



**2020 / Prismatic Services
Case Study**

How Poor Bell Time Analysis Can Go Wrong

Introduction

Prismatic Services has current and direct experiences with bell-time analysis studies and the necessary changes to school transportation structures that go with it. In 2019, Prismatic was hired to assist Greenwich Public Schools in their transition to new school start times. Unlike other firms, Prismatic understands that changing school starts is a holistic endeavour that requires a thorough review and overhaul of current transportation services.

About Prismatic Services

We have worked with more than 200 school districts and education agencies across the country. Our clients have ranged from 700,000 in student enrollment to just 109. We've travelled via bush plane in Alaska, eaten gas station pizza in Oklahoma, and survived mudslides in Colorado, all for our clients

- Completed over 200 projects in 31 different states
- Boutique firm with a razor-sharp focus on YOU - our clients
- Low overhead to offer our clients the best tools at the best value
- Saved our clients up to seven-digit figures per project

School Start Times: A Cautionary Tale

Prismatic has current, direct experiences with a school district that recently implemented new school start times. Greenwich Public Schools in Connecticut is a district of 9,000 students, with one high school, three middle schools, and 11 elementary schools. After more than a year of study and working with a consulting firm (not Prismatic), Greenwich adopted new school start times for 2017-18.[1]

School Level	Start Time	End Time
Elementary	8:15-8:45 AM	2:45-3:15 PM
Middle	8:00 AM	2:50 PM
High	8:30 AM	3:15 PM

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The initial results were, in a word, problematic. Many buses were routinely late, as the bus run times vis-à-vis the rest of daily commuting traffic was not sufficiently considered. A bus that could make a particular run to the high school at 7:15 am now encountered substantially more street traffic at 8:15 am. Furthermore, unaccounted for road construction led to further delays that impacted student learning. Additionally, bus-rider count estimates were significantly inaccurate which led to over-crowding and unpleasant riding conditions. Lastly, the district did not properly account for the

number of special education buses needed, which led to further over-crowding and delays.

In the years following the initial review, the district posted regular updates on its efforts to address problems by rerouting and purchasing additional bus services.[2] In 2018-19, Prismatic was hired by Greenwich to assist with ongoing transportation service quality problems. We determined that a second, more thorough review was necessary to guide the transition to new school start times. In the end the district ended up spending more money to implement these changes. However, if Prismatic had been contracted from the beginning, we could have saved the district countless hours and dollars.

[1] <https://www.greenwickschools.org/district-information/district-priorities/school-start-times>

[2] https://www.greenwickschools.org/uploaded/district/School_Start_Times/SST_2017-2018/SST_Update_-_092917.pdf

A Better Path Forward

In the two years Prismatic has thus far spent working with Greenwich, we have helped them substantially eliminate late morning bus arrivals created in the school time shift.

We have also **helped eliminate and consolidate routes**, saving the district \$200k+ in 2019-2020. Projected savings for Greenwich exceed **\$400K for 2020-2021**.

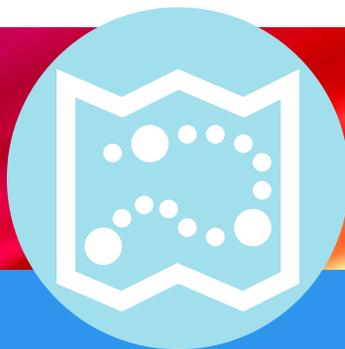
The Take-Away:

With the unprecedented transportation (among other) challenges school districts are facing this year, an on-hand consulting firm has proven to be an invaluable resource in planning, managing and implementing adjusted school transportation services in the current COVID-19 crisis. We anticipate helping the district plan for and maneuver through more obstacles as we transition to a “new normal” and move into the uncertain future. Despite the challenges schools are facing and will continue to face in the coming years, we anticipate finding even more savings for 2021-22.



Review for Efficiency

We bring our personalized database of resources and tools to find inefficiencies that other firms miss



Determine Best Path Forward

We provide clients with a list of specific, measurable and implementable recommendations to start saving you money TODAY



Optimize Spending (and Saving)

We continue to offer the best value in education consulting and have saved our districts into the seven-digit figures in transportation-related spending