



Dist. 15 to take a look at short-term bus solutions

By Sara Faiwell | Daily Herald Staff

Published: 10/17/2007 12:12 AM

A temporary fix could be coming to alleviate problems with Palatine Township Elementary District 15's bus service.

Officials are working this week to add buses and shift start times at three schools.

A special school board meeting is called for Thursday night, when officials will vote on getting six additional buses from a private contractor.

Superintendent Robert McKanna said Tuesday this should help get students to and from school on time.

Officials are asking St. Theresa and Immanuel Lutheran schools to move their schedules ahead by 20 minutes, so school will start earlier and end earlier. District 15 provides busing for those private schools, as well as some others.

Conyers Learning Academy in Rolling Meadows would shift their school day 20 minutes later. McKanna said all of these changes would help with the bus route problems.

Kathy Feifar, an Inverness parent with two kids at Immanuel Lutheran, says changing the start time affects people's day care arrangements and teacher contracts.

"I definitely disagree with it," she said. "To ask us to change our times, especially in the middle of the school year, is really bold."

Since the beginning of the school year, parents have complained about long bus rides, children arriving late to school and special-needs students sleeping in the hallways to wait for buses.

The cost for the six additional buses would be about \$300 a day per bus, per route, McKanna said. School districts do get about 60 percent of that back from the state.

The school board meeting this week is deemed an emergency.

School districts are required to go out for bid for bus contractors, which can take several weeks.

"We need to do something now," McKanna said.

The district will go out to bid for additional buses and when that information comes back, elected officials will make a more permanent decision for the remainder of the school year.

They won't purchase additional buses for their fleet, but instead contract the vehicles from other companies.

McKanna says that in January, he expects the board will discuss a plan that would create a three-tier busing system for next year, instead of the existing two-tier method.

Emergency school board meeting

- The Palatine Township Elementary District 15 school board will hold a special meeting Thursday to talk about and vote on an emergency short-term busing agreement.
- The meeting is at 7:30 p.m. at Sundling Junior High School, 1100 N. Smith St., Palatine.