

To Whom It May Concern:

I am a tax paying citizen and parent of two elementary students who attend a Catholic School within the district of Columbus City Schools. This year by far has been the most frustrating for myself pertaining to the reliability and safety of transportation for my children. The district has failed to provide a service that gets my children to school on time despite not having any other students to transport in the morning to other schools prior to our students pick up. I have been told by representatives of the transportation department that there is not enough resources for an earlier pick up at the present time. This is a disgrace that such a large district who is currently transporting far less than half its student population due to the pandemic cannot start its morning bus routes fifteen minutes earlier as it has in the past to assure student arrival on time. Not only this, but then to schedule to pick up students thirty minutes after school has let out, and unreliably so, is equally as concerning. Some days the bus picks up at 2:30pm, others at 3:00pm. How can there be such inconsistency? Children should not have to worry about getting to school on time to start their day successfully. Nor should they need to be concerned with notifying their parents when the bus finally does arrive to bring them home so the parent will be available to safely walk them home because their bus stop has been moved to a less than desirable location.

This brings me to my next concern, which is in regard to my children's safety. Our bus stop which for at least the past three years has been within our neighborhood was changed. This year the school district moved my children's' bus stop to Broad Street, a main fairway for traffic during rush hour, immediately outside a rental car business. Where before I would have been comfortable allowing my children to wait on the bus without constant adult supervision, I am no longer. What is even more frustrating, was to learn that the bus route still drives past my children's former bus stop. The safety of my children has been tested and for what reason I am not sure. I wonder how Columbus City Schools Department of Transportation under the current guidance will ever be able to provide reliable and safe transportation for all of the children once blended sessions begin in late October. During this pandemic and time of social distancing if the bus is not maximizing its space by placing siblings from the same family in seats together on the bus, which they are not in my children's experience, how are they ever going to be able to transport all of these students?

I believe Columbus City Schools had more than sufficient time to plan for this 2020-2021 school year and the changes that needed to take place to allow for reliable and safe transportation of our students and that they simply failed to do this.