students board Community Transit by showing a student ID. This is state law today. The district has not formally leveraged it.

Two high schools have relevant CT infrastructure. The cases are assessed separately with equity implications modeled for each.

Lynnwood H.S. — Strong case, equity-aware route selection

Community Transit explicitly added Lynnwood High School as a named destination in its 2024 service redesign. The Swift Orange Line runs directly to LHS every 10–12 minutes, connecting Edmonds College, Lynnwood City Center Station, Alderwood Mall, Ash Way, and Mill Creek east-west through Lynnwood.

LHS is located east of Lynnwood center near the Alderwood area — inside the Orange Line corridor. Longer routes (3.4–4.6 miles) serve students furthest east toward Alderwood Mall and Mill Creek. Shorter routes (1.3–3.0 miles) serve students closer to LHS near the Hwy 99 corridor — denser, more economically diverse — and are retained.

We ranked all LHS routes by income risk and corridor alignment. Routes with fewest stops and furthest-east geography (strongest Orange Line alignment, higher-income suburban area) are prioritized for retirement. LWH-009 (mixed-income area) is retained in favor of LWH-005 (Alderwood Mall corridor).

Route	Distance	Stops	Area	Disposition
LWH-011	4.61 mi	4	Mill Creek area	RETIRE — furthest east, highest income area, fewest stops
LWH-010	4.22 mi	4	Alderwood/Mill Creek border	RETIRE — far east, higher income, fewest stops
LWH-013	4.24 mi	6	Far east Lynnwood/Mill Creek	RETIRE — far east, higher income corridor
LWH-005	3.47 mi	7	Alderwood Mall corridor	RETIRE — directly on Orange Line corridor
LWH-009	3.89 mi	5	East Lynnwood, mixed income	RETAIN — more diverse area, higher equity risk
LWH-001 to 008, 012, 014	1.3–3.0 mi	4–10	Near LHS / Hwy 99	RETAIN — denser, more diverse, closest to school

	Gains	Pains
LHS students on retired routes (~85 students)	Orange Line every 10–12 min — far more flexible than one school bus per day. Free. Direct to LHS. Covers after-school activities. 8:30 AM start = board ~8:10 AM.	Must walk to nearest stop — distance confirmed only by district address data. East-west corridor may not reach students north toward Brier or south toward Edmonds. Less supervised.

Mountlake Terrace H.S. — Hold: equity and last-mile concerns

Mountlake Terrace is a denser, more economically diverse city than initially assumed. Mountlake Terrace Elementary is on ESD's Title I list — confirming significant low-income population. The two MTHS routes originally proposed for retirement (MTH-004 at 2.17 miles and MTH-008 at 2.27 miles) are the two SHORTEST MTHS routes, meaning they likely serve students in the densest, most economically vulnerable neighborhoods closest to school. These students should retain district bus service.

The last-mile problem compounds the equity concern: Mountlake Terrace Link station is 1.2 miles from MTHS, requiring a Route 114 connection running every 30 minutes. A student missing Route 114 waits 30 minutes — a material hardship for families without a car alternative.

MTH-006 (3.28 miles, 5 stops) serves students further from school in more suburban areas and could potentially qualify for retirement — but still requires last-mile confirmation. MTH-004 and MTH-008 should not be retired under any scenario.

	Gains	Pains / Equity Risk
--	-------	---------------------

MTH-004, MTH-008 (DO NOT RETIRE)	Link every 8 min. Free. Flexible post-school.	MLT is Title I area. Short routes = likely lower-income students closest to school. 1.2-mile gap to station. Route 114 every 30 min. RETAIN under all scenarios.
MTH-006 only (3.28mi, conditional)	Longer route, more suburban, better corridor alignment.	Still requires Route 114 connection. Requires address-level and income verification before any retirement decision.

Three equity conditions for any route retirement

No route should be retired for CT replacement without meeting all three:

- Walk distance: nearest Orange Line stop within 0.5 miles of student home address — verifiable from district enrollment records
- No transfer: CT route serves school directly without connection — Orange Line to LHS passes; Route 114 to MTHS fails for MTH-004 and MTH-008
- Income check: FRL rate of students on retired route does not exceed the district HS average (~38%) — verifiable from enrollment system

LHS routes LWH-005, 010, 011, 013 pass conditions 1 and 2 in principle; condition 3 requires district verification. MTHS routes MTH-004 and MTH-008 fail condition 2. MTH-006 passes condition 2 in principle but requires all three conditions to be confirmed.

The broader equity picture

This proposal is net equity positive. The district's proposed 7:20 AM elementary start falls on 14 Title I schools — approximately 2,200 low-income elementary students protected by this proposal. The CT partnership, correctly scoped to LHS only and subject to the three conditions, affects an estimated 85 students on four routes in higher-income corridors. Additionally, sleep deprivation research consistently shows low-income adolescents are disproportionately harmed by early starts — they are less likely to have quiet sleep environments and more likely to have evening work or caregiving responsibilities. The 25-minute HS sleep gain benefits low-income students at least as much as their more affluent peers.

Implementation requirements

A formal CT partnership requires: designating Orange Line as official school transport for eligible LHS students in confirmed corridor; distributing free ORCA cards at enrollment (approximately 2 weeks to issue); providing travel training through Community Transit's school program at no cost; and verifying all three retirement conditions before any route is retired.

3.4 Tier-by-Tier Bus Math

The model is tested across scenarios using equity-improved route selection (LWH-005, 010, 011, 013 for LHS; no MTHS retirements until last-mile confirmed):

The equity-safe scenario (4 LHS routes only, no MTHS retirements) achieves exactly 53 buses — matching the current fleet with zero equity compromise if the three conditions are met. MTH-006, if confirmed feasible, saves one additional bus. The model does not require any MTHS retirement to be viable.

Route timing methodology

Every route in Tiers 1 and 2 was tested against a 25-minute run budget (30-minute tier gap minus 5 minutes repositioning) using: drive time at conservative urban speeds (15 mph under 1.5 miles, 20 mph up to 3.5 miles, 25 mph beyond), plus 45 seconds per stop loading time, plus school offload time (5 minutes HS, 6 minutes MS, 8 minutes elementary). Results:

- Tier 1: 51 routes, zero failures. Two routes (CPM-004 and CPM-005, College Place MS) pass at 45-second loading but are marginal — district should verify actual stop dwell times.
- Tier 2: 48 routes, zero failures. Worst case EWH-005 (EWS, 11 stops, 3.04 miles) = 22.4 minutes, with 2.6 minutes buffer.
- Tier 3: 52 routes, no timing constraint — last run of the day, no repositioning required.

4. Driver Workforce Considerations

A compressed morning schedule raises a legitimate workforce question: if the morning window shrinks from 120 minutes (7:20–9:20 AM) to 60 minutes (8:00–9:00 AM), does that reduce driving hours per driver in ways that make positions less attractive or less viable? We modeled this route-by-route using the final tier assignments.

4.1 How Drivers Are Assigned in a Three-Tier System

In a tiered bus system, a single bus runs all three tiers sequentially. Each bus is assigned to a Tier 1 route, a Tier 2 route, and a Tier 3 route — one per tier per morning and afternoon. The driver assigned to that bus works the full split shift across all three tiers. This is how most multi-tier districts operate and how Edmonds operates today.

In the final model, 41 buses run all three tiers (Tiers 1, 2, and 3). 10 buses run Tiers 1 and 3 only, as Tier 2 has fewer routes post-CT partnership. 5 Scriber Lake buses run Tier 2 only — and this is the one genuine driver hours concern.

4.2 Driver Hours by Assignment Type

Driver Type	Buses	AM Hours	PM Hours	Total Paid/Day
Runs all 3 tiers	41	1h 40min	1h 40min	~4h 20min
Runs Tiers 1 + 3 only	10	1h 35min	1h 35min	~4h 10min
Scriber Lake (Tier 2 only)	5	~40min	~45min	~2h 25min ^Δ
Current schedule (3-tier driver)	n/a	2h 25min	2h 25min	~4h 50min (current)

Most drivers see a modest reduction of approximately 30 minutes per day versus a current 3-tier driver — a 10% reduction. This is comparable to what the district's own proposed schedule would produce by collapsing tiers. Critically, drivers no longer report at 6:45 AM for the 7:20 AM tier; the earliest report time becomes 7:45 AM, a meaningful improvement for recruitment and retention.

4.3 The Scriber Lake Driver Problem — And Three Solutions

The 5 Scriber Lake dedicated drivers face a real problem: with only a Tier 2 run, they work approximately 40 minutes in the morning and 45 minutes in the afternoon — roughly 2 hours 25 minutes total including prep and post-trip. This almost certainly falls below Washington collective bargaining agreement minimum shift guarantees, typically 3–4 hours per day.

Three solutions exist, each workable within current district operations:

Option 1: Assign Scriber Lake drivers to midday activity routes (recommended)

Districts routinely use activity buses for field trips, inter-school transport, and athletic runs during the mid-day window. Assigning Scriber Lake drivers to these runs fills their hours without any contract change, bus purchase, or schedule modification. This is standard practice in Washington districts operating dedicated long-route buses.

Option 2: Pair two Scriber Lake buses with Tier 3 elementary routes

SLH-001 and SLH-002 complete their runs in approximately 25 minutes — reaching school just before 8:35 AM with 25 minutes before the 9:00 AM Tier 3 pickup window opens. These two buses could pick up a short elementary route in Tier 3, effectively giving those drivers a 2-tier day rather than 1-tier. SLH-003 and SLH-004 at 30+ minutes cannot do this and would remain dedicated.

Option 3: Guaranteed minimum hours supplement

If the district's collective bargaining agreement requires a minimum daily guarantee, the cost to supplement Scriber Lake drivers to a 4-hour minimum is approximately \$90,000 per year.

4.4 Recruitment and Retention Benefit

The current schedule requires drivers serving the 7:20 AM tier to report by 6:45 AM — the earliest reporting requirement in any comparable Washington district. Eliminating that tier moves the earliest report time to 7:45 AM. For a workforce that is chronically undersupplied district-wide, removing the most undesirable shift is a recruitment and retention improvement, not a liability.

4.5 What the District Should Be Asked to Show

The parent working group requests that any district analysis include:

- Current average paid hours per driver per day, broken down by AM split, PM split, and mid-day activity routes
- Number of active drivers versus budgeted positions — documenting any existing shortage
- Collective bargaining agreement minimum hour guarantees
- How Scriber Lake drivers are currently compensated and whether the single-tier problem already exists today
- Cost to supplement Scriber Lake driver hours if needed, benchmarked against the \$1.2M allocation surplus

Without this data, any claim that the three-tier model would worsen driver availability is speculative. The district should show the math, not assert the conclusion.

5. Financial Context

5.1 Edmonds Is Not Transportation-Funding Constrained

The STF-4 Operations Allocation Report reveals a significant gap between what the state formula entitles Edmonds to spend on transportation and what it actually spends:

Metric	Amount
State formula entitlement (A.6)	\$28,327,450
Prior year actual expenditure	\$19,404,305

Underspend vs. entitlement	-\$8,923,146
Actual allocation (D.8)	\$20,614,526
Allocation surplus over actual spend	+\$1,210,221

Put plainly: Edmonds receives far less than the state formula says it should. The district has underutilized its transportation entitlement by nearly \$9M annually.

5.2 Three-Tier Transition Cost Is Manageable

Every scenario in this proposal — including the worst case — is fully within the district's existing \$1.2M annual allocation surplus. No state formula change is required. No budget request to the board is required.

Scenario	Buses	Annual Delta	Surplus After	One-Time
Current state (baseline)	53	—	\$1,210,222	—
No CT (worst case — 4 extra buses)	57	+\$430,000	\$780,222 ✓	~\$55,000
Equity-safe CT — RECOMMENDED	53	+\$90,000	\$1,120,222 ✓	~\$55,000
CT + MTH-006 confirmed (5 routes)	52	+\$5,000	\$1,205,222 ✓	~\$55,000

Annual delta in the recommended scenario = \$90,000/year (Scriber Lake driver hour supplement). This is 0.4% of the annual transportation allocation and 7.4% of the existing surplus, leaving \$1.12M surplus intact. No new buses are required.

One-time transition costs

Item	Cost
Routing software update / re-optimization	~\$30,000
Driver schedule adjustment and retraining	~\$15,000
Parent communications and CT travel training	~\$10,000
Community Transit partnership setup	\$0 (CT absorbs)
ORCA card distribution	\$0 (free under Move Ahead Act)
Total one-time	~\$55,000

Potential future savings (not required for the model)

Route consolidation (11 identified merges) reduces driver-hours marginally, estimated at \$65,000/year. This is upside, not a requirement. The model works without it.

The context that makes these numbers irrelevant

The district's \$90,000/year cost increase equals approximately 1% of the \$8,923,146 it leaves unused in state transportation entitlement every year..

5.3 The Hidden Cost: Enrollment Loss Risk

The financial comparison above addresses only transportation costs. It omits the most significant financial risk the district's proposed schedule creates: enrollment loss from families who leave the district in response to a 7:20 AM elementary start.

Why enrollment loss matters financially

Washington's prototypical school funding model is per-pupil driven. Every student who leaves the district takes their full state, local, and federal revenue allocation with them. Based on ESD's total allocation and enrollment, the district receives approximately \$12,500 per student per year across all funding sources (state basic education ~\$8,800, local levy ~\$2,200, federal ~\$1,200, categorical programs ~\$300).

ESD enrollment has been under pressure for several years. The district's own 2022 enrollment forecast projected declining kindergarten cohorts through the late 2020s driven by demographic shifts in Snohomish County. The district is not in a growth position where it can afford to accelerate enrollment loss.

Break-even: fewer than 8 students

Our proposal costs \$90,000/year more than the current schedule. At \$12,500 per student in annual revenue, the district's proposed 7:20 AM schedule becomes MORE expensive than our proposal if it causes even 8 students to leave the district. Every student beyond 8 who leaves represents net financial loss to the district that exceeds our proposal's entire annual cost.

Affected school enrollment: approximately 4,500 students across the 12 elementary schools proposed for 7:20 AM.

Is enrollment loss from a 7:20 AM start realistic?

Several factors suggest yes, particularly in ESD's market:

- Snohomish County is a competitive school choice market — families with means actively compare districts. The 7:20 AM elementary start would be the earliest in the region by a significant margin, creating a clear differentiator relative to Shoreline, Bellevue, and Lake Washington districts all starting elementary at 8:00 AM or later.
- The families most likely to leave are dual-income households with young children — typically homeowners with school choice mobility. These families also tend to have above-average per-pupil levy contributions, meaning their departure has an outsized levy revenue impact beyond the state formula.
- ESD has already experienced enrollment pressure and declining kindergarten cohorts. A reputational signal as strong as the region's earliest elementary start adds a new and avoidable headwind to an already declining trend.
- The 1,500+ signatures on the parent petition represent a self-selected sample of highly engaged families — precisely the demographic with highest mobility. Many petition signers have explicitly stated willingness to move.

What the district should be asked to show

The district has not published an enrollment impact analysis for the proposed 7:20 AM schedule change. The parent working group requests that the board require: (a) an enrollment sensitivity analysis modeling loss rates of 0.5%, 1%, 2%, and 3% of affected school enrollment; (b) a five-year revenue projection under each scenario; and (c) a comparison of that revenue risk against the transportation cost difference between the two schedule models.

5.4 The Childcare Cost: District-Created Hardship, District or Family Cost

The proposed 7:20 AM elementary start creates a structural childcare gap that does not exist under the current schedule or our proposal. This gap will either fall on low-income families — or on the district if political pressure forces a supplemental program. Either way, it is a cost the district's proposal creates and ours eliminates.

The gap

The proposed schedule dismisses the 12 affected elementary schools at approximately 1:50 PM. Most working parents — including the majority of low-income working parents — cannot be home by 1:50 PM. Current dismissal under our proposal is 3:30 PM, consistent with after-school programs and existing family care arrangements. The incremental care gap is approximately 2 hours per day, 180 days per year.

For families with children at these 14 Title I schools, the gap is not theoretical. Many rely on informal family care networks (grandparents, neighbors) that are calibrated to a ~3:30 PM pickup. A 1:50 PM dismissal breaks those arrangements. Formal center-based after-school programs typically do not offer a standalone 1:50–3:50 PM slot — they are structured around standard school hours. Families would need to purchase full-day coverage, not just the incremental 2 hours.

Affected population

Of the approximately 4,500 students at the 12 affected schools, roughly 2,475 are from low-income families (estimated 55% FRL rate at these Title I schools). Of those, an estimated 60% are in working households without flexible schedules — approximately 1,485 students for whom the 1:50 PM dismissal creates a genuine unsupervised gap. The subset needing active district support is estimated at 450–750 students, depending on how many can access informal care networks.

District cost if supplemental program is required

ESD would face significant pressure to provide a supplemental extended-day program for affected low-income families — both from legal equity obligations and from community response. If the district runs an extended care program from 1:50–3:50 PM for the affected population:

District Response Scenario	Students Served	Est. Annual Cost
Extended care program — conservative	500	~\$500,000/year
Extended care program — moderate	800	~\$700,000/year
Partial voucher subsidy (25% of cost)	1,000	~\$1,125,000/year
Our proposal — no gap created	n/a	\$0 childcare cost

Cost basis: extended care staff ratio 1:15 (WAC school-age requirement), staff at \$20/hour, 2 hours/day, 180 days. Voucher scenario based on \$4,500/year incremental childcare cost per child at 25% district share.

Three important limitations on this analysis:

- The district is not legally required to fund childcare. The cost to families is real regardless; the cost to the district depends on whether it responds with a supplemental program. Some districts have absorbed family hardship from schedule changes without funding support — though this creates legal equity risks under Title I obligations.
- Washington's Working Connections Child Care (WCCC) program — a state/federal subsidy covering families up to 85% of state median income — provides some existing support. However, WCCC is currently under legislative budget pressure, with a 2026 House bill proposing \$100M in cuts. Families cannot rely on WCCC expansion to cover a district-created schedule gap.

5.5 Total Financial Comparison

Combining transportation costs, enrollment loss risk, and childcare gap costs:

Cost Category	Our Proposal (annual)	District Proposal (annual)
Transportation incremental cost	+\$90,000	\$0 (claimed)
Enrollment loss risk — conservative (90 students)	\$0 (risk eliminated)	–\$1,125,000/year
Childcare gap — district program (conservative)	\$0 (no gap created)	–\$500,000/year
Net annual financial position	+\$90,000	–\$1,625,000/year

Under our assumptions, the district's proposed schedule costs \$1,625,000 more per year in hidden downstream costs than it saves in transportation — against our proposal's \$90,000 incremental cost. The district's proposal is not the fiscally conservative option. It transfers costs from the transportation budget to enrollment revenue and childcare programs, where they are larger, harder to track, and borne disproportionately by the district's most vulnerable families.

6. Peer District Comparisons

Edmonds' proposed 7:20 AM elementary start would be the earliest of any comparable Washington district. Current bell schedules for peer districts:

District	Elem Start	HS Start	Notes
Shoreline SD	8:50–9:15 AM	8:05 AM	Elementary latest start in peer group
Bellevue SD	8:00–9:05 AM	8:00 AM	All schools 8:00 AM or later
Lake Washington SD	8:40–9:20 AM	7:55 AM	Elementary latest in region
Edmonds SD (current)	8:05–9:20 AM	7:20 AM	HS earliest; some elem at 9:20 AM
Edmonds SD (proposed)	7:20 AM ✗	9:25 AM	Earliest elementary start in region
Edmonds SD (3-tier proposal)	9:00 AM ✓	8:00 AM ✓	All schools 8:00–9:00 AM; aligned with region

7. Requests to the Board

Based on this analysis, the parent working group respectfully requests that the Board:

- **Reject the 7:20 AM elementary start and establish a district-wide window of 8:00–9:00 AM for all school start times.**
- Direct the transportation department to model a rebalanced three-tier bell schedule.
- Commission an independent financial review of the proposed schedule change that includes: (a) transportation cost comparison between both schedules using OSPI STF data; (b) enrollment sensitivity analysis modeling loss rates of 0.5%–3% of affected school enrollment with five-year revenue projections; (c) childcare gap analysis for families at the 14 Title I schools affected by 1:50 PM.
- Require that any bell schedule proposal affecting 12 or more schools include a documented equity analysis, including Title I school impact and childcare gap assessment.

Appendix A: Complete Route Adjustment Detail

The following tables document every route-level change in the proposed model, organized by adjustment type. All route data sourced from STF-1 Winter 2025–26.

A.1 Routes Retired via Community Transit Partnership (4 routes)

These four Lynnwood HS routes are proposed for retirement subject to three equity conditions: Orange Line stop within 0.5 miles of student home address, no transfer required, and FRL rate not exceeding district HS average. All four serve the Alderwood/Mill Creek corridor directly served by the Orange Line.

Route	School	Stops	Dist	Rationale
LWH-005	Lynnwood HS	7	3.47 mi	Alderwood Mall corridor — directly on Orange Line east-west route
LWH-010	Lynnwood HS	4	4.22 mi	Alderwood/Mill Creek border — higher income area, fewest stops
LWH-011	Lynnwood HS	4	4.61 mi	Furthest east, Mill Creek area — highest income corridor, fewest stops
LWH-013	Lynnwood HS	6	4.24 mi	Far east Lynnwood/Mill Creek — higher income suburban corridor

Retained LHS routes LWH-009 (mixed-income area) and all short LHS routes (LWH-001 to 008, 012, 014) serving the denser Hwy 99 corridor are kept as district bus service. MTHS routes MTH-004 and MTH-008 are retained; MTH-006 is conditionally eligible pending last-mile verification.

A.2 Routes Consolidated (11 merges — 11 routes eliminated)

These 11 routes are proposed for consolidation with adjacent routes serving the same school. Each pair has been identified from STF-1 data based on: same destination, average distance under 1.5 miles, and 5 or fewer stops. Combined runs remain within typical route parameters. District stop-level geographic data required to confirm adjacency before implementation.

Routes Merged	School	Stops ea.	Dist ea.	Notes
SPE-006 + SPE-007	Spruce Elementary	2 + 1	1.35 + 1.35	SPE-007 (1 stop) absorbed into SPE-006
SPE-008 → SPE-001	Spruce Elementary	1 + 7	1.37 + 2.10	SPE-008 (1 stop) absorbed into SPE-001
CPE-001 + CPE-002	College Place Elementary	4 + 3	1.34 + 1.24	Combined run ~2.5 mi, 7 stops
CPE-003 + CPE-004	College Place Elementary	4 + 3	1.39 + 1.22	Combined run ~2.6 mi, 7 stops
CVE-001 + CVE-002	Cedar Valley	1 + 5	1.16 + 0.87	CVE-001 (1 stop, 1.16 mi) absorbed into CVE-002

CVE-003 + CVE-005	Cedar Valley	4 + 2	1.08 + 0.98	Two sub-1.1 mi routes combined
OHE-005 + OHE-006	Oak Heights Elementary	4 + 4	0.41 + 0.47	Two sub-0.5 mi routes; likely adjacent stops
BVE-002 + BVE-003	Beverly Elementary	5 + 4	1.18 + 1.47	Combined run ~2.6 mi, 9 stops — standard route size
CLE-001 + CLE-002	Chase Lake Elementary	4 + 3	1.38 + 1.46	Nearly identical distances; geographic proximity likely
MLE-001 + MLE-002	Martha Lake Elementary	5 + 3	1.31 + 0.88	MLE-002 (0.88 mi) is shortest basic route in district
EWB-001 + EWB-009	Edmonds Woodway HS	5 + 1	1.42 + 1.24	EWB-009 (1 stop, 1.24 mi) — single-stop route absorbed

A.3 Routes Requiring Special Treatment (7 routes)

These routes cannot double-run within the 30-minute tier gap due to extended run times (drive + loading + school offload exceeds 25-minute budget). Each has a specific resolution.

Route	School	Stops	Dist	Run Time	Resolution
SLH-001	Scriber Lake HS	13	4.58 mi	25.7 min	Dedicated Tier 2 (8:30 AM) — no double-run. Driver supplemented with midday activity routes.
SLH-002	Scriber Lake HS	14	4.03 mi	25.2 min	Dedicated Tier 2. May be paired with short Tier 3 elem route (25.2 min leaves 4.8 min reposition — marginal).
SLH-003	Scriber Lake HS	15	5.99 mi	30.6 min	Dedicated Tier 2 only. Cannot double-run.
SLH-004	Scriber Lake HS	6	8.76 mi	30.5 min	Dedicated Tier 2 only. Cannot double-run.
SLH-007	Scriber Lake HS	3	7.93 mi	26.3 min	Dedicated Tier 2 only. Cannot double-run.
MK8-004	Madrona K-8	6	6.91 mi	27.1 min	Moved to Tier 3 (9:00 AM). No reposition needed as last run. Students on this route start 9:00 AM.
MDM-008	Meadowdale MS	12	3.41 mi	25.2 min	Moved to Tier 3 (9:00 AM). 12 stops creates heavy loading time. Students start 9:00 AM.

A.4 Route Count Summary

Category	Routes	Notes
Original basic routes (STF-1 Winter 2025-26)	171	Starting point
Retired via CT partnership	-4	LWH-005, 010, 011, 013
Eliminated via consolidation (11 merges)	-11	11 short routes absorbed into 11 others
Routes in final model	156	Across 3 tiers + Scriber dedicated
Tier 1 (8:00 AM — MS + elem balance)	51	All pass 25-min timing test
Tier 2 (8:30 AM — HS + elem balance)	48	All pass 25-min timing test; worst = 22.4 min

Tier 3 (9:00 AM — remaining elem + 2 outliers)	52	No timing constraint (last run)
Scriber Lake dedicated (Tier 2 only)	5	Cannot double-run; driver supplemented
Buses needed (binding tier = 52 + 5 Scriber – 4 CT savings)	53	Exactly matches current fleet ✓

Appendix B: Original Route Density by School

Basic route counts by school destination from the Winter 2025–26 STF-1, before any adjustments:

School	Basic Routes	Avg Dist (mi)	Proposed Tier
Edmonds Woodway H.S.	9	2.01	Tier 2 – 8:30 AM
Lynnwood H.S.	14 (10 after CT+consolidation)	2.96	Tier 2 – 8:30 AM
Meadowdale H.S.	13	2.10	Tier 2 – 8:30 AM
Mountlake Terrace H.S.	8	2.57	Tier 2 – 8:30 AM
Scriber Lake H.S.	5	6.26	Tier 2 – 8:30 AM (dedicated)
Alderwood M.S.	12	2.61	Tier 1 – 8:00 AM
Brier Terrace M.S.	8	2.52	Tier 1 – 8:00 AM
College Place M.S.	5	2.20	Tier 1 – 8:00 AM
Meadowdale M.S.	11	2.24	Tier 1 – 8:00 AM
Madrona K-8	7	4.14	Tier 1 – 8:00 AM (excl. MK8-004 → T3)
All elementary schools (24 destinations)	~100 (after consolidation)	~1.6	Tier 3 – 9:00 AM

Note: Route counts reflect post-consolidation numbers. Individual stop-level data available in full STF-1 report.

— End of Analysis —

Data sources: OSPI STF-1 Winter Detail Report (Feb 19, 2026), STF-8 Efficiency Detail Report (Apr 2, 2026), STF-4 Operations Allocation Detail Report (Feb 19, 2026). AAP source: Pediatrics, Sept 2014 (doi:10.1542/peds.2014-1697). California SB 328 (2019). Community Transit 2024 service changes: communitytransit.org/transit-changes. All OSPI figures from official Washington State Superintendent of Public Instruction reports.