



Policy Code – Version: T19 – V1	
Policy Name: Bell Times Management	
Approved by motion of Board on	28/01/2013
Cross Reference G14 – Public Consultation	
Related Forms	

Policy Statement

1. The Ottawa Student Transportation Authority (hereinafter OSTA) shall ensure that the bell times for all schools of Ottawa-Carleton District School Board (OCDSB) and Ottawa Catholic School Board (OCSB) are set and/or adjusted to allow for efficient and effective route and run operations, wherever possible.
2. OSTA shall determine and implement bell time changes without Member Board of Trustee approval, where the bell time changes are ten minutes or less, with appropriate consultation.
3. OSTA shall recommend bell time changes to Member Board of Trustees where the change is more than ten minutes and seek approval to implement the changes, after appropriate consultation has been conducted.
4. OSTA shall conduct consultation with stakeholders according to its Consultation Policy and planning process.
5. Communication of new bell times to stakeholders shall occur no later than the last day of February prior to the new school year when such bell times are scheduled to begin.
6. OSTA shall not re-set new bell times in schools more than once within a period of three years, unless a significant and material change in Member Board policy or boundary is made that affects OSTA's ability to deliver safe, efficient and effective transportation services.

7. Morning entry bell times shall not normally start before 8:00 am or extend beyond 9:30 am.
8. Afternoon dismissal bell times shall not normally start before 2:10 pm or extend beyond 4:00pm.
9. OSTA shall ensure that bell times are set to adhere to the Ministry's time parameters for instruction of students at the elementary level (6.5 hrs for JK to 8) and secondary level (6.25 hours for 9-12).
10. OSTA shall support student achievement within its member school boards by establishing bell times that accommodate special morning and/or afternoon programs, where advance notice of the program is provided and where the bell time is consistent five days per week.
11. OSTA shall collaborate with Member Board Special Education Departments and schools to establish appropriate bell times for the release of students with special needs.
12. OSTA shall endeavour to be sensitive to other needs the school community may have with regards to specific bell time requirements and will provide an explanation for the reasoning behind the proposed change.

Procedure

1. Bell times will be subject to a comprehensive review as part of annual bus and route planning and optimization phases at OSTA prior to the school year start (April-July).
2. As a rule, changes in bell times require consultation with affected schools and the public. Public consultation must be carried out in accordance with the policy governing consultation and with due diligence. Consultation will occur during the school year prior to implementation of the bell time change.
3. Any change in bell times will be communicated to Member Boards, their member schools and to the public. Notification of effective changes will be provided through the OSTA website and other means of communication to achieve a seamless operation of services and to meet stakeholders' expectations.
4. OSTA will endeavour to plan later start times for secondary schools and earlier start times for elementary schools, whenever possible
5. OSTA will review, on an annual basis, the scheduling needs of special morning programs bell times that respect the program needs including, but not limited to, the before-school breakfast program.